

CHAPTER FIVE

**“Becoming What I Really Am”:
Stories of Self-definition and Self-expansion in an Even Start ABE/ESOL Family Literacy
Program: A Developmental Perspective**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Jean

Jean is an American woman in her mid-30s and the mother of many children who span a range of ages. Shy and rather self-effacing, Jean has a face that lights up and a voice that fills with passion, conviction, and pride as she tells us how being an ABE student in the Even Start family literacy program has changed her and helped her to be the parent and person she wants to be.

I wanted to go back to school and be able to learn the things that I didn't know how to do. . . . Well before my kids used to ask me to help them with reading and stuff and it was very difficult for me because I didn't understand what they were doing so it made me feel bad about myself of not helping them. But when I started here, I learned to read better and now I actually can sit down and really help them and feel good about myself to be able to help them. . . . At first I didn't think I could learn new things, then, I think now I can learn anything . . . Right now I feel good knowing that I can do some of the stuff that I couldn't do before.

Felicia

Felicia is a warm and energetic ESOL student and the mother of two young children. Originally from South America, Felicia describes what participating in the Even Start program has meant to her.

. . . when I came here and I didn't speak English. I'm depend for my husband . . . I can't communicate with the people. . . . Yes and I can't help my children . . . my son, he speak English , and he ask me some, some question in English. And I can't help him . . . Because I didn't understand, I'm feeling too bad, dispirited . . . I need to know how they really feel inside and my children they, understand how I feel. . . . in my country we don't have really that help for how we can help our children, how we can understand them, but you know, over here [at Even Start] we have a lot of conversation about that. And now I'm feel success. . . . I can explain my children's want . . . I can do more things . . . Yeah, and now I can ask for something, and I receive something . . . I'm professional in my country. And when I came here I wasn't nothing. Why? My English, my kids. So the communication, that is really important. That's my goal now—I want to learn for complete English for read, write everything, so I really can do what I'm really like to do, what I really am.

Ho

Ho is parenting a preschooler. He is from Southeast Asia and is in his twenties. As he explains, Even Start has been a kind of educationally corrective experience.

. . . there's a time . . . I'd seen kids go to school and then I feel like I'm missing in some point . . . and then I feel left out for I couldn't have whatever people do. Like I couldn't go to school like other people and then it would make me feel ashamed in some point or guilty . . . and then [I saw] this program . . . I used to be a shy person, but now, I read more, I talk to people more, join more activity. . . . I just have better self-esteem, I guess. Patience for everything . . . so my plan was got it [a GED] then perhaps I can go full time college. . . . I know that now my English improved a lot . . . and speaking, pronunciations, compared to a couple of years ago . . . and writing which I love mostly now . . . just start loving school this past year.

Linn

Soft-spoken Linn tells us about her hopes for herself and the value she derives from participating in Even Start. From Asia, and now mothering two young children, Linn characterizes her experience at Even Start this way.

I have to study English because I have been here, in the U.S.A., almost nine years, but most of that time, I had to stay home with my children. So I didn't have much chance to speak with other American people and to study English. . . . Most of the time inside of me I want to do something to improve my life. But this time I am very happy with this program. It makes me happy. I want, I think I can do something. . . . When I first came to Even Start my goal was learning only English. After take the class I think this class give us not only English but other things. We read a lot in the class. When I read many kind of articles, many kind of other things sometimes it give me a more high level English but I can accept some information and some knowledge about other things . . . so to learn again is more exciting to me. . . . To get another new idea, to learn new things is happy with me . . . to know new something . . . If it makes my mind more wide.

The notions of self-definition and redefinition expressed in the students' excerpts which begin in this chapter, underscore the salience this particular Even Start family literacy program has had for the 15 ESOL and ABE students we interviewed, whose lives and concerns have been the focus of our thinking for more than two years. These themes of self-creation, re-creation—of “becoming somebody”—relate to the Even Start students' perceived changes in their social identities as learners and parents. In our view, the evolving perceptions of agency and authority that accompanied these changes linked to and were importantly contoured by their development.

This chapter is a focused portrait of the multiple forms the learners' development and experiences of self-definition and self-expansion took as they participated in a family literacy program.

It explores how the context of the Even Start family literacy program, for the majority of the students, provided a community of confirmation and recognition supporting these students' efforts of self-definition and movement toward their goals for themselves and their children. But this chapter is also the story about the challenges these students face, both within the culture at large and within the learning environment of Even Start itself. It is also the story of how both a developmental perspective on adult education and a developmental theory of adult growth and self-expansion can help *us* expand our awareness of the ways educators and program designers may help adult literacy learners attain their goals and hopes.

This chapter considers the meaning and meaningfulness of family literacy learning from the perspectives of the students. We hope that we have faithfully reported what they told us was important and helpful to their learning. We hope that we have amply described the multiple ways they were encouraged and demonstrated personal courage as they reached out toward their aspirations and dreams.

Background on the Research Setting

Our study took place in an Even Start ESOL/ABE Family Literacy Program located in Massachusetts. We selected this particular program as one of our research sites because of its longstanding reputation for excellence and its integrated instructional approach of theme-based and ABE/ESOL skill learning and its strengths-focused, learner-centered developmental parenting curriculum. The instructional approach in the preschool class is also developmentally based and child centered. The Even Start program we researched offers a comprehensive component model of family literacy that is also intergenerational in nature. The Even Start program describes itself as serving

up to thirty families by providing adult education (one intermediate-level ESOL class, one intermediate/Pre-GED ABE class and basic computer instruction), a preschool class for up to fifteen children 2.9 to kindergarten age . . . parent-and-child time, a parent discussion/support group, and weekly home visits. The program meets five mornings a week from 9 to 12 [at a local school]. ("Program Materials," 1996)

The adult ESOL/ABE components, parenting curriculum, parent-and-child-time, and preschool class curriculum are all coordinated and flexibly implemented. The teachers collaborate to ensure that the various classroom materials amplify and build upon each other. The ABE/ESOL curriculum is "based loosely on a series of scope and sequence charts of skills in the areas of conversation, grammar, writing, reading comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, word attack skills, survival skills, math, and content area knowledge" ("Program Materials," 1996). However, the ABE/ESOL curriculum also consistently includes topics that arise from parents' concerns, topics that link to the parenting curriculum or emanate from aspects of the students' ethnic background or home country history or geography. The parenting curriculum and the early childhood component likewise draw from the parents' and children's interests.

The goals of the Even Start program are multiple. These include helping students prepare for employment, helping students advocate for their children and themselves, supporting students' involvement in their children's education, helping students develop their own and their children's self-confidence, and helping students gain ABE and ESOL education ("Program Materials," 1996).

The ABE and ESOL classroom and preschool educators are highly experienced and well trained. Three thoughtful, dedicated educators (an ABE co-coordinator, ESOL teacher, and early childhood co-coordinator) are the nucleus of the program (although there are additional staff, such as a computer teacher, two preschool teachers, interns, ABE/ESOL volunteers, home visitors, clerical support staff, and several consultants). While each woman heads a different classroom and two of the three share an administrative role, the three women coordinate their educational practices and share a vision of working with student strengths. These women also strive to create and build a classroom community atmosphere that embraces and celebrates the diversity of its students. Within the ABE and ESOL classes, the teachers have a goal setting and evaluation system that enlists student participation in these processes by inviting them to set their learning goals and periodically evaluate their own progress.

In our last interview, held jointly with the ABE teacher (who is the ABE co-coordinator) and the early childhood co-coordinator (who is in the preschool half-time), the ABE classroom teacher articulated the collaborative educational vision.

And I think the other thing that is interesting about early childhood and adult ed—and I had never quite thought about it this way, that [they] are on each end of the K–12, and have some similarities . . . **We are looking at the children individually and the parents individually from their strengths and helping them recognize those strengths, honor those strengths, and then build on them.** Because some family literacy programs *do* operate off a deficit model. You know, “oh, these poor families, you know, we’ve got to break this cycle of illiteracy. And these poor parents need to know about budgets and discipline,” and you come in with a canned program. I think it’s been very interesting to hear [the early childhood co-coordinator] . . . talk about her curriculum, her early childhood curriculum being developmental, child centered. You know, my curriculum . . . I mean I don’t use the word developmental but I use the comparable word for adults. **Where you take a person where they are in their lives. That is developmental. You know, you start with where they are.** The experience they are having right now, and you use that for a curriculum and for setting up goals. And it’s learning centered certainly . . . And there are comparable things . . . we talked about when we were talking about philosophies. **So, I think in terms of vision, I think we want the parents to discover their own strengths, to find out what they need, and help them meet those needs, educational needs, . . . Because I think we want, as it says in our mission statement . . . or the definition of family literacy, . . . to help families meet their full personal, economic, social, and academic potential.**

The early childhood co-coordinator added:

I think building on strengths is really true . . . And I think that goes into the community as well . . . we started a collaborative on family literacy. And it’s not coming in saying, “this is family literacy, we think you should do it.” It’s like . . . “okay, let’s build on what you do and what you can bring to the group and what we can maybe give you to help support it” . . . and **it’s listening to somebody else.** It’s the same thing that we do between each other. It’s the same thing that we do with

the parents. Let's listen and work it out. **I'm not going to come in and say, you know, "we should do it this way, or we have to do it this way." So there's a real give and take and a learning process.**

Learners also report on this give and take. In their interviews (and we discuss this more fully later), several students comment on program and teacher flexibility that seems salient to their enjoyment and persistence in the program. This flexibility may be especially important given the program's policy of open enrollment and the fact that some students do stop out of the classes and return at a later time. Nevertheless, a strong group ethic seems to prevail within each class and across the program.

One of the unique aspects of this Even Start family literacy program is the diversity and cultural richness of the participating families. The students who joined our study represented 11 different countries. They range in age from 22 to 44 and have diverse prior educational and work histories. Their number of years living in the U.S. and socioeconomic status vary as well. Several of the students in our study come from war-torn countries and were unable to complete their secondary education because of political unrest and upheaval within their country of origin. For a more complete account of the learners' background information, see Table 1.

Table 1: Background Information of Even Start Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Years in U.S.	Region of Origin	ABE/ESOL	SOI Time 1	SOI Time 2	Time in Program	Additional Information
Yvette	F	33	8	Caribbean	ESOL	2/3	3/2	2 years	Has 2 children. Completed 9 th grade. Not working.
Trudie	F	35	17	Caribbean	ABE	2/3*	3/2	5 months	Has 4 children. Completed 10 th grade. Working.
Jean	F	29	29	United States	ABE	3/2	3/2	2 years	Has 6 children. Completed 10 th grade. Not working.
Pamela	F	38	10	Central America	ESOL	3/2	3/2	3 years Stopped out.	Has 4 children. Completed 3 rd grade.
Indira	F	33	1	sub-Sahara	ESOL	3(2)	3(2)	3 months	Has 2 children. Completed high school. Not working.
Anna	F	40	13	Caribbean	ABE	3	3	3 years	Has 3 children. Completed high school. Not working.
Sarita	F	27	2	Asia	ESOL	3	3	9 months	Has 1 child. Completed 11 th grade. Not working.
Felicia	F	25	3	South America	ESOL	3	3	8 months	Has 2 children. Completed college + 2 professional training.
Raquelle	F	37	14	Caribbean	ABE	3	3	10 months	Has 1 child. Completed 8 th grade. Working.
Elena	F	30	3 mos.	Caribbean	ABE	3	3*	2 months	Has two children. Completed college + graduate training. Not working.

* Trudie's SOI score Time 1 represents a range of 2/3-3/2. It was difficult to ascertain a more discrete score.

* Elena's SOI score Time 2 represents a range of 3-3(4). It was difficult to ascertain a more discrete score.

(Table 1 Continued)

Name	Gender	Age	Years in U.S.	Region of Origin	ABE/ESOL	SOI Time 1	SOI Time 2	Time in Program	Additional Information
Linn	F	34	9	Asia	ABE	3/4	3/4	2 months	Has 2 children. Completed college + professional training. Not working.
Ahara	F	37	8	sub-Sahara	ESOL	3/4	3/4	4 1/2 years	Has 2 children.
Ho	M	22	9	Asia	ABE	3/4	3/4	4 months	Has 1 child. Completed 10 th grade. Working
Dalia	F	31	13	Caribbean	ABE	4	4	1 year	Has 5 children. Nearly completed high school + 2 years adult education.
Hamid	M	44	15	sub-Sahara	ABE	4	4	5 years	Has 9 children. Completed 5 th grade. Working.

We first met the Even Start ABE and ESOL students in September 1998, at which time there were 12 ABE students and nine ESOL learners who agreed to participate in our research study. Over the course of 10 months, during which we interviewed the students on three separate occasions, six students dropped out or transferred from the program and left the study, bringing the sample size of participants who we were able to follow in our study down to fifteen individuals (nine ABE and six ESOL students). Of the 15 who stayed in the study, one left the program and two transferred to other literacy centers over the course of the three data collection periods. We were, however, able to complete their final interviews. (See Chapter Two for a complete description of the research methods and research instruments used in the study).

In comparing the Even Start students to those of the other two research sites, two features stand out as unique: the Even Start learners are all parents and most are in their early thirties. In contrast, the sample of community college students we interviewed were childless and primarily in their mid-20s. While many of the workplace site literacy students also had families, they were, on average, older than the Even Start learners. The fact that the learners were actively engaged in the expansion of their roles as both adult learners and parents was an important consideration in selecting this Even Start research setting.

Challenges for Teachers and Challenges for Researchers

As we read and reread the narratives of the learners in our study, we at times found ourselves grappling with issues linked to what ESOL teachers describe as the multilevels in the classroom (Burt,

1997). Our research team frequently found ourselves following and intrigued by the distinct contouring of the multiple differences that abounded within and across the two classes (the ESOL and ABE) of students we interviewed.

As we noted, while most of the immigrant students in the ESOL class had not worked in their home country, several had previously held jobs, and one student had trained for and worked in a professional career in business. In the ABE class, a number of students had previously worked in their home country, and several had received college training for their careers. Thus, another difference we wondered about was the students' varying level of education across the classes. Additionally, several ABE students described their previous school histories as negative and confidence robbing. We also noted differences in their SES level (when living in their home country), as well as differences in the number and ages of their children. All but one of the students in this study was an immigrant. We wondered about these distinct individual features of the learners both within each class and across the two literacy classes we interviewed for our study. We wondered, as well, about the possibly different atmospheres within the ABE and ESOL classes, since, as we explained, they were taught by two different literacy educators, despite the fact the teachers themselves depict their educational philosophies as quite similar. Our concerns and questions related to how these differences across and within the classes might influence or have bearing on the students' perception of their education, their instructional preferences, and views of and hopes for themselves as learners.

In our view, differences in ethnicity and cultural background as well as level of English language fluency are no small matter. As researchers and developmental psychologists who are particularly interested in ways that individuals constitute meaning, we continuously asked ourselves how these mostly immigrant students from 11 countries construed their purposes for entering the ABE/ESOL program, their expectations for their teachers, and their goals for themselves as students and parents. We told ourselves we would not be surprised if we found 15 different and distinct responses to our questions. Surprisingly, and to a greater extent than some of us expected, patterns of similarity in their construals did emerge (although many differences coexisted within these narratives). Thus, in this chapter, we share and focus our analysis and interpretations of meaning on the students' stories of commonalities we discerned. We also realize that researchers with a different orientation might choose to focus on the disparate, distinct, and diverse elements of the participants' backgrounds and might therefore recount a different story about the meaning and purpose of education in the lives of these literacy learners. We do not assume that our interpretation and analysis of the data is the or their whole story. Rather, we see our contribution as *one way in* to thinking about and understanding the various personal meanings these diverse students bring to their experience in their literacy classes. We imagine and hope that this approach of surfacing the regularities across the students' experiences is both a powerful and helpful way of joining what so many literacy researchers and practitioners have noted as an absence of students' own accounts of their views of the functions, purposes, and practices of literacy (Auerbach, 1997; Gadsden, 1994, 1996; Lytle, 1991; Taylor, 1997).

British social anthropologist Brian Street suggests that educators need to bring an anthropologist's viewpoint to their work in ABE/ESOL literacy education. By this, he means that an anthropologist's perspective on cultural differences, beliefs, and practices would serve to help literacy educators become more sensitive and responsive to the differing ways literacy learners seem to conceive of the functions, purposes, and practices of literacy in their lives. In his words, "teachers need to become cultural anthropologists, alert to signs of difference and to where students are coming from" (Street, p. 209, cited in D. Taylor, 1997). Street goes on to say, "all learners, 'mainstream' as well as minority and those from diverse cultural backgrounds, carry with them cultural assumptions

about what and how they are learning and about what is appropriate” (ibid.). In Street’s view (p. 209), educators need to recognize that learners from non-mainstream backgrounds “do not come *tabula rasa* to the education system, that they come bringing trails of their own cultural heritage and that this is frequently why they have difficulty ‘seeing’ what the mainstream teacher takes for granted.” Street (cited in Taylor, 1997, p. 209) believes that some of teachers’ frustrations with students’ “inability . . . to do things that seem straightforward enough” link to the teachers’ lack of awareness of these cultural differences. To correct for this “cultural insensitivity,” Street and other literacy researchers (Auerbach, 1997; Gadsden, 1994, 1997; Lytle, 1991; Taylor, 1997) urge listening to what the learners themselves have to say.

We join these researchers in their focus on the importance and primacy of listening to what learners themselves say are their beliefs about the value of literacy. We also agree that learners (and here we include mainstream, minority, or immigrant students) do not enter any ABE or ESOL program *tabula rasa*, but rather, as we and other developmentally minded educators suggest (Belenky et al., 1986; Daloz, 1986; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Perry, 1970; Weathersby, 1976), come to their educational endeavors with their own important, valuable, and guiding conceptions of the functions, purposes, and practices of literacy in their lives. And while we agree that culture, race, and ethnicity are critical and extremely influential shaping forces upon learners’ literacy beliefs, we suggest that another important, powerful organizing feature undergirding these differences may link to one’s way of knowing or, as we will discuss next, to a person’s orderly system of meaning organization which we believe shapes these beliefs as well. Although we offer this different way of understanding the preferences and meanings learners bring to their literacy endeavors, we see our developmental perspective as compatible with an anthropological-cultural approach to interpreting learner beliefs and the meanings and purposes of literacy in their lives. Thus, we find ourselves inviting our readers to don a different “theoretical persona” and to take up a different journey into the stories these students tell about their lives, one that wends its way through the lens of development.

Developmental Perspectives on the Self, Education, and Parenting

Although several explanations of our developmental perspective appear elsewhere in this monograph (see, for example, Chapters Three or Four), we now take the time to review and emphasize several key features of our developmental theory that seem particularly relevant to our understanding of the Even Start learners’ experiences.

Foundational to our constructive-developmental framework are the twin ideas that human beings persistently strive to interpret, bring coherence to, and make meaning of experience *and* that the very “activity of making-meaning is the fundamental motion of personality” (Kegan, 1982, p.15). We are, in other words, indomitable meaning-makers who develop through the activity of constructing the world. Although these constructions—the meanings we make—might seem random or idiosyncratic, our developmental framework suggests that they are not. According to constructive-developmental theory, our meaning-making is filtered through a way of knowing that entails its own consistent, coherent, and qualitatively distinct and increasingly complex inner logic. Moreover, constructive-developmentalists believe that a given way of knowing or logic shapes a person’s thoughts, emotions, and understanding of herself in relation to others. To this end, researchers whose work flows from the constructive-developmental tradition have applied its basic theoretical principles and ideas to the development of self across a variety of domains, including self as learner and parent (Belenky et al., 1986; Daloz, 1986; Kegan, 1994; Newberger, 1980; Perry, 1970). Self-theorists (Epstein 1991; Harter, 1999) whose focus is the development of self-concept apply constructive-

developmental principles to suggest that individuals actively construct theories of self which evolve and become more complex over time. They believe that these self-theories, also bound by developmental logics, shape how a person perceives and evaluates herself, framing the portrait she paints of who she is—her identity. In sum, developmental psychologists, researchers, and theorists all link the process of development and perceptions of self and self-agency both to the activity of constructing meaning and to the forms these constructions take. To this end, building upon the notion that one's social identity is intimately connected to the form and activity of meaning-making, we assert that when a person is consistently unable to express her made meanings or enact her sense of identity defined by her governing logic, her very self may be put at risk.

Constructive-Developmental Logics—Ways of Knowing

Earlier in this monograph we described the three most common forms of constructing meaning (or ways of knowing) in adulthood: the Instrumental way of knowing, the Socializing way of knowing, and the Self-Authoring way of knowing. For a fuller explication of these ways of knowing we refer the reader to Chapter Three. Here we supply a quick description of the ways these logics shape the *form* of one's identity, guiding the construction of one's social role and, in particular, one's view of self and other. Into our conception of "other," we implicitly fold in teachers, peers, children, intimate others, and countries' or programs' cultural values.

The essence of the Instrumental knower's relation to an[other] is as follows:

As a self subject to my needs, wishes and interests, I relate to another person by viewing his/her needs, wishes and interests in terms of the possible [practical] consequences for my world view. Essentially I know you in knowing whether who or what you are will help or hinder me in my effort to live my needs, action-oriented goals, plans or interests. (Lahey, et al., 1988, p. 98)

The essence of the Socializing knower's relation to an[other] is as follows:

The triumph of the [Socializing] mind is the new ways the other's point of view matters to us. . . . The other's point of view matters to us intrinsically, not just extrinsically as a means of satisfying our more egocentric purposes (Kegan, 1994, p.126) . . . when the [Socializing way of knowing] dominates our meaning making, what we **should** feel is what we **do** feel, what we **should** value, is what we **do** value and what we **should** want is what we **do** want. (Kegan, 1994, p. 275)

The essence of the Self-Authoring knower's relation to an[other] and another's ideals, values, and evaluations is as follows:

Evolution between [the Socializing way of knowing and Self-Authoring way of knowing] is the story of gradually separating internalized points of view from their original sources in others and making the self itself a coherent system for their generation and correlation (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 51). This evolution . . . brings into being an "I" that has, rather than is, its relationships. [This way of knowing's] strength is its capacity for self-regulation, its capacity to sustain itself, to parent itself, to name itself—its autonomy. (Kegan, 1982, p. 223)

Developmental Mechanisms

One way to conceive of these different ways of knowing is to see them as different perspectives of the self (and other) that help direct both an individual's perception and location of personal authority and agency (a trajectory that becomes increasingly internal and self-directed over time). According to constructive-developmental theory, we characteristically become identified with the particular meaning system or way of knowing that we create and, in turn, creates us.¹ Thus, we are consistently engaged in the process of preserving and defending the logics that filter our perceptions of our selves, our authority and our agency. This tendency to preserve our current way of knowing in the face of being presented with new and novel experiences or information links to the process of assimilation, one of the key developmental mechanisms described by Piaget (1952). Assimilation, then, is the developmental process of taking in and interpreting information or experience according to our existing logic. British social scientist Peter Marris (1974, p. 9), who writes on the processes of personal and social change, cites the thinking of developmental psychologist John Flavell (1963, p. 50) in describing what they both characterize as the "conservative impulse" undergirding the making of meaning.

Assimilation is by its very nature conservative, in the sense that its primary function is to make the unfamiliar familiar, to reduce the new to the old. A new assimilatory structure must always be some variant of the last one acquired and it is this which insures both the gradualness and continuity of intellectual [and, we would add, self] development.

As new information is interpreted through a given way of knowing, there may still be a consolidation or elaboration of one's thinking. When the new or the novel can be interpreted through a given logic, the information or experience may be similar enough to approximate one's ways of knowing and still expand one's understanding. However, should the new or the novel not approximate our existing way of interpreting it, we may create a new meaning framework (or way of knowing) through which we can interpret the information, or we may substantially modify an existing way of knowing so we can interpret the information. This process of creating or modifying a new meaning framework is what Piaget called accommodation.² Simply put, growth through these distinct ways of knowing relates to the appropriate support for and moderate challenge to an individual's current way of knowing so he may continue to coherently interpret and make sense of his psychosocial surround and build upon his personal agency. We more fully consider what constitutes appropriate support or challenge to a given way of knowing later in this chapter.

In our study, we note that the Even Start students we interviewed depicted life situations and circumstances of acculturation that presented a variety of challenges to their way of knowing and to their demonstrations of personal authority and perceived agency. In a very few instances, these challenges promoted shifts in their interpretive logic or slight changes to the very structure of their given way of knowing. In most instances, challenges and the subsequent educational supports the learners found through the context of the Even Start program fostered changes in what we call the

¹ However, we note that for a vast majority, these meaning systems will evolve and transform gradually over time.

² In this description of assimilation and accommodation we do not mean to suggest that such modifications or changes to one's way of knowing are instantaneous; rather we see these changes as gradual, incremental, and evolving.

contents of their knowing. We do, however, understand these content changes as important to the consolidation and elaboration of their meaning-making and to their growth as learners, parents, and people. In other words, these changes are significant to the further expansion of their social identities.

Developmental Perspectives on Education and Parenting

Developmental educators are fascinated by and focused on teaching and learning issues, which ultimately relate to the processes of assimilation and accommodation. That is, developmental educators regularly absorb themselves with and ask questions about how much a teacher or a course curriculum should explicitly challenge a student's given way of knowing in order to promote learning and/or growth toward a more complex way of knowing (Daloz, 1986; Kegan, 1994; Lasker, 1975; Perry, 1970; Tinberg & Weisberger, 1998; Weathersby, 1976). Developmental educators are also concerned with how a learner's way of knowing may shape her expectations for learning, including her educational goals, instructional preferences, view of her own and her teacher's responsibilities, and understanding of the value of education and even the origins of knowledge. Various theorists have suggested related models of learners' conceptions of the nature and origins of knowledge and the evolution of students' understanding of themselves as knowers. In the table below (Portnow, Popp, Broderick, Drago-Severson, & Kegan, 1998), we offer a synthesis of some of these ideas and draw heavily from the work of Rita Weathersby (1976) and Harry Lasker (1975), two groundbreaking educators and researchers who imaginatively integrate dynamics of self-development with learner perspectives on adult education and the teaching and learning process.

Table 2: Learners' Understanding of Education

Learners' Understanding of Education
<p>Instrumental Ways of Knowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “What’s in it for me?” ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> is a kind of “possession,” an accumulation of skills, facts, and actions that yield solutions; a means to an end. -You “get it” and then you “have it.” ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> is right or wrong. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> comes from external authority which tells you the right skills, facts, and rules you need to produce the results to get what you want. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> helps one meet one’s own concrete needs and goals, and obtain instrumental outcomes. ◆ Education is to <u>get X</u>. <p>Socializing Ways of Knowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “What do you think I should know?” ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> is general information that one should know for the required social roles and to meet expectations of teachers/authorities. Knowledge is equated with objective truth. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> comes from higher authorities and experts who hand down truth and understanding. Authorities and experts are the source of the legitimate knowledge and informed opinions. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> helps one to meet cultural and social expectations, gain acceptance, and enter into social roles and feel a sense of belonging. ◆ Education is to <u>be X</u>. <p>Self-Authoring Ways of Knowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “What do I want to know? What is important to me to keep learning and growing?” ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> is understood as a construction, truth, a matter of context. Bodies of knowledge and theories are seen as models for interpreting and analyzing experience. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> comes from one’s interpretation and evaluation of standards, values, perceptions, deductions, and predictions. Knowledge comes from a self-generated curiosity and sense of responsibility for one’s own learning. ◆ <u>Knowledge</u> helps to enrich one’s life, to achieve a greater competence according to one’s own standards, to deepen one’s understanding of self and world; to participate in the improvement of society. ◆ Education is to <u>become X</u>. <p><i>Adapted from R. Weathersby, A Synthesis of Research and Theory on Adult Development: Its Implications for Adult Learning and Postsecondary Education, 1976, pp.88-89.</i></p>

As this table suggests, learners' conceptions of themselves as knowers and their understanding of the nature and source of knowledge follows a trajectory of increasing complexity of thought. At the Instrumental way of knowing, knowledge is initially conceived as skills or facts and understood in rather dualistic, either/or ways. Yet, these conceptions evolve as one's way of knowing becomes more complex over time so that the Self-Authoring knower comes to understand that knowledge itself is contextual and a construction. Knowledge is no longer viewed primarily as a means to attain an instrumental set of goals but is perceived as a way to enrich one's life, to deepen self-understanding and self-discovery and is valuable for shaping one's own destiny.

Developmental approaches to parent education (which we admit seem to be a decidedly Western orientation) likewise trace a trajectory of evolving complexity of thought that focus on the ways parents are increasingly aware of and able to take the child's perspective and put themselves in the child's shoes, eventually coming to see the child as "a complex and changing psychological self-system" where parent-child interactions are understood as being mutually influential to the growth of each party.

Developmentally driven conceptions of parental awareness (Newberger, 1980) have implications for the ways that parents interpret their children's needs, see themselves as authorities, and conceive of the nature of the child. Here, too, these "levels of parental awareness" presume that individuals bound by a more Instrumental way of knowing will have a more concrete orientation toward their own and their children's needs. Instrumentally-oriented parents might find it difficult to put themselves in the shoes of their children and may understand proper discipline as ensuring their children do what they say, follow the rules, and meet parental needs. At the Socializing way of knowing, a parent would characteristically internalize her child's perspective and might understand and enact discipline approaches and a view of the nature of the child that are derived through culturally prescribed values and practices. At a more Self-Authoring way of knowing, a parent would see herself as creator and generator of her parenting values which both take into consideration the child's internal psychological perspective and her own. These values derive from the individual's superordinate theory of parenting which directs the parent's understanding of discipline and her view of children's development (Kegan, 1994). The table below summarizes and is adapted from Newberger's (1980) "Levels of Parental Awareness Scale," a scale that links to the way individuals construe their parental role and the parent-child relationship.

Table 3: Newberger's Levels of Parental Awareness

Levels of Parental Awareness
<i>[particular issue is understanding of the child in relation to parental role]</i>
<p><i>Egoistic orientation [the Instrumental way of knowing]</i> The parent understands the child as a projection of his or her own experience, and the parental role is organized around parental wants and needs.</p>
<p><i>Conventional orientation [the Socializing way of knowing]</i> The child is understood in terms of externally derived (tradition, culture, authority) definitions and explanations of children. The parent orients to the internalization of the child's perspective and the parental role is organized around socially defined notions of correct practices and responsibilities.</p>
<p><i>Subjective-individualistic orientation [growing toward Self-Authorship]</i> The child is viewed as a unique individual who is understood through the parent-child relationship rather than solely through external definitions of children. The parental role is organized around identifying and meeting the needs of this child rather than as the fulfillment of predetermined culturally prescribed role obligations only.</p>
<p><i>Interactional orientation [the Self-Authoring way of knowing]</i> The parent understands the child as a complex and changing psychological self-system. The parent, as well as the child, grows in his/her role and the parent recognizes that the relationship and the role are built not only on meeting the child's needs but also on finding ways of balancing his or her own needs and the child's so that each can be responsibly met.</p>
<p><i>Adapted from Carolyn Newberger's Parental Awareness Scale from "The Cognitive Structure of Parenthood: Designing a Descriptive Measure," New Directions for Child Development, 7, 1980.</i></p>

We believe that developmental perspectives on parental role construal may be helpful to parenting educators, or, in this case, family literacy practitioners, because such frameworks provide ways to understand what may be the developmentally driven difficulties and/or strengths parents face in meeting cultural and/or curricular expectations set for them in their roles as parents. In understanding the ways parents conceptualize the parent-child relationship, educators may interpret parental behavior as emanating not from noncompliant, selfish, traditional, or even self-righteous attitudes but as the result of the ways parents understand and make sense of themselves, their roles as parents, and their world. In short, we see parenting behavior and attitudes as reflective of and influenced by an individual's development, or way of knowing. Later in this chapter, we take up the way the Even Start students' developmental positions or ways of knowing affect their response to and incorporation of the Even Start parenting curriculum and the implications this has for their notions of teaching, disciplining, and interacting with their children.

In the next section of this chapter, we use a developmental perspective as an analytical tool through which to learn about and listen to the challenges the students in our study describe as important to their reasons for enrolling in the Even Start program and for seeking ABE and ESOL education within the context of a family literacy program. In this section, we explore the ways their systems of meaning organization direct their goals for learning and their understandings of the

teaching and learning enterprise. We also explore these learners' perceptions of their own competence and agency in their roles as parents and learners. We connect these perceptions to learners' construals of self. We explore the ways that these students, who frequently describe feeling unrecognized, undervalued, or constrained by the U.S. host culture's less than generous welcome to individuals who do not possess the requisite English language skill or fluency, dedicatedly work to actualize their dreams and aspirations for themselves and their children.

II. THE MEANING OF COMING TO CLASS: "BECOMING SOMEBODY": PROVIDING FOR ONESELF AND ONE'S FAMILY

Why Do Students Say They Come to the Program and What Does Literacy Learning Seem to Offer Them?

Recently, many literacy researchers (Pierce, 1995; Weinstein-Shr, 1995; Ullman, 1997) have focused on the way that language learning (and, for the students in our study, it is English language learning) intertwines with one's social identity. Ullman (1997) writes,

[s]ocial identity can be seen as the various ways in which people understand themselves in relation to others, and how they view their past and their future. The act of immigrating to a new country can profoundly affect a person's social identity. In fact, some people experience this change more as an act of re-creation than as a temporary process of readjustment. For example, it might necessitate re-creating one's parental role because one's child can more quickly acquire the new language and perform tasks such as talking with a landlord or paying bills. . . . These transformations are complex and continual. . . . And it is this complex, changing self that learners bring to the ESL classroom. (pp. 1, 2)

In much the same vein, we heard questions and confusions of social identity raised within and across the interviews we conducted with the Even Start ESOL and ABE learners who participated in our study. In the broadest sense, these questions related, as Ullman describes, to the learners' perceived changes in how others related to them and to the ways their views of their past and their future felt challenged or compromised due to their lack of English language fluency. Many of these learners recounted distress and frustration with their inability to enact their self-perceived parental role responsibilities. We believe these changes in the learners' self-perceptions (and social identities) comprised a challenge to the very way they constituted their roles as parents and conceived of their competence and agency as adults. In this sense, we feel that, for a majority of learners, these challenges to their social identities called for acts of reclamation and reconnection to a way of knowing put at risk. This upheaval in and challenge to their way of knowing (governing their construals of their agency as parents and adults) was an important source of the distress and disequilibrium many of the interview narratives articulate. We surmise that, for many students, these challenges (as well as their aspirations) motivated them to enroll in the Even Start program.

Overall, the students we interviewed in our study of the ABE/ESOL classes at Even Start felt satisfied with their program. Most reported increases in confidence and perceived competence as parents and adults, enhanced language fluency and literacy skills, and a positive sense that, through the various components of the program, they were better able to attain or move toward their goals and aspirations for themselves and their children. The learners' narratives of the support they felt the Even

Start program provided reminds us of Ullman's (1997) description of the dynamic way ESOL (and we would add ABE) classrooms foster transformations of identity. Ullman writes, "When immigrant learners talk about their aspirations in the United States, the teacher's response and their classmates' responses, along with their own words, are important parts of their self-re-creation" (p. 2).

In our view, the Even Start students who participated in our study felt well supported in reclaiming, reconnecting to, and, in some cases, redefining their social identities. At a later point in this chapter, we will take up the story of the particular ways these students differently required and received support from their teachers and peers for this process. What follows next is the exploration of the ways these learners experienced challenges to their perceptions of self and their parenting competence as well as an elaboration of the ways their systems of meaning organization directed resolution of these challenges, thus shaping their goals for learning and their understandings of the teaching and learning enterprise.

In this section, as in others to follow, we describe the learners' experiences from both the ABE and ESOL program in a holistic way. While we understand that there are differences in the format and focus of these two classes as well as some fundamental distinctions across the learners themselves, notably and importantly a disparity in the language fluency of the ESOL students and that of the ABE students, our interest here lies in describing the similarities that the individual students from these diverse backgrounds share by virtue of their developmental position. Moreover, in this section, the distinctions to which we draw attention are those of the differences in the ways that learners bound by different systems of meaning-making construe their goals, aspirations, and expectations in the program. We realize that in parsing the students' stories in this fashion we necessarily distort some fundamental differences. We also wonder whether the fact that almost all (but one) of the students in our study were immigrants to the U.S. might have some similarly shaping influences upon their aspirations that cut across the ESOL/ABE classes. The ESOL students saw a priority and urgency in gaining English skills so as to better communicate and be understood, and these skills were critically important to their agency in the world. We also note that almost all ESOL learners had this goal, regardless of their developmental position. Yet, even within the group of ESOL learners we studied, there were differences in the motives for learning English we feel are attributable to their developmental position. Another important difference among the students pertains to their prior work history and training for a professional degree. Only three of the students interviewed from the ESOL or ABE classes had trained for a professional career. Four of the students had worked in their home countries. Six of the 15 students were working at the time of our interviews. Nine were not employed. We note these differences because a number of students explicitly describe their goals as linked to their hopes to gain employment or re-establish their work identity. Here, too, in this realm, there are real life differences in their goals that cannot be accounted for by considering their developmental positions. For some, being able to work and attain an adequate salary was vital to their family's financial buoyancy.

A final caveat

In the sample of adult ABE/ESOL learners we interviewed, most shared some features of a Socializing way of knowing. That is to say, most of the learners in our study were either moving out of the Instrumental way of understanding toward a Socializing way of knowing, bound by a Socializing way of knowing, or growing from a Socializing way of knowing toward Self-Authorship. Of 15 students, only 2 were discerned to be solely bound by a Self-Authoring way of knowing. Therefore, for most of the students in our study (13 out of 15), a Socializing way of knowing predominates or substantially

and importantly contours their understandings of the challenges they face, their view of their role responsibilities as parents, and their goals for themselves and their children. As noted by the authors of Chapter Four, we find it is difficult to draw “empirically clean” distinctions across these learners’ descriptions of their reasons for joining the program and their motives for learning. Yet, subtle differences do exist that we feel are important to highlight. We agree with our colleagues’ interpretation (see Chapter 4) concerning the overlap in the learners’ developmental positions as “representing various points along a continuum . . . [in which] students at one end of the continuum [have] their Socializing way of understanding shaded with more Instrumental concerns [while] students at the other end [have shadings] of Self-Authorship.” To help the reader make clearer distinctions about how a particular way of knowing may shape a student’s understanding of self-challenges, we highlight and showcase the differences and simultaneously seek to capture those similarities that seem important to their self-descriptions.

Becoming Somebody: Forms of Agency in Parent and Learner Identity

Growing From Instrumental Ways of Understanding

Being in Trudie’s presence, one feels a sense of strength and outspokenness. Originally from the Caribbean, Trudie has been in the U.S. for some time and in the program for approximately eight months. Direct and to the point, she tells it like it is, repeating a phrase many of us will recognize across the learners’ narratives. Trudie puts it this way:

I decide to come here and study so I could have my GED . . . because I will try for an education, so I can go to college, and **be somebody**.

Most important thing to me is my education. Yes, I have been thinking about going back to school long time. And especially at reading, in U.S. if you do not have education, it’s—**you are nothing**. You will not be anything. You will do a dirty job. Working hard. And having less money. You working hard, more than the other who have education. They pay you less money. Now is my . . . I’m focus in school, to have my high school diploma so I can go to college to learn something, to give me knowledge, too. When you have education, you can be somebody. . . . You can be a nurse. Without education, you can’t. You can be doctor, engineer, a lot of things, you can be when you educate[d].

[So without education, you’re . . . ?] Nothing!

“Being somebody” and “being nobody” are words we hear throughout the interviews, across gender and across developmental position.³ These are powerful sentiments, filled with knowledge about the inequities of class, education, and the ways U.S. culture can make invisible immigrant and minority individuals and those who have been poorly served by the educational process. For Trudie, education is a pathway out of a social identity linked to economic deprivation, demeaning work, and societal disrespect, a path away from “being nobody.” This is an awareness we hear many Even Start learners articulate in many forms. Yet, in Trudie’s words we also hear what is salient to learners who are growing away from the Instrumental way of knowing: the twin motives to derive the practical, concrete, and utilitarian results of education *and* the societal or social approval from important others (in valued social roles) they believe literacy and returning to school ensure. We note a subtle distinction here from the ways other learners bound *solely* by Socializing or Self-Authoring ways of knowing relate to this awareness and to striving to “become somebody.” For example, Trudie both understands the definition of “being nobody” (when one is uneducated) as connected to very concrete elements—“the dirty work, the lack of money”—and she understands the societal attribution of “being nothing” as inextricably linked to the role of manual laborer delegated to the working class. In Trudie’s view, there is not a sense of psychological space for the idea that someone might conceivably choose the role of manual laborer, and so she believes this role is necessarily demeaning; [dis]respect is inherent in the worker/laborer role. Of course, Trudie is right, U.S. culture *is* classist and discriminatory and quite frequently devaluing of manual laborers, though not necessarily demeaning of hard work or work that does not require college education.

So how does a developmental perspective add to our understanding of Trudie’s construction of self and her motives to gain literacy skill? Interpreting her words through the lens of development, we hear in Trudie’s declaration of intention what may be a unique way in which she is especially vulnerable to the societal attributions that link marginalization with class. We find that individuals who share a Socializing way of knowing are particularly vulnerable to internalizing the norms of *any culture* as defining and determinative of their self-sense. And, so, here we understand Trudie’s proclamation for self-development to emblemize the ways she has come to believe she *may* be seen as a valued, approved of, and respected member of U.S. culture—“a somebody”—to guard against these negative attributions. And in this proclamation we hear her claiming her right to a social identity she wants to develop and feels is under attack by virtue of her low English and literacy skills.

Moreover, we note in Trudie’s statement her ability to decode the rules for professional advancement in U.S. culture. She is, as our colleagues in Chapter 4 suggest is true for learners growing from Instrumentalism, able to discern and evaluate the lessons of cultural capital⁴ when these are made explicit or are obvious. As Trudie indicates, she observes that education is the key to status, respect, and financial reward. Some second language acquisition theorists (Pierce, 1995, p 17) have begun to discuss the “complex relations of power, identity, and language learning” and the links

³ We note that several researchers on adult literacy learners (Luttrell, 1997, Rockhill, 1991) have explored the phenomenon of “becoming somebody.” However, these authors have focused their research on women’s experiences of identity development in the context of literacy learning. We use a constructive-developmental analysis to understand the different developmental meanings that “becoming somebody” has for both women and men who are at diverse developmental positions.

⁴ Here we draw on the notion of cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). These authors assert that certain knowledge, skills, and competencies are privileged in U.S. culture and, in particular, within the educational system and that these competencies are purported to be universal or objective vs. signs or codes of power (Delpit, 1995).

between the acquisition of cultural capital and one's motivation to learn the target language of the community into which one is acculturating. Pierce (1995) asserts that

learners invest in a second language, . . . with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources,⁵ which will, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners will expect or hope to have a good return on that investment—a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (p. 17)

In this definition of language investment, Pierce raises questions about what some theorists delineate as distinct and separately operating motives for second language learning: instrumental and integrative motivation. In instrumental motivation, “learners have to learn a second language for utilitarian purposes, such as employment, whereas integrative motivation references the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully with the [host] community” (p.17). Pierce believes these dichotomous forms of motivation exist simultaneously. We wonder whether our developmental perspective may add to this insight and help clarify why, for example, Trudie exhibits a blend of instrumental and integrative motivations to learn English, i.e., her desire for the instrumental and practical benefits of English “to get a good job,” and avoid the “dirty work,” and the more abstract idea that English affords societal recognition, acceptance, and approval housed in a professional identity (her integrative motivation). Viewed through the lens of constructive-developmentalism, we would explain this blend of motivation as emblematic of an individual's transition, growing from an Instrumental way of knowing into a more Socializing stance. This is the case for Trudie and for many of the learners in our study who are operating from this developmental position.⁶

We find that students such as Trudie, who are growing from Instrumental ways of knowing do seem to place great emphasis on establishing or reclaiming an independent agentic sense of self located in the ability to *do and act*. They appear to emphasize gaining the fundamentals of literacy as a way to meet action-oriented, concrete goals; practical needs; interests; or plans. Of course, non-native speakers of English and even ABE students with poorly developed English language skills need to acquire English fluency to be understood and independently navigate the myriad social and institutional systems with which they are involved. Not surprisingly, the narratives of the ESOL students, regardless of developmental position, seem to focus persistently on an urgency to learn English literacy and communication skills. Yet, what is interesting, especially to developmental psychologists (and we hope literacy educators), is that learners bound by Socializing and more Self-Authoring ways of knowing seem to articulate and stress *additional forms* of agency they wish to reclaim or re-establish. We think that the focus on seeking practical English skills is not necessarily indicative of a form of agency predicted by developmental position in and of itself, an observation that is probably obvious to ABE/ESOL educators. Yet, when viewed in relation to how other students understand the challenges they face, we surmise that for students growing from Instrumentalism, skill acquisition does direct their constructions of identity as “doers and actors” and circumscribes their perceptions of competence in particularly powerful ways.

⁵ Pierce (1995, p.17) defines symbolic resources as “language, education, and friendship, whereas . . . material resources include capital goods, real estate, and money.”

⁶ We also posit that while these twin motives may exist for learners regardless of developmental position, the expression of instrumental and integrative motivation may be different because at different developmental levels the idea of successful cultural integration will be construed differently.

Doing, Acting, and Becoming—Instrumental, Independent Agency

Jean is a native English speaker, ABE student, and dedicated mother who, for a variety of reasons, was unable to complete her high school diploma. For Jean, literacy skills are a gateway to developing a new identity as a person who can achieve her goals, both for herself and for her children, and who can act and more fully participate in the world. The process of returning to school has been transformative to Jean's sense of self, increasing her feelings of confidence and her belief in her own parental authority and competence. In particular, Jean sees learning the skills of reading and writing as critical to now being able to demonstrate her care for her children and to viewing herself as a positive role model.

When I came to the program I couldn't read that good. I wouldn't pick nothing up to read . . . before I wouldn't pick up a book or anything because if I didn't understand it or couldn't read it, I didn't want to deal with reading or anything any more. **But now I could pick up a book or the paper and sit there and be able to read it and not get like mad at myself for not being able to read it or something.** Because like **before I wanted to read it, but I didn't understand it, so I couldn't read it, so I didn't do it. . . . [I got mad at myself because] I thought it was on me. . . . I understand what's going on in life now.** I can read the newspaper and know what's going on out in the world, and stuff. Because I would like to know what goes on around the country and stuff. Like I could understand the paper now, the weather part. Like I didn't know that before. . . .

Yeah, I can read the labels now. Before I used to ask, like if there's new things in the store and I couldn't read, I had to ask my husband, what's this? Is it good? [*That must be great.*] Yeah, knowing I can do something.

I just want to finish and get my high school diploma, knowing that I did one of my goals of getting my high school diploma. **Right now I feel good knowing that I can do some of the stuff that I couldn't do before.** [What's important to me is] finishing school, helping with like financial . . . but I put paying the bills, so getting a job, like financial things. Well being successful [is] to help with the financial things.

Jean's narrative reveals a new-found sense of agency and pride in being able to be an independent actor and agent in the world. Her positive identity, improved self-esteem, and perceived competence link to the mastery of particular skills and the attainment of specific, concrete, utilitarian goals. What comes through in the above excerpt is that Jean is less frustrated and has a better sense of herself as someone who can approach concrete tasks and stay with them. She can read the paper and learn about world events for and by herself. Through her own words, we sense she feels more generally connected to the world of knowledge. She no longer experiences herself as a cultural outsider.

The skills Jean acquires through the Even Start program afford her the capacities we frequently associate with having been adequately attended to in school: gaining the "tool knowledge" or multiple forms of literacy of one's society. Lifespan psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) carefully and

beautifully chronicled this move into an agentic identity of “doing” in his writings about the life cycle. The risks of not acquiring such literacy “tools,” he warns, may result in a sense of inferiority. The Even Start program, for Jean, appears to be a counterbalance to her felt sense of inferiority and lack of confidence. She no longer gets mad at herself about these issues. She no longer avoids a whole array of activities and no longer has to rely upon others to decode the world, thus she experiences herself to be a “successful doer.” Viewed through the lens of our developmental perspective (Kegan, 1982), we believe that literacy has enabled Jean to enact the self-sufficiency critical to identity for individuals bound by this Instrumentally toned way of knowing.

For most of these students, this sense of “I can do” carries into their parenting role and undergirds their perceived competence. Their conceptions of providing for, nurturing, and teaching their children link to being *models of action*, “doing for” their children. They focus on helping their children with practical academic aspects of their school work. But the fact that some of these parents may be less fluent English speakers or less able readers than their children creates special challenges to enacting and claiming parental authority and even calls into question their perceptions of themselves as adequate caregivers and providers of their children’s basic needs. We find, as some literacy researchers have suggested (Ullman, 1997; Weinstein-Shr, 1995), that adult ABE/ESOL learners with school-aged children may experience their lack of literacy as a barrier to parental authority that sets in motion an undesired, painful, and self-shaming loss of control and credibility with their children. Once again, listening to Jean’s words, we can appreciate just how some of these adult learners’ lack of skills—the inability to be able to do and act—translates into self-perceptions of being a bad parent and less than effective role model. Here, Jean describes the transformation she feels in her ability to define herself as an able, caring parent. In sharing Jean’s words, we emphasize the action-oriented concrete quality of her language, which we feel she equates with her newly developed sense of competence and the exercise of parental authority. We find this sort of focus throughout the narratives of learners who are growing from an Instrumental way of knowing.

It makes me feel good because I can help my kids read now. Before I used to look at them, **“I can’t do it.”** But now I can try to help and stuff. It makes me feel good about myself to be able to help them. Before I used to feel like I wasn’t a good parent or anything ‘cause I couldn’t help them. . . . Well, it makes it hard, because, from my experience they look at you, you know, **if you can’t do something**, they look, “why should we have to do it if you’re not even going to try it?” **“If she can’t do it, why should I be able to do it?”** You know? And it’s a mixed message of giving them. And I think **it’s better if they see you doing it, they’ll do it**, and it helps them in the long run when they go get a job . . . So, I was like, if they’re going to school, I can go to school and do my part. . . . If I can’t help them, I have to help myself to be able to help me, so I can help them. When I couldn’t help the kids and stuff, I felt bad and I was like, I can go to school and help myself and be able to help them. And now we all sit down together and we do homework at the same time . . . ‘Cause I think helping your kids with their education is good because it shows you care. . . . Well, I want them to be able to make it out in this world, you know? The education they need, you know? **So they can do it on their own, do things on their own.** . . . Well I seen it from my things of being out there, growing up, the most of it you need, a lot of it. Like, if you work in a grocery store, you need to

know your math. Anywhere. A lot of places are with money or computers, and a lot of it is, like, reading, anything is, mail, anything.

Jean's narrative seems emblematic of the way those learners who are growing from Instrumentalism construe the parent-child relationship. There is a simultaneous orientation to the concrete elements of parental care and a sense that she takes her children's perspective into account; she feels good because she is able to help her children. Yet, she casts her understanding of her children's needs and responses to her own lack of reading ability in somewhat concrete language. Being a good role model for her children, something extremely important to Jean, seems related to being a model of activity.

As we have already noted, a recurring concern, particularly for the ESOL students who were growing from Instrumentalism, was to rapidly gain English communication skills so as to better navigate and advocate their way through the medical and educational systems for their children. These parents quickly realize that effective communication skills are critical to being able to independently provide care and oversee their children's education and medical help. Almost all the ABE/ESOL students, regardless of their developmental position, report the need to gain both English fluency and reading and math skills in order to enact their role responsibilities as parents. But what strikes us as interesting is what the parents who are growing away from Instrumentalism seem *not* to say. Unlike their ESOL (and ABE immigrant) class peers who are bound by more Socializing ways of knowing, these learners seem to focus more specifically and consistently (and almost exclusively) on the practical results of English language fluency, the practical aspects of providing care and academic support to their children. In contrast, learners who were bound more by Socializing ways of knowing seemed to be most concerned about the internal psychological-emotional elements that they see as implicated in effective communication with others.

Here, Yvette, a mother of two children and an ESOL student, discusses her pride in becoming more fluent in English. Similar to Jean, she sees English fluency as enabling her to better provide for her children's basic physical and educational needs. English also helps her reclaim her independence and authority as a parent and moral guide for her children.

Yes, **I can talk to people**. . . . If you have a child in the school, it's important to know how she's doing or how he's doing in the class . . . if something happens, you can know. But if you not have conversation with the teachers, you don't know what happened with your child in the class. Sometimes the teacher would like to say something to you about your child but you don't have conversation with them, you don't know anything . . . Now I can know how my children are doing in school. Sometimes I ask the teacher, how are my son or my children doing?

Ya, now **I can ask questions**, if I can't understand, if I want something, if I need something. **I can ask for something**. Example, my daughter, sometime I don't know what [happens]. She come home with the report card but have no grade, and I said, "What happened about your report card? Because you didn't have the grade." But I say maybe, but when I talked to her she didn't [say]. I said maybe I can find out what just happened. **I didn't have too much English, but maybe if I say something [to the teacher]** . . . But when I come, the teacher told me, my daughter sometime didn't pay attention when you say something . . . she not finish the work

the teacher give . . . [I say to her] “they say you didn’t pay attention when he [the teacher] say something.”

Yes, she was not paying attention. . . . I talk to her, nothing changed. But I went to classes, I told the teachers, “I would like you change my daughter’s seat, because if seat is different, she can pay attention. If you move her, she can listen to what you say.”

But for my home, my husband working all night, I’m at home with my children. If something happens or when something happens, if I speak English **I can do it by myself**. Like to call an ambulance . . . If something happens, something, **you can call for other people, you can ask for help**. But if you speak you can make the phone call, maybe an ambulance, tell what happened. . . . **Now I know [English], I can work with my children**. Sometime they brought their homework at home, they ask me for something, but I don’t know. I know in my language, but I don’t know, I can’t ask, I can’t help him [her son] for English. Sometimes she [her daughter] ask me something, but . . . she don’t understand what I say, sometime she try by herself . . . But now when they ask me something, I know, **I understand what they’re asking**. We couldn’t work together. But if you not speak English, you can’t [help with] homework.

I think if I stay home, I didn’t come [to the Even Start program], I can’t do it. Maybe I fail everything, but now when I keep going, I knew exactly what they mean . . . everything my husband know, I take the train with my children, I go to somewhere I have appointment with XX hospital with my kids. My husband don’t have time to bring me **I took the train by myself . . . I proud. . . . now I can say, “Hi, bye,” can have little conversation, but before I can’t.**

In Yvette’s dialogue, we again note the complex relationship between identity, power, and language learning. Pierce (1995) suggests that

when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers . . . they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. (p. 18)

We agree with this interpretation and hear Yvette reorganize and reclaim a positive self-view, shaped by her way of knowing. Using a constructive-developmental framework, we would suggest that Yvette, in gaining English fluency, is reconnecting to a self identified with enacting and meeting her utilitarian plans, purposes, and more concrete needs.

Socializing Ways of Understanding

Becoming Somebody—Being “Seen” by Others and Belonging: Mutuality and Empathy as Forms of Agency

Learners bound by the Socializing way of understanding depicted different aspirations for and challenges to their sense of self, their social identity. In these students' narratives, expressions of self-doubt as well as self-confidence involved the threat to or enhancement of their perceptions of relational and interpersonal connectedness and acceptance. Indeed, for these participants, a sense of reciprocal sharing and understanding appeared linked to their internal sense of "belonging, being seen, and being somebody." These learners' narratives articulate a desire to recapture and reconnect to the way they know themselves and make sense of the world.

While these students described a desire to learn and master the practical aspects of communication and writing skills, they seemed consider this interest part of a bigger intention. For these students, being a competent and effective communicator was a natural bridge and necessary means to reclaiming an identity located in their *perceived* ability to express understanding of another's perspective and have their own wishes, thoughts, and ideas understood by others. This relational tendency to put themselves in the shoes of the other and to communicate this understanding felt beyond their reach and caused much pain, emotional distress, and, we suggest, disequilibrium to their sense of self. Without this mutual and reciprocal mode of speaking and relating, these women felt that they were disconnected from themselves, from the others they cared for most, and from the world in general. On the other hand, successful relations, interactions, and communications facilitated by better English usage served as a primary measure of self-esteem and source of well-being, or, as one participant noted, "They understand, I understand too, that makes me feel happy" (Sarita, an ESOL student).

Anna, a quiet woman from the Caribbean, is an ABE student and the mother of three children. Here, Anna describes the difficulty of being unable to communicate with others. She is distressed by being unable to relate in an emotionally mutual and reciprocal way. Again, this is a notably different sensibility from the way Yvette and other students growing from Instrumentalism describe the communication impasses they encounter.

If you are here and you don't understand anybody, I feel like it's like you're living in another world . . . I think if you're living some place, you **should** understand the language of the country so you can communicate. So you can understand and people can understand because if you don't, sometimes you just . . . sometime people say something, and you just don't understanding. I think it's hard a little bit when you cannot understand somebody else . . . you don't understand somebody . . . what did he say? . . . **I think it's hard for both people. I think somebody doesn't understand you, they feel bad, too . . .** you just feel like, **you feel embarrassed.** Somebody said something . . . you don't understand and the. . . . Sometimes you feel, feel embarrassed . . . Because sometimes people get nervous as they talk to you and you don't understand, sometimes they can get nervous, too.

For individuals bound by the Socializing way of knowing, a "sense of self [is constituted] in the relationship between [their] own point of view and the other's" (Kegan, 1994, p 126). Thus, unable to communicate, Anna feels embarrassed and assumes that the person with whom she is speaking feels similarly upset. Therefore, a lack of English fluency creates a different challenge for these students: English fluency is not *only* necessary to meet their concrete needs, but is inextricably linked to their the enactment of *a particular sense of self*. Their construction of identity is based upon empathy and reciprocity. Anna's and Yvette's differing reactions to being misunderstood are not

rooted in one's lack of self-esteem or less developed interpersonal skill but linked directly to differences in their ways of knowing that shape their perceptions of themselves in relation to others, their social identities. Unable to communicate clearly and empathically, Anna's way of experiencing herself in relation to others (in which her sense of self is defined through the expectations and opinions of others) is compromised. She feels she is not herself and disconnected from the way she relates to her social context. She feels she is "living in another world."

Felicia, an ESOL student from South America, exudes energy, ebullience, and a deep interest in people. Although she received university training in her home country, she is unable to work at her profession in the U.S. Felicia views her interpersonal skills as strong and also has a strong professional identity. She is deeply frustrated because she is unable to realize these aspects of herself that are not merely personality traits or achievements but emblematic of her way of knowing. Here, Felicia talks about the primacy of being able to relate and communicate. She links communication and how she is perceived by others to her definition of who she "really is."

. . . communication, I love that. I love communication with the people. For example, that's my goal now because in my language . . . I speak with the people a lot. So I have a lot of conversation with the people. I love to speak with the people. Many kinds of things. But in English, I can't. So I feel like, too frustrated. And in my language, that's my skill. I have a lot of relations. . . . For example, sometimes about communication, when I stay on the bus some people will start talking with me. You know, they start the conversation. And they're talking and talking and I'm saying "Oh yes, yes." I understand what they say, but I can't continue the conversation. I can't participate. And they're waiting for me. And I'll say, "Oh yes, oh, good." Or something like that. And they say, "Uh-oh." [*Like you have so many ideas, but you can't express it.*] Yes! Yes! So then they probably think I'm dumb or something, or that I'm not interesting because I'm just saying, good, good, good. Mhmm, Yes, Yes! . . . So the communication—I think for me communication is the big, the principal point. **No in this country, everywhere. If you can't get the communication with everybody, you can do nothing. You are nothing.** If you can't talk, you can't do nothing. So that is really important. That's my goal now. I need—I want to learn for complete English for read, write, everything. So, I really can do what I'm really like to do, **what I really am.** (emphasis ours)

For Felicia, English and the ability to communicate enables her to reclaim the sense of self she cannot express because of her poor language skills. English is a key unlocking the expression of her identity, her sense and understanding of her past, real self. Without English fluency, she feels unable to have authentic relationships with others who speak English.

Craig Sorti writes about the forms of psychological distress—or culture shock—a person may feel when they are new to a foreign country. Here, Sorti (1992) poignantly describes the powerful sense of disconnection that may occur when individuals lack linguistic fluency and cannot express themselves and enact their identities.⁷ He writes,

⁷ We are indebted to Deborah Helsing for acquainting us with Sorti's ideas and this powerful statement of self-estrangement.

. . . if we can't communicate our views and explain ourselves, how can anyone know us? (And how, for that matter, can we know us?) And if we can't understand others, how can we know them? Not knowing anyone, not being known by anyone, we feel isolated and profoundly alone. Indeed, we feel isolated from ourself and lonely for that person we know ourself to be but can no longer express. (p.13)

We believe that Sorti's depiction of the pain of not being known captures the internal disequilibrium of such ABE/ESOL learners as Felicia and Anna, who are bound by the Socializing way of knowing. Once again, we assert that these individuals are especially and uniquely distressed by the inability to express themselves, and this poses a critical challenge to their way of knowing. Without the linguistic fluency that lets them establish truly reciprocal relationships, these students experience a threat to their very selfhood.

Some of the students in our study articulate a strong desire to reclaim, develop, or establish a work identity. Those who have had a career feel especially thwarted by their lack of English skills, and several looked to the program as a steppingstone to a work identity. But learners operating at the Socializing way of knowing seem less focused on the instrumental advantages—money, leisure time, or status—a career may afford. For them, establishing a work identity seems tied to reclaiming or developing this sense of self in which a career is more than a job. They see this as a path toward self-development, representing and defining themselves and their values. Here, Felicia describes her hopes for this journey. Much like other students bound by the Socializing way of knowing, she views education as a means to her goals. Yet she also views education and learning as intrinsically rewarding because she “likes to know anything.”

So I went to the university. I choose my profession, and **I love my profession**, and **I know what I like, it's what I'm going to know**. So, I'm studying my profession, very happy in like I put my old interest in, and **I love mathematics**, and I like . . . to study my profession to improve myself. . . . I learn, it was easy for me to learn that [about her profession] because I really want to get my profession, to improve myself, that's way. . . . And, **well, I always, I like to study. I like to learn many things. I'm very curious.**

Oh, I like to learn, for to get more information. **I like to know anything. That's why I like to learn things.** So I get my profession in my country. I'm professional in my country. And when I came here, I wasn't nothing. Why? My English, my kids . . . So I want to go in that.

My wish is continuing to study. Improve in my profession. And I would like to work I really what I want. I've got opportunity to work but not my profession. So, that's not really what I want to do.

Raquelle is an ABE learner who shares a similar view of the value of education. Her deeper motives for learning are linked to developing an abstract professional identity, a vision of herself projected into the future. For Raquelle, learning English is the bridge to becoming somebody—the somebody and self of her dreams.

I can speak better, I can work better. I would like to do something else. I would like to become an occupational therapist . . . because if you can read, you can write. And you know math. So you can do it. If [you] don't know . . . **you can't dream that.**

Anna also worries about who she will become and links the challenge of enacting her aspirations to self-discovery. She is not concerned with the utilitarian gains learning and studying yield. Rather, her educational focus and views of her own identity development are more abstract: She wants to find something she loves.

I'm worried about making my life. Like, sometimes you as a person, you're always saying, "How? How I'm going to make my life?" Like sometimes it's very difficult to make your life. And I think it's for everybody. Am I going to finish my school? Am I going to find what to do? What kind of person I be? . . . You like to finish school, go to college and learn something, and then work. . . . I'm just trying to develop my skills first, before I start to learn something. Then I see what would be the best for me to do. I think to learn something, **sometimes you have to love that thing, because sometimes people learn something, but they don't love it.** They don't like it, you know. I think before somebody start, you should like it first, and then you go on to it.

Whereas Kegan (1994) states that for Instrumental knowers "the future is the present that hasn't happened yet," these women, all operating from the Socializing way of knowing, see their sense of self and identity evolving over time. Being and becoming are vitally important to them. Their learning enables them to envision a future and a sense of reaching into themselves and their dreams.

Success as a student and success as a parent seem inseparable for learners in this developmental position. In this developmental position, a person defines herself through or "made up by" the opinions, expectations, and values of others, and evaluates based on others' assessment of her role performance. For adults who make sense at the Socializing way of knowing, what they should do, should know, or should be to fulfill their responsibilities as a parent or student is specifically defined by important individuals outside themselves and, more generally, by societal or cultural norms. Moreover, the ability to fulfill these others' expectations directly affects how they feel about themselves and evaluate their competence as a person and, in this case, as a parent.

In this context, mastery of communication and written skills takes on new meaning and importance. While non-native speakers in any developmental position want to communicate effectively and better navigate various cultural systems, learners operating from the Socializing way of knowing see acquiring these skills differently. The skills themselves become the commerce for meeting the hopes, wishes, and expectations of important others, such as one's children or spouse. English and communication skills enable these students to enact their values and ideals, what they've come to feel and believe a parent *should do* to be perceived, and to perceive themselves, as a good parent. Meeting these expectations is critical for these parents to feel they are maintaining the bond of trust and connection.

Anna's dialogue about the importance of helping her children reveals the kind of bootstrapping effect between increased literacy skill gained in the Even Start program and sense of agency these learners' experience as parents. This agency is subtly distinct from the more

instrumentally oriented learners' perceptions of agency and competence. It is not solely about helping a child "to do" but about helping a child "to be" and, specifically, to be less helpless. Skill learning is the steppingstone to fulfilling such parenting ideals as the care, protection, and nurturance of a child's emotions and well-being.

My family's important to me . . . I mean my kids, my husband, and my parents. They are all important to me. **I think that I should care about them because they are part of myself.**

My little one, every time he comes home with homework, he always enjoy when I can sit down and have . . . my homework. He's the youngest, and **I have to sit down and help him so he doesn't feel so helpless.** He has somebody to help him. . . and then if you can help them when they're having a problem at school, you can understand them also . . . like, you go to school, too, so you will understand them, how they do all . . . They learn in English and sometimes they come to you and say, "What is this, what is that?" Then I think it's hard for them not to find help at home because you don't understand, so you cannot help them. So if you know, if you learn something, you can help them to do, and **they feel better so to see that you can understand those kids** when they come home and say, "What is this, and I don't know," and **they feel bad, and they feel helpless.** . . . Like, sometimes I feel like he feels happy that I can help him . . . **If I didn't come to the program, I wouldn't be able to do that.**

Anna's increased enjoyment as a parent and an increased sense that she can help her children with their school work appears linked to her learning in the Even Start program. It seems notable that students bound by the Socializing way of knowing construe helping their children with homework or reading as connected to enacting their parenting values and ideals. Helping their children become someone, and attending to their internal psychological well-being, affects these parents' positive self-evaluations. We believe that for these students, the literacy learning they gain in the program promotes and sustains a positive parental identity and/or enables them to reconnect or reclaim their sense of themselves as capable, nurturing parents. Felicia puts it this way,

I like to learn . . . I like to improve myself and for good mother, I try to do anything to be happy my children . . . If I improve myself, I can give more opportunities to my children. Right now I do, if I do anything it's not really for me. More it is for my children. If I learn for completely English I can help my son. I know he asks me many, he will ask me many things because he needs the help . . . And they have a lot of problems because they need help with their school work. And that's why I want to learn. And that's more for my children. Because I don't want to say, "Oh, no, I don't know." **And I would like my children to feel happy with me . . . if somebody asks, what's your mother? And they feel like proud.**

Raquelle connects her own learning to providing her child academic help. She links this directly to giving her son a positive future and strong identity.

For myself, I want to know more English, more vocabulary, more in everything and to give you [her son] what I've been living in my country. I really want to know more so I can raise my son and help him with his homework and with his life, too. That's why I really like this program.

Raquelle shares her understanding of the way her son values and depends upon her developing English skill and general knowledge. Once again, in relaying how her son feels, she exhibits the characteristic way these learners put themselves in the psychological shoes of the their children. Their capacity for empathy and attention to their children's internal well-being guides their notions of providing, nurturing, and teaching. Being able to help their children motivates them to remain in the program and apply themselves to learning. For example, Raquelle stays in the program and learns English to help her son with his homework, but also sees learning English as the means to meet his psychological and intellectual needs.

Mommy, I hope you stay [in the program] . . . don't quit, Mommy. And I say, I will keep going for you. He said because, Mommy, when I have big homework, mommy, daddy cannot help me. If you cannot help me, Mommy, what am I going to do with my homework? You've been such a good help, you've been good Mommy helping me. So if you keep going to school, you will help me more. And I said, "Okay, I will." And I've been coming ever since.

In this quote we see how attuned Raquelle is to her son's bid for help. He seems to be suggesting that, without his mother's support, he will not know how to do his homework. Like Anna, rather than allow her child to feel helpless, Raquelle promises to keep attending her ABE class so she may effectively guide her son's learning. Raquelle does this at great cost to herself. To remain enrolled, she has dramatically changed her work schedule. Raquelle's efforts indicate her commitment to the value of education and her deep desire to support her son's motivation to learn and sense of positive academic achievement.

Sarita, an ESOL student from South Asia, feels similarly motivated and also values education both as a way to help her son meet the demands of school and to support his emotional well-being. When she cannot offer this support, she feels she is not able to care for her son. Her view of herself as a good parent is challenged. Characteristic of individuals who make meaning in this way, Sarita is upset with herself when her son is upset. Thus, her education involves her positive sense of self and feelings of competence to do what she understands *one should* do as a parent: actively step in and support the child's emotional and intellectual growth.

My son, he has homework, I can help him with homework. When I couldn't help him, I felt very upset myself. And when I help him, I understand that things, and I feel like he's happy that I can help him. I'm proud and I happy.

Growing Toward and Reaching Self-Authorship

Becoming Somebody—Doing Something for Myself: Self-direction, Self-expansion, and Realizing One's Potential as Agency

Most of the learners growing toward Self-Authorship share qualities of those who are bound by the Socializing way of knowing. They overlap in the ways they describe their aspirations, concerns, and challenges for themselves and their children. Several of these students report a concern about helping their children with school work, worry about their children's helplessness, and are deeply upset if they cannot help their children. Some mention frustrations stemming from the disparity between their children's English fluency and their own. These adults also orient to their children's emotional and psychological world and feel successful when they connect verbally on this level. Those who are new English speakers consistently describe the difficulties they face in navigating medical, educational, and business worlds that assume and require a high degree of English fluency. Much like their peers growing from the Instrumental ways of knowing, these learners continue to express an interest in and focus on mastering practical communication, writing, and reading skills. For the most part, they view participation in the Even Start program as helping them meet their varied goals. Yet in their interviews, these students tend to speak slightly more from a place of self-directedness. They also linked their concerns for themselves and their children to their attitudes, behaviors, and value differences. They seem to have a greater perspective on ways they may inhibit themselves or, alternatively, do not allow themselves to feel diminished. They also seemed to value education as a path toward actualizing their views of lifelong personal development. Thus, some of these students appear to construe challenges to their social identity as challenges to enacting and/or developing their stalled or unrealized potential. Others, especially those who worked or had careers in the past, seem to describe a struggle to enact their fullest sense of themselves, which they discern is restricted by lack of cultural recognition or legitimation of their intelligence, abilities, or credentials. They believe in their abilities and intelligence regardless of others' assessment.

Linn is an Asian ABE student who trained for and had a professional career in her home country. Now she does not work and stays home to care for her young children. In her interviews, Linn describes the many difficulties she experienced in making the move to the U.S. Linn is moving from a Socializing to a Self-Authoring way of understanding and, characteristically, is struggling with her perception of herself as a mother and an adult professional. This is fueled by issues of acculturation (e.g., social isolation, difficulty navigating systems, lack of professional entree, lack of childcare, cultural expectations that she act as her children's primary caretaker). Linn wants to support her children's development and understands their needs as coming first. Although Linn has determined this, it is difficult to ascertain whether she is following what is expected of her or whether she herself believes this to be a priority. Linn also feels a strong urge to develop her self, reclaim her professional identity, and expand her knowledge of the world and herself. While she seems to feel trapped by her domestic and social situation, she also reflects on the ways she feels in conflict. She perceives that she has not kept up with the knowledge and learning she values. She understands she is unable to motivate herself at home and realizes she needs a supportive context, such as Even Start, to begin to regain her self-esteem and positive attitude. These insights seem to be emergent elements of a Self-Authoring way of knowing in which individuals tend to hold themselves responsible for their actions related to their goals and aspirations.

In Linn's narrative, she reports feeling depression and a loss of self-esteem. We wonder if some of this relates to her lost career identity, which may both define her and express her urge for self-definition and self-development. Lynn reports having chosen a career her family opposed. Perhaps her chosen professional identity is linked to a growing edge of Self-Authorship and self-determination that may feel less available to her because she is her family's primary caretaker, a role she seems to equate with putting her desire to study on hold.

Here, Linn poignantly recounts the inner conflict she experienced in staying home to take care of her children.

During the years I very, **sometimes I was very upset**. Sometimes I want to study more and more. . . . **My desire is I want to study more, but my family situation is not, I have to stay home. So I have very many conflicts with myself.** . . . So, I think it's not time to study or going to outside. I want to stay with the home. Only when they [her children] go to school, I can start studying. **In my experience when I stayed with my children, sometimes it's good, but sometimes it makes me depressed** because I don't have any chance to meet other people. Most of the time, inside of me I want to do something to improve my life. This time I'm very happy with this program. It makes me happy. I want, I think I can do something.

When I being this program the situation in my life, the time I feel very, **I want to something to study and to be other things . . . but in my mind I can't do that cuz I can't English, I have to take care of the children, I'm too old to study other things**. After this program I'm getting good to learn English and then I saw other students. They have a hard life, they study here, and they work, and they have to take care of the children, many children. When I look them I feel I'm not lonely. Many other immigrants they live very hard too, very hard time. So I can do my life positively. . . . When I stay home, I don't have any motivation to learn something. Only for housework. But when I study here I meet the other student and meet good teachers and meeting good people is another learning to me. Not only English.

So, nowadays, my children are growing, so I have to teach English and I have to read English to my children. I think I have to study more because of my children are growing, so I have to teach English and I have to read English to my children. And then, future life I want to be, I want to be something, someone. . . . At this time I only housewife and mother. And after growing my children, I want to study something, and then I want to be someone. But the English is necessary to do something.

I decided I want to study more, and then after I study [in her profession] after that I want to work at my career. The language is more powerful tools to live in U.S.A. If I can't speak English, I think I during the times, I lost my self-esteem. Yeah, I can't do anything, when I go outside, I can't speak English, I didn't do anything. I have more self-confidence now, and also I think I can do something.

Linn's struggle is complex. To some extent, she seems to have internalized the feeling she is not "somebody" because the U.S. system does not afford the immediate opportunity for her to work at her profession. She also seems torn about defining herself primarily as a mother, yet feels compelled to do so. Her dialogue reminds us of Rockhill's (1991, p. 346) research, in which she asserts that women feel "an acute desire for their children to become educated." Rockhill suggests that while women believe supporting their children's and husbands' literacy is critical, they have a hard time claiming

this support for themselves and frequently put their own development and education on hold because of family responsibilities.

We surmise that the obstacles immigrant ABE/ESOL learners face in quickly re-establishing their careers in U.S. culture (which tends not to recognize their credentials and training) may exacerbate the conflict women professionals experience as they emerge from Socializing ways of knowing into a more Self-Authoring stance. These women may already be undergoing developmentally driven internal conflicts about supporting their own or their children's development (still understood in rather either/or terms). We wonder whether obstacles to reclaiming their legitimate professional status might thus be construed as too difficult to overcome, taking too much time away from family obligations. Under such difficult and unwelcoming political circumstances and feeling they must meet others' demands and expectations, these women may "fall back" to the Socializing knowers' tendency to place others needs ahead of their own.

A context such as Even Start may be especially helpful to immigrant learners in these circumstances. Listening to Linn, we get the sense that the Even Start program has bolstered her confidence and facilitated her reconnection to her identity as a lifelong learner. Like many students moving into Self-Authorship, she sees learning as a venue for self-development and self-discovery. Here she reflects on her drive for continued self-enhancement she yokes, in part, to keeping pace with evolving knowledge.

After move to U.S.A., I didn't have much time to read the magazine . . . I want to know about the other world. About the social changing the society, and then the knowledge is changing and then develops, so I stopped to, before I move here, I think I stopped my knowledge about the society. But this class I enjoy the many kind of topics. Sometimes we read about science, sometimes we read about history.

Almost all of the learners who are moving toward or reaching Self-Authorship report this interest in and concern about gaining or deepening their knowledge. For these learners, cultural and general knowledge is linked to their desire for self-expansion and is the means to gain their competence in "reading the world" (Friere & Macedo, 1987), or decoding, interpreting, analyzing, and eventually critiquing their psychosocial surround for themselves and their children.

Dalia is an ABE student from the Caribbean and mother of several children, one of whom attends the Even Start preschool. Like other more Self-Authoring students, Dalia articulates an impulse toward self-definition and self-direction.

I wanted to always keep my mind fresh and organized and learning new things. I never felt like I knew as much as I wanted to . . . Getting a college education to me would be like a way to have a door open for me . . . with a college degree . . . **nobody is going to tell me . . . you are not qualified.**

School, I think basically what it says to me . . . **I'm doing something for myself . . .** I think I'm more proud of myself. I feel like I'm accomplishing something for myself.

Dalia's concerns for her self-development seem reflective of Self-Authoring learners' orientation to "deepen one's understanding of [one]self, and world . . . and [to] develop an increasing capacity to manage [one's] own destiny" (Weathersby, 1976, p. 88). Dalia clearly sees returning to school as "doing something for herself" to enhance her self-esteem. Moreover, she seems to be saying she sets the terms for how much or how little she needs to know. Dalia appears to suggest that she's aware that education is perceived as a kind of cultural legitimization of and key to expertise, but she also believes in her own intelligence. With an education, she can gain access, knowledge, and mastery for herself and protect herself from others' attempts to limit her options. For Dalia, education ensures that she can maximize and enact her own strengths and self-assessed abilities. This drive for self-direction and self-promotion is indicative of Self-Authoring learners' capacity and tendency to evaluate themselves through their own standards and to set the terms of their own learning. Literacy learning lets Dalia expand and elaborate her identity as a competent adult.

Hamid, another ABE student, describes a similar understanding of education as an essential step to achieving his goals and reconnecting to his self-defined professional capacities. Hamid's job in the United States is only tangentially related to his work in his Sub-Saharan home country, where he was involved in a health-related profession and reports having considerable experience and responsibilities. He is unable to work at the same professional level in the U.S. He aspires to reclaim his work identity and do the work he loved. Hamid describes his capacities and the challenge he sees in recapturing his work identity.

The education very important, and you know, how to earn a better life. . . . If you don't have education [in the U.S.] really too hard done, even if you smart. [*Even if you're smart it's hard to do things?*] Yes. The people believe only also what paper he had. . . . when you have work, I, for example, myself, I was doing back home [mentions his profession]. . . . Yes, when I left my home. I was doing many things there [mentions his varied areas of responsibility] . . . I saw it in America, if you don't have paper, they think you know nothing.

Being seen as somebody or being seen to know nothing cuts across many learners' interviews. But Hamid's awareness of the way he is evaluated is most similar to Dalia's insight. Unlike Felicia, Hamid does not seem to feel or believe he *is* nothing without the required credentials or English fluency. Rather, like Dalia, Hamid identifies a need to acquire specific credentials to attain a certain professional clout and status. These credentials "open the door," as Dalia asserts, but they do not determine his abilities and capacities. Hamid defines and evaluates his own skills according to his own standards. He merely understands the need of having certain credentials in the U.S. to regain the work he finds meaningful.

For adults who have reached or are growing toward Self-Authorship, learning for its own sake is rewarding. Like Linn, Dalia seems fueled and energized by new ideas, "keep[ing] [her] mind fresh." Unlike Socializing learners, who also may enjoy learning, Dalia seems to appreciate both the *content* and the *process* of learning and discussing as means for self-discovery. She describes classroom learning as an opportunity not only to gain knowledge but to discover herself, her feelings, and her ideas.

. . . being active doing things, communicat[ing] with other people, talking about whatever we read, who agrees, who disagrees . . . our feelings about it . . . so to develop ourselves more.

She seems to bring the personal enrichment she gains through learning into her social relations. . . . go places, and I meet people, and I have something to talk about . . . I just learned something, and I take it in and then I can share it with others. I like that very much.

One gets the feeling from these interview excerpts that Dalia appreciates the chance to develop ideas and then debate them with others, to compare how others think about things, to compare perspectives. This is different from the concerns of Socializing learners, such as Anna. To belong and to feel connected and accepted, and to reduce awkwardness with others, Anna wants to learn English and to empathize with others' experiences. In contrast, Dalia seems to view learning and interacting as a chance to develop her own ideas for their own sake, to develop herself in relation (and sometimes in opposition) to others. She relates these capacities to strengthening her sense of self and her social identity. For these Self-Authored learners, exposure to new ideas and new realms of learning seems to ignite self-direction and self-discovery.

Dalia reflects on her self-perceived changes, changes she attributes to being at the Even Start program. Here, Dalia comments on the ways she has integrated what she has seen and participated in during the "parent and child time."

I felt more constructive, more energetic, more productive . . . I did more than just like before . . . when I went to school, then I started doing arts and crafts and coloring and painting and patterns and shapes . . . I got into plants, I got into gardening, I got into a lot of other stuff instead of just certain basics. I was getting involved with an area that I was creating things, that was active, and doing different things all the time.

Dalia's appreciation for the process of learning as discussing, debating, creating, and experimenting, and her explicit understanding of the transfer of knowledge to her social encounters, reflect a vision shared by several of these Self-Authored students of education as deepening one's interests and self-knowledge and as ongoing and lifelong. Another ABE student—Ho, who is from South Asia—echoes a similar understanding of education when he says, "I always thought learning would never end." Self-Authored individuals construe "being somebody" (enacting their personal agency and identity) as linked to actualizing their self-named potential.

Several of the Self-Authored learners noted that they particularly prized learning about the ways various cultures and governing institutions operate. These more Self-Authored learners' concerns and hopes as parents appeared to emanate from their questions and perspectives about the difficulties of actively constructing and reconstructing their own and their children's identities in a new culture. They seem to appreciate learning how U.S. institutions, cultural values, and norms "work." They appear to view cultural literacy and cultural knowledge as particularly important to enacting their self-assigned parental responsibility as cultural translators. One mother, Ahara, an ESOL student from the sub-Saharan, reports the challenges she faces as a parent.

I don't know American system. I have for another culture, but when I looking for this . . . they born in this country, my children, they learn the same American people. **I responsible for my children. I'm thinking about my children. How my children grow up. I look in. I find out both things, both cultures.**

My children, they ask to me too many questions. I didn't know that about American history. I don't grow up this country and when I started the book, when they asked me and I couldn't explain or translate. Still I need to learn English. . . . **Now the difficult time with my daughter. I teach her about when I was child. But she wanted about this country.** I help her, she say, "Mommy, no, I tell you this, just pay attention to what you teaching [about this country]." . . . But still now when I come because different culture, you have to learn [about this culture] when you live this country. Just I pay attention how it working. . . . Just now I need to learn about this country. Yes, I live here, and when I went outside, I see different culture because this is a big country. The people, they came from different country. They have different culture. They have different language. But when you meet them, they learn from me, I learn from them.

They're helping me a lot. **Very important adult talking how discuss issues children, how to learn how the system in America is different.** Because I have different culture . . . In other class they learn many things about another people, for different country, different opinions.

As we will explore in the next section, several of these students raised concerns about the challenge of living in a bicultural system and saw acquiring cultural knowledge as key to guiding their children. That these learners seem able to step back, assess, and evaluate differences and values across their home and U.S. culture seems indicative of the move toward Self-Authorship. These students seem less focused on "belonging," or fitting in, or blending with the U.S. culture. Rather, they wish to decode cultural norms and practices and adopt what they choose and discern as important.

Linn is concerned about maintaining her home-country cultural values for her children. Yet she believes that her children need to learn and integrate both cultures as part of their identity, so they can "success for . . . life."

[And you said you teach your children about your culture?] This is very difficult question. Yeah, sometimes I worry about that situation. I so, so many Asian children have, like that kind of problem. They lost their identity in the U.S.A., so they have many problems in this country. But me and my husband believe if they have a strong identity, I'm an Asian and I'm and American-Asian, I'm American. If they have a strong identity, they can [have] American culture and Asian culture. . . . But if they don't have much [of both cultures] . . . they don't know who they are, they not Asian, they not American. . . . So because of that, me and my husband also want to teach our culture and our language. But in that situation, he [her son] can success for his life.

In summary, the ABE and ESOL adult learners we interviewed at the Even Start program described a variety of challenges to enacting their aspirations, goals, and visions for themselves and their children. Many recounted problems in fulfilling their parenting role responsibilities. To be sure, many of these perceived concerns and challenges linked to difficulties of acculturation, such as lack of access to preferred work, disparities between their children's and their own English language abilities, and problems navigating through culturally insensitive medical, educational, and business institutions requiring English language fluency. For a few ABE students who had been poorly served by the U.S. elementary and secondary educational systems, regaining self-confidence as learners and mastering basic literacy skills were important. We believe that these multiple challenges and concerns threatened students' self-perceptions and their sense of the "somebody" they longed to be or sought to reclaim. Furthermore, we assert that these threats challenged the way these learners made sense of their lives and conceived of their roles as parents and agency as adults.

Although almost all of the students faced similar economic and sociopolitical challenges, we observed that these ABE and ESOL learners interpreted these challenges somewhat differently. Consistent with the developmental literature, their differing construals and resolutions of challenges to their social identities depended on their developmental position or way of knowing. Despite their diverse backgrounds, individuals who shared a particular way of knowing saw the challenges similarly and articulated many common concerns. Thus, these challenges or threats to their constructions of their identity and agency are best understood as a developmentally defined trajectory of constructed challenges to what they can do, to the ways they may belong and are accepted or understood by others, or maximizing and enacting their self-chosen values and/or ideology.

These students also experienced threats to their identity as parents. Once again, these challenges were interpreted and constructed differently. For example, all of the learners described a desire to take care of their children and help them learn. They all expressed concern about obstacles to acting as their children's caretaker and provider. However, the focus and meaning of taking care and helping (as well as the construal of obstacles) varied, depending on the learners' developmental position. Parents growing from an Instrumental way of knowing stressed taking care of their children's practical, physical, and concrete learning needs. They felt a sense of shame and lack of authority in not being able to "do for" or present a positive *model of action* for their children. Parents operating from the Socializing way of knowing exhibited an interest in meeting their children's practical, physical, and learning needs but also emphasized supporting and developing their children's psychological and emotional well-being. When they were unable to communicate their attunement to and understanding of their children's emotional needs, these parents felt guilty and believed they had breached a bond of trust with their children, leaving them disappointed and helpless. In contrast, a majority of parents growing toward or reaching Self-Authorship not only considered all of this important but also were concerned about their children's biculturalism and sought to actively guide and fashion their children's identity. They saw their lack of knowledge and understanding of U.S. culture, institutions, and governance as a threat to their parenting competence. They considered this knowledge necessary to fulfill their self-defined parental responsibility to help establish their children's bicultural identity.

Thus, we note a layering of concerns informed by an individual's developmental position. Further, we surmise that differences in concerns are linked to differing motivations to learn and, as we will describe later, differing instructional preferences and supports deemed helpful to becoming the "somebody they wished to be." We turn now to exploring aspects of the Even Start curriculum that posed another developmental or cultural challenge for some.

III. PARENTING: VIEWS OF TEACHING AND GUIDING AND ACCULTURATION: FOLLOWING THE RULES, “FITTING IN” AND “READING THE WORLD”

We begin this section with a premise increasingly shared by developmentally minded educators (Kegan, 1994; Lasker, 1975; Tinberg & Weisberger, 1998; Weathersby, 1976). We suggest that not only are students' expectations and interpretations of challenges and role responsibilities influenced and shaped by their developmental position, but that institutions, teachers, educational programs, and curricula commonly operate out of particular developmentally linked internal logics (Lasker, 1975; Kegan, 1994; Weathersby, 1976). We believe teachers (who bring their own way of knowing to work with them), program curricula, and specific learning tasks make what are often implicit (though sometimes explicit), developmental demands upon the learners. That is, we posit that certain curricula or learning tasks require a threshold or benchmark level of development and that learners must be operating at a particular developmental position affording specific developmental capacities to succeed in a task or learn the curriculum material.

We find that the Even Start program is no exception—particularly in the parenting education curriculum, one of the elements the learners regarded most highly. This curriculum material is delivered contextually to ESOL and ABE students and integrated within classroom learning. It is seeded through the preschool program, a critical piece of parent discussions, and transmitted through the program's parent-and-child time components. In particular, the program's view of discipline and its developmental orientation to children's learning and growth seem especially well suited to and readily grasped by individuals bound by the Socializing way of knowing. We determine this by extrapolating and applying key ideas of constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kohlberg, 1969) and linking these to developmental perspectives on parenting and parental awareness (Newberger, 1980; Lickona, 1985).

Across the various components of the program, parents are encouraged to put themselves in the shoes of their children to understand the children; identify, interpret, and evaluate their children's motivations for their behavior and bring a developmental view to this understanding; anticipate their children's emotional responses to their reactions to their children's behavior; key into their children's internal emotional well-being, self-image, and the creation of trust, understanding, and respect in the parent-child relationship; set consistent limits; and observe, reflect on, and write about their behavior, successes, and difficulties enacting positive parenting practices. The preschool program staff and parenting education components present and demonstrate learning activities, adult and child behaviors, and adult expectations for children considered developmentally appropriate and well-matched to children's capacities.⁸ Thus, we might describe the overall program (for parents and children) as oriented to a developmentally informed view of the nature of the child. This view seems shaped by Western perspectives on child rearing and represents a particular set of values.

When we analyze the program's values and perspective on child growth, learning, and guiding, we find these elements are predicated upon a third person perspective-taking that is emblematic of individuals bound by a Socializing way of knowing. The capacity to put oneself in the

⁸ We base our description of the program expectations upon discussions with the Even Start teachers, review of some materials specifically targeted to teaching discipline, and the reports of the learners who described their perspectives on the program's approach to discipline, teaching, and positive parent-child interactions.

shoes of others is a hallmark of Socializing knowers and a cornerstone of being able to empathize with a child's psychological motivations (Newberger, 1980). The capacities for abstract thought and the ability to think about one's thinking undergirds an adult's ability to be internally psychologically self-observant and reflexive about one's parenting behaviors and to consider such notions as a child's self-image (Kegan, 1994). Furthermore, the entire developmental approach may be understood (and internalized) as a generalized compendium of socially sanctioned values concerning how one *should* conceive of child growth, development, learning, and teaching (Newberger, 1980).

An approach toward parenting education founded on a set of internalizable values and ideals is extremely compatible with Socializing knowers' tendency to take the social role norms and values of the psychosocial surround as their own. Yet not all of the learners we interviewed were operating solely from the Socializing position and poised to internalize these values. In particular, a few learners closer to the Instrumental side of the developmental continuum (those beginning the move into the Socializing way of knowing) seemed to relate differently to the program's perspective on discipline and did not "smoothly" internalize or unquestioningly adopt its values in this arena.

Developmental psychologists like to think that invitations to developmental growth depend on the interaction of one's experience and meaning frame. They believe developmental growth occurs when there are moderate discrepancies or disconfirmation between one's way of knowing (or interpretive framework) and experience (or in this case, the information, insights, and values of the program) (Kohlberg, 1981, Piaget, 1952). Yet, as we described earlier, such growth (or transformation of one's way of knowing) is frequently "resisted;" it is common for individuals to lean toward "the conservative impulse" (Marris, 1974, p. 8)—to internalize or make use of new information on behalf of one's current way of knowing (Kegan, 1994, p. 97). This may be at work in the ways individuals more bound by Instrumentalism differently relate to and take in the program teachings on discipline.

Let us recall Trudie and Yvette, two learners in the Even Start program who are devoted mothers seeking what's best for their children and actively guiding their children's behavior. These women, both from the Caribbean, are growing from Instrumentalism into a more Socializing way of knowing. We interviewed each of them three times over the span of nine months. When we initially met and spoke with them, they were both operating from the same developmental position.⁹ Yet Trudie's and Yvette's responses to the discipline curriculum at Even Start seem somewhat different. Here, Yvette comments on the ways she is changing her discipline approach.

[*So, do you think that as a parent, do you think that you've changed?*] Changed as a parent? . . . Yes. For some things, I changed because some things, some things I am impatient. . . . Yes, I am impatient. Sometime my son makes me crazy, you know? Sometimes it makes me crazy. And sometimes when I sometimes in the class [they] say if you calm down, if kids like to make trouble, calm down. If there is something and you don't like it talk to him. Talk to him and after when you calm down talk to him something you don't like, "don't do it anymore." You come to talk to that child. . . . Yes, but it's hard for me. . . . I prayed to God he will change because he's

⁹ As mentioned elsewhere, we interviewed all of the Even Start students who participated in our study during three separate three-day sessions over a nine-month period. These sessions were conducted at the beginning of the study, during the middle of the data collection year, and at the end of the nine-month data collection period.

too young. . . . Yes, I talk to him. Sometimes he says, “Mommy, I can do it.” I say, [“do what I] tell you.”. . . He forgot, and he says sometimes he forgot. When I ask him, I told you, “Don’t do that.”. . . but he like to run and run and run. . . . Yes, I’m changing, I pray to God. Sometimes I think I am patient, I try to be patient. . . . [*But is it helpful to talk to people here about when you feel impatient, need to calm down, need to talk to him?*] Yes. Sometimes you like to get another idea, you know? You have your idea but another person has an idea and can help you. . . . Yes it’s a good idea, it can help you change. . . . If you have a good idea, but maybe I can make the conversation with you, I can tell you my situation, you know? How I feel, why I am impatient. Maybe you can give me a good idea. Maybe that way you can tell me, maybe you can make it better.

In this interview excerpt, Yvette describes both her wish and her struggle to become more patient with her son. Listening to Yvette’s words, we hear her striving to parent differently, to be more patient, to talk to her son, to calm down and not become so angry, to employ talking rather than hitting as a discipline approach. In this excerpt, Yvette seems inclined to incorporate the Even Start norms and values of discipline, limit-setting, and punishment. This approach, as we suggested, entails trying to listen to the child’s perspective to understand his mind and motives; it is a child-focused view of development and behavior. We think it is safe to say that Yvette is reaching for these values, attempting to make them her own. We hear her struggle. From a developmental standpoint, we understand part of her struggle as related to her developmental position. Yvette takes in these child-focused values and ideals in a somewhat rule-bound, concrete, “how-to” way and she is quite successful in doing this. Yvette is tracking her own behaviors differently now. For example, she states that her son makes her crazy, and she knows she needs to calm down and talk to him about his misbehavior. The Even Start program seems to have helped her develop this strategy. She also seeks advice from friends and peers when she feels stuck. She now expresses her own feelings, explains why she is impatient, and enlists others to give her “a good idea . . . and make it better” to help her resolve her situation. With this more “how-to approach” and peer scaffolding through advice, she is better able to regulate her actions and reactions to her son. However, she seems reliant on external rule-based, and concrete supports to both maintain new behaviors and change old ones. She has not yet completely internalized these new values. Or perhaps these interviews do not provide the evidence to contest this claim.

As developmental psychologists, we are not surprised by Yvette’s orientation. As she is transitioning into the Socializing way of knowing, she is simultaneously bound to a more concrete interpretation of information *and* wants to internalize the values of the social surround. Yvette demonstrates one developmental response to new information: utilizing and incorporating new parenting strategies that get the results that meet her need and desire for her child’s good behavior. This is the more Instrumental side of the process Yvette is undergoing. Yet she also employs these strategies in a way that helps her check her child’s motives and stay aligned with the approval of the peers and classmates who promote this child-focused view of discipline. This is a sort of Instrumental approach to beginning to internalize another’s (her son’s, her classmates,’ and her teachers’) perspective as implicitly mattering to the self.

As we have suggested, we surmise that the Even Start parenting curriculum targets and rewards a parenting approach premised on mutuality, empathy, and parents’ ability to take in and internalize their child’s perspective as a guide for their own behaviors and beliefs. Thus we might say

the parenting curriculum “pushes on” the more Socializing aspects of the transition between Instrumentalism and a more Socializing way of knowing. Kegan (1994) has written about the Socializing mind’s unique and defining capacities for internalization, which distinguish this way of knowing’s logic from both the Instrumentalist and Self-Authoring perspectives. He writes,

The [Socializing] consciousness amounts to the psychological threshold for what sociologists call “socialization”: we become truly a part of society . . . when society has become truly a part of us. Our capacity to internalize, and identify with, the values and beliefs of our social “surround”—as these may be communicated by family, peer group, state, religion, ethnic class, geographic region, or social position—makes us inductable into the commonweal. (p.76)

Yvette seems on her way to being inducted into U.S. child-rearing practices. Yet, listening to Trudie’s understanding of parenting, we hear a slightly different response and impulse concerning the incorporation of a more U.S. culture–focused view of discipline. If, as we suggest, the Even Start curriculum invites, expects, and rewards a Socializing mind’s orientation to parenting, how is it that Trudie, who shares Yvette’s developmental position, does not seem to strive to become the same sort of inductee? Before moving on to this question and a possible way to think about the differences in their responses, we present and interpret Trudie’s view of discipline.

My children is important to me because I brought them in the world . . . so I’m going to care for them . . . They’re my blood, they’re my heart . . . they are very important for me. . . . What I mean care? I mean care for giving care, all kind of care, feed them, be there for them, talk to them, and try to understand them to make them happy. . . . [have] a chance to talk with them . . . [about] lot of things, when I was a child. How I grown up. Ya, because you different culture. I’m from Caribbean, I’m their mother, they gonna realize this is a different culture, I tell them how to listen in school, how to behave, how not to be. I’m raising them different . . . They don’t pay very much attention. Sometimes I don’t feel happy, but what can I do? [*So do you think that they’ll be ok if they only know American culture?*] Not bad, but I would like them to learn this, tell them about my country . . . Back home kids learn [behavior] and back home even they are not your family, but if you’re in the street, you cannot swear. If you swear they gonna see that, they will punish you and when they punish you, your parents will be happy . . . you cannot punish them here, here . . . you cannot discipline your kids physically. Everybody here is the same. [*So here it sounds like you can’t punish your kids physically, but at your home country you could, and not only could, but it’s expected. . . . If you took your home country way of doing things and said, “Well, they may not do it here in America, but I’m from a different culture and that’s what I do?”*] But they would call that child abuse. [*Is one way better than the other?*] Even some time you are to talk to the child, if you tell them and they won’t listen, you have to punish them . . . they did not listen. . . . [*So you just have to do what people do around you?*] Mhmm . . . [*So here you don’t do it so much because you’re worried about what other people would think?*] They report to the teacher. [*They’d report you?*]

[*So you were talking about the different ways you were taking care of your kids, and you said, feeding them, being there for them, listening to them, trying to understand them. Can you say a little more about why that’s important?*] Because you are the parent, first one to contact, it’s you. . . . Because my mother used to do the same

thing, so I'm filling that . . . I'm the mother, and this is the way my mother raised me . . . when they talk to me about something, you have to understand the situation, what they need. How they feel. Is important to know the person, they can talk to you . . . It's better than don't talk to you, and let them go out and talk to their friends. . . . I'm angry with my son, not every day sometimes . . . my son, when I tell him to do something he doesn't do it. When I tell him not to go out with his friends, he listen to me, but when I'm not there, . . . he does things that make me angry, sometimes. . . . [*He disobeyed you. Does it matter why he went out?*] Doesn't matter why, because you have to listen to your mother. She say not go out, you don't go out . . . I always tell him, "you wait til I come in and you tell me why you want to go out." . . . children have to obey their parents and you have a good life, you will be blessing and live long. . . . He won't be a good person, what you gonna, learn your kids for future, if you always [dis]obey your mother, things goes once coming back.

Listening to Trudie's words, it's clear that she dearly loves her children. They are important to her. They are her blood, her heart, part of her. Like Yvette, her understanding of care entails both instrumental concrete ideas and more abstract notions. Trudie articulates this range, describing care as feeding her children, talking to them, trying to understand them to be able to make them happy. She also believes it's important to have her children talk to her and, when they do, that she tries to understand the situation. These seem to be steps toward or possible demonstrations of her desire to take her children's perspective and understand their motives; these are the elements of her orientation to care that reflect a more Socializing way of knowing. Yet, here, too, the practical aspects co-exist. Trudie wants her children to talk to her so they don't "go out and talk to their friends." Having her children feel able to talk to her relates to their emotional well-being but also has a practical value and result: They don't ask others for advice, maintaining her authority. In another interview, Trudie articulates a similar vision of caring for her children, again incorporating both the concrete and more abstract meanings of "being there" for her kids. Here, she delineates the ways she orients to her children's needs, emotions, and behaviors.

I'm always there for my kids . . . Meaning time, I'm making time to talk to them, joke with them, and to tell them what's good, what's wrong, what's bad to do. So certain things is not appropriate to do outside, inside, or in school. Talk to them . . . their mind so they can tell me if they're not happy with something that's in the house or in school."

In Trudie's words we hear a dedication to listening to and nurturing her children. In keeping with her developmental position, Trudie focuses on the practical definitions of "being there" for her children (making time, joking, advice-giving) *and* includes some slightly more internally oriented approaches to taking her child's view into consideration.

Like Yvette, Trudie struggles to have her children listen to her and conform to the behaviors she wants. Trudie seems to have a different view of discipline than Yvette. Trudie adheres to what she articulates as the American way of discipline and does not physically punish her children. However, although she does not enact the disciplinary approach of her home country, which sanctions physical intervention, she *does* believe in it. Trudie appears to feel comfortable holding these two distinct views of guiding. It is almost as if she keeps both cultures' orientations on separate bands of experience, or perhaps they are somewhat compartmentalized and rule-bound. When in the U.S., she

follows its method; in her home country, she might use its approach. Unlike Yvette, Trudie does not seem to strive to be inducted into what she perceives as the U.S. child-rearing approach as much as she seems to want to avoid any difficulties by following the rules. The Instrumental aspect of Trudie's way of knowing may enable or facilitate this sort of compartmentalization to keep norms or values more rule-bound and context specific. Only when a person's consciousness is under the full sway of the Socializing way of knowing are ideals or values internalized in a more abstract *and* generalized way.

We still need to account for the fact that, while both women are operating from the same developmental position and are growing from Instrumentalism, one leans toward internalizing the Even Start teachings on discipline and one seems to identify more with her home culture's practices. This is especially interesting, given some critical literacy theorists' critiques of family literacy curricula.

Critical literacy theorists (Auerbach, 1997; Street, 1997; Taylor, 1997) maintain that some family literacy programs homogenize learners' cultural beliefs and literacy and parenting practices. They assert that in the process of acculturating into U.S. life and through their educational experiences, ESOL learners frequently strive to "fit in." In so doing, these individuals lose connection to and appreciation for their own culture. Street (1997) goes further in suggesting that some learners are unaware of abandoning their culture and do not understand and value their cultural background. These theorists particularly criticize the teaching of Western normative values and emphasize the use of basic school practices in the home setting as a way to foster literacy development for adults and children.

In our study, not all learners blindly take in the programs' values or teachings. For the most part, an individual's developmental position predicts these differences. However, in our study, we also find that many learners *do* strive to internalize the Even Start teachings and enthusiastically adopt its parenting and educational practices. Yvette, as we've noted, struggles to take in and use the developmental child-focused values of the program. Yet, to say these learners internalize the program's values and thereby discount or homogenize their own cultural heritage seems to overlook another important influence the learners described. Listening closely to the narratives of the students, we find their personal history and cultural experience with discipline and learning and perceived understanding of their home culture's stance on children's development implicates and importantly guides how they relate to, take in, and use the information to which they are exposed. Family literacy researcher Vivian Gadsden (1996) makes a similar observation. She writes about the influence of families' beliefs and cultural practices upon an individual's perspective.

Family cultures . . . provide the individual family member with a way of constructing their futures **within or oppositional** to the life-course trajectory of the family. [These family cultures include], approaches to literacy, relationships among parents, children and other family members and expectations within the family.¹⁰
(p. 2, emphasis ours)

¹⁰ Gadsden (1996, p. 2) defines family cultures as entailing "collections of beliefs, practices, and approaches" to literacy and interpersonal relations to which "family members contribute from which they extract" ideas, ideals, which are also modified over the "life-course of the family."

We next explore the ways that these learners' personal experiences, in combination with their developmental positions, incline them to respond to the program's teachings. We highlight the ways these learners may adopt and internalize wholly new views of parenting; consolidate or elaborate their own compatible perspectives; or assess, critique, and integrate different curricular elements they like.

Perspectives on Teaching and Guiding

Growing from Instrumental Ways of Knowing

Following the rules of the cultural context

To aid this exploration of the intersection of developmental position, personal experience, and the internalization of ideas, ideals, and perspectives on ideology, we return to Yvette's struggle to develop patience and avoid hitting her children, and her orientation to their emotional happiness. To understand the possible differences underlying Yvette's friendliness or disposition to take in more Western values of child rearing when Trudie seems not to have such an impulse, we look at Yvette's account of her own childhood experiences of discipline and learning, and her views/recollections of parental support.

Where I come from they have . . . **it's different discipline. But over here you know it's very hard to discipline your child.** . . . Sometimes in my country you have to hurt the child for something they do. **But I think that not good idea to hurt** [for] something. If your child makes something wrong, you can sit down with them, to explain, you can explain how you can make that, you know, you can teach them. "It's not good to do some, to do this," you know, you can talk and not hurt them in anything. . . . If they do something wrong then you talk, you talk, but if you do it again you can make the rule for that time. You make very serious the rule, "if you do it that time, I can hurt you, but I don't want that thing." You explain, you don't like that, you know, you make her understand that you don't like it. "If you do it again, for three times, maybe I can punish you, you know, that way, I can, if you do it again because I do it two times, I told you." I don't want to . . . **I mean if you talk you have a good relationship with your kid and then it can work.** But if you have not good relationship and something that happened and you hurt something, that wouldn't work. . . . [*Uh huh. So is it ever hard . . . to do this discipline with your child, I'm wondering.*] Yes, it's very hard, but something, when something happened, I . . . but I calm down. I don't let my child see that. . . . I'm upset, I calm down. After I talking about it. "I don't want you doing, I don't like being upset, but I don't like this mess you make. I really don't want this happen again. Because I don't want, to hurt you, I try to help you."

[*So what happens when you have so many ideas about what to do with your children . . . how do you decide which one you're going to use?*] If I have to make a rule for something . . . I talk to my husband, after, we talk together, with the kids. You can have different idea. If I have one, you have another one, maybe another one who help . . . the good one you have, you can take one . . . the rule I can make after you know each other what you can do. . . . But if you think about what ways is good . . .

You see what is happening, you can get your ideas what has happened, you can get his idea, his idea can work better. . . . But you do have to be very strong to your child. But you have to, you know, **if you are very strong, strong, maybe the child scared for something someday he has to tell you. . . .** [*So it makes your child more comfortable if you're not so strong when . . . ?*] Yeah! Not so strong, more comfortable. . . . **Like in my culture, my mother, everything, I like to talk to my mother. But not my father. Everyday strong, everyday, you can say, maybe he can hurt you for something. But my mother, I can explain, I can tell you, maybe you can do that, but [not] my father . . . you scared to tell [him] something. . . .** [*And you don't want your children to be scared to tell you something*] No! "If you have something, you can tell me. Not go to your friend. You know, you tell me everything." . . . You have to know everything, **a good relationship, if something happen, [your child will be] relaxed and comfortable to tell you.**

Closely reading Yvette's depiction of her relationship with her parents, we find a possible reason why she may be disposed to adopt and use the Even Start approach to disciplining children. Her personal experience of being frightened to talk with her own father, fearful of being physically punished may direct her away from this mode of guiding. That she felt comfortable telling her own mother everything seems particularly important to Yvette, and she equates it with having a good parent-child relationship. Yvette seems to want to ensure this sort of good relationship with her own children. In fact, Yvette emphasizes it's important to have a good relationship with her children so they, too, will feel "relaxed and comfortable" about telling her everything.

Interpreting Yvette's story through a developmental perspective, we might say her move toward the Socializing way of knowing readies her to internalize the norms and values of the psychosocial surround. However, Yvette may be particularly inclined to adopt the Even Start parenting norms because these are more syntonc with the lessons she draws from her personal history, i.e., it's important to have a good, communicative parenting relationship lacking fear. The Even Start discipline approach may promote parenting strategies Yvette prefers and sees as useful in helping her son feel comfortable talking with her, the way she felt comfortable talking with her mother. Thus by eventually internalizing the Even Start view of discipline, Yvette would be able to simultaneously reject her father's approach and maintain her alignment with and develop her mother's teachings and values. Identifying with her children's fearful response to harsh punishment and needing to discipline differently than her father may actually amplify her readiness and inclination to make a developmental and philosophical transition. This is an example of the powerful intersection of developmental position and personal experience. Moreover, we believe the "discipline curriculum" of Even Start challenges Yvette to move toward this transition. We note that the supportive parent discussion group structure scaffolds her and further motivates her to try these parenting strategies that may receive social approval.

It is interesting to remember that Trudie, too, describes the salience of her mother's teachings. She's raising her children as she was raised. Yet her personal experience seems to incline her to maintain a preference for her own culture's norms and approach to discipline. While we surmise that the differences in the two women's stances have much to do with the interplay of developmental position, cultural norm, and family and personal experience, we are also aware that Trudie is in a different classroom much of the time and entertain the possibility that there may be a

slightly different focus or weight placed on discussing and using specific discipline ideals in each class.

The Socializing Way of Knowing

“Fitting In”—Responses to the norms and values of the cultural and classroom context

As we have previously asserted, in contrast to the learners who are growing away from Instrumentalism, those students bound by the Socializing way of knowing share a developmentally driven tendency to be “inducted into the commonweal” (Kegan, 1994, p. 76). Most of the learners operating from this way of knowing speak enthusiastically about the teachings of the Even Start program’s parenting education component and understand them as helping to strengthen their parenting. Many report changes in the ways they approach discipline and teach their children.

Once again, we suggest these changes are not about abandoning their own cultural practices or family beliefs. In many cases, these changes served to develop and consolidate the learners’ emergent values or augment and elaborate their family of origin’s views. In a few cases, the Even Start teachings seem to validate and consolidate personally held values that opposed the beliefs of their families or home country. In only one case did a student completely substitute the Even Start perspective on discipline and teaching for her home country’s parenting values and educational practices.

“Fitting In”—Aligning with, consolidating, and elaborating family of origin beliefs and values

Elena, an ABE learner from the Caribbean, is the mother of two young children. New to the U.S., she finds the Even Start parenting curriculum helpful in maintaining and enacting her mother’s values and nurturing, child-focused view of child rearing. Elena describes having changed and strengthened her parenting abilities. She, too, feels she’s become more patient with her children. Like many learners, she reports developing a strong belief in the value of reading. This is new, but a view her mother holds and communicates. Even Start has been extremely important to Elena’s overcoming the parenting difficulties she has encountered after moving to the U.S. Elena depicts her struggle to be the parent she would like to be after losing the considerable social supports, scaffolding, and parenting help her family—in particular, her mother—provided.

Well, before, I remember . . . **I wanted to be more patient, because I lose my patience always with them.** And I think I this year I’ve been living here, my patience has improved a lot. [*Why do you think?*] Maybe because I know, like you realize this is your life and you have to be more patient, and you know because in my country I have so many people who can help me with them, my mother, my sister. And so I was like losing my patience. If my mother was there, I just leave them with my mother, you know. Here I know I have to be with them. I’m the only one . . .

It’s something not that I learn here, but I see it here, that I’m not very patient with my kids, you know. . . . And I see here that everybody, I’m not the only one, you know. That everybody in my situation the same as me, like because it’s my life changed 100 percent. **When I was in my country, it was very different.** . . . Like,

if I was tired, my mother do something . . . she can help me with everything. I have somebody who helped me with my children, too . . . **I mean here, in the beginning when I moved, I said, “Oh my God, I’m going to get crazy,”** really because my neighbors were complaining that my children were making a lot of noise. In my home country, we lived in a house, we had no neighbors close. They could run, they could play, they could do whatever they want. They can yell, like normal children does. When I moved to here, just a little noise, my neighbors were complaining. . . . **At the beginning I was like, “What should I do?”** . . . I never hit my children or anything like that, I just tell them, “Go to your room.” . . . And then I realized, I was telling them all the time, “No, no, no,” you know. Everything was, “No.”

And I think I’m going to frustrate them if I keep doing the way I’m doing now. Because I am telling them all the time, “Don’t run, don’t step, don’t jump on the floor, don’t do that. Don’t drop your toys.” You know, I’m not talking to an adult. **But sometimes I think, I’m getting so hard, like to myself, you know.** That shouldn’t be.

Like, I get worried very easily. So I was trying to keep them quiet, and also I didn’t want to strike them . . . like how can I make my little one understand he cannot run, you know? . . . **The stress was that I never like to bother anybody . . . I mean, I always get in the other person’s position,** you know? . . . That’s something I think I have. **I try to have everything inside of me. I’d rather hurt me than hurt anybody.**

So, I’m alone with my kids. I’m not used to take care of them the whole day, you know? . . . Everything they do, I mean everything they do, I have to do it for them. And in my house, my mother used to help me so much . . . Yeah, it’s very hard for me. But I have to handle it.

In these excerpts, we hear Elena’s dedication as a mother. Now in a new country and unaccustomed to parenting alone, she strives to manage her frustration and be sensitive to her children’s developmental needs, under trying circumstances. Part of Elena’s distress is located in her developmental capacity to put herself in her children’s emotional/psychological shoes as well as in her capacity to monitor her own actions. Thus, she realizes her attempts to control her children seem unreasonable. Her children’s feelings about being disciplined matters to her deeply and implicates her feelings about the way she guides them. These responses are indicative of her developmental position, in which one is oriented to the way others respond to and perceive the self. Yet the very strengths of this way of knowing—the capacity for empathy, mutuality, and attention to pleasing others—seem to cause Elena even more distress in her new role as sole parent. Wanting to please competing parties (her neighbors and her children), she’s increasingly worried and stressed. How can she keep her children quiet and support their growth and simultaneously comply with her neighbor’s demands? Elena reflects on her behavior and worries she’s “getting so hard” with her children. She seems to be in a psychological bind, attempting and desiring to meet everyone’s expectations. In fact, she may feel torn. She’d rather hurt herself than anybody else. And she may be doubly stressed because she is without accustomed social support. These stresses call into question Elena’s perceptions of her

parenting competence and even her social identity as a parent. Thus, Elena seems to seek models for being with her children and directing their play for long spans of time. The Even Start home visitor program has been critical to helping Elena manage her frustration, meet her children's developmental needs, and spend prolonged time with her children in a positive manner.

Because she [the home visitor] spends one hour with me while my kids is playing so I can get ideas how to play and how to spend time with my kids . . . the home visitor, she always read a book or two books. Also she plays with them, with toys she brings. So when sometimes I was like frustrated with my kids, that I felt, "Oh my God, I'm going to get crazy" because they are, like, inside of a little apartment, just two small kids and me and cold weather outside, it's, like, hard. . . . **So I learned from her that I could help, how I can play with them and maintain them like busy, and we are enjoying what we are doing.**

Learning how to spend time with her children is an important change, Elena reports. By adopting ideas taught in the Even Start program, Elena is developing her own competence to enact the parenting style and values her mother modeled for her. These new models of activity and interaction help Elena parent independently. In particular, Elena links learning to spend time with her children with learning about the value of reading. Several of the Even Start parents report such an appreciation, and almost all comment on the way they've internalized this new value, seemingly distinct to the U.S. Nevertheless, for Elena, spending time with her children helps her fulfill the values she's gleaned from her mother.

And also my mother taught me how to be. Everything I know, everything I am, she was the one who was there taking me everywhere. . . . And I think my mother taught me most of the things I am now . . . [*So do you think of her when you work with your children? Do you have her in your mind?*] Oh, yes. . . . Like, she does the same thing I do, you know, like, teaches them what's right, what's wrong, don't do that, be careful, things like that. That's to keep them, they're only young, like, they are not going to understand. I mean they think, but the things that are for their age. She always calls me and tells me, "I hear the news that it's very good to read to your children." You know, in our home country, we don't encourage parents to read with their kids.

Something really, really important to me is the way I raise my children, and I think **this program has helped me a lot how to raise my children**, because when I was living back in my country, I never read to them. Like I thought they were too little. And they wouldn't understand, and I was busy in my own life. And so being here has helped me a lot, because I have to be just with them, I have no family . . . This program teaches you a lot what to do with your children. How to play with them . . . And the way that it most helps is in the way that it encourages you to read to your children every day, which are good books to read to them. **And reading helps them to open their minds, teach them that you care for them, because you've given them your time, you know? You care for them, because you've given them your time. So they feel that love.** And that's something real important for

every human being. . . . **the most important thing is that they see that we love them**, we're giving them our time to read to them. They're also learning about what the book says, and reading to them encourages them to, I mean, they learn how to read. They want to read a book, for them.

I try to give them all the love I can, but I never read to them before and, like, I never spent like a lot of time just being with them, listening what they need . . . So this program helped me, how to, use this time to teach them instructive things . . .

[How do you feel about education now, having been in Even Start?] I think my feelings have changed a lot. Because in the aspect of reading to my children, I mean there, they don't encourage you to read. They just go to school, they learn how to read, write, you know. Not like here. Here, everybody's so focused on their children's education. I mean, children's education is so important here. It just amazed me. And it's so good, you know.

Several of the mothers demonstrating a Socializing way of knowing emphasize the value of education for their children. In a way that's developmentally distinct from their peers, they conceive of teaching and learning with their children as important to building relational closeness, to teaching care and love, as Elena suggests above. This focus on reading and engaging in educational and even school-based practices in their homes to solidify and deepen emotional bonds seems reflective of the Socializing parent's attention to their children's psychological and social well-being. It is a similar focus to one we noted earlier in these learner's construals of helping their children with their homework.

Prizing education as important to one's enhanced possibility and, in particular, the internalizing and recognizing reading as an important activity is syntonetic with several learners' families' and specifically, their mothers' value of education. In a striking way, a number of women recalled the power of their mothers' support for their education. As they told it, their mothers' encouragement was key to their own development.

Raquelle is one such parent. She believes in supporting her son's education. This is a value she has internalized from her mother.

[How did you learn so much about how to help your child be a good student?] Oh, you know, I try because when I was little, my mother doesn't know how to read, how to write; my father didn't know how to read. He know how to write a little bit . . . We can be a better person, like now I'm working really hard . . . to come here to learn more. **But my mother, she's a real courageous lady. . . . because even if she don't know herself, she always try for us.** When we were little, she paid people to help us do homework. If some of us don't pass for the year, she send you to someone to help you . . . So I try myself. I can read, I can write, and so on. So I try to raise my son different, because she wasn't able to read with me when I was little, with us, when we was little. . . . **You the parent are supposed to try** even you don't know as if to help the kid or if you do something but or something wasn't good when you was a kid, you don't want your kids to do the same thing. Because

the life is different, and their future going to be different, and you doesn't want them to repeat the same mistakes you make then.

For Raquelle, the Even Start instruction on how parents can help their children read, do math, and engage in fun learning activities in the home implicitly validates, promotes, and expands her ability and desire "to raise her son different." While she may internalize the parenting curriculum in a "how to" sort of way, learning these methods to help her son read and do his homework connects to and allows her to enact a larger set of transgenerational values about the importance of education. Specifically, the educational practices she learns through Even Start enable her to be her son's model of educational support, much the way her mother was an inspiration and role model. However, Raquelle wants to teach her child in a way her mother, who was not literate, could not. Thus, we suggest that, by incorporating the Even Start teaching practices, Raquelle is building her social identity as a parent in a way continuous with her own and her mother's values about the importance of education. She is not abandoning the values she acquired from her family of origin in her home country. Rather, she is strengthening, consolidating, and elaborating her parental role as her son's teacher in ways that align with her own mother's unrealized hopes and dreams. We find this particularly interesting, given the critical theorists' critiques (Auerbach, 1997; Street, 1997; Taylor, 1997) of the use of school-based practices in the home and their concern about students being inducted into U.S. host culture literacy beliefs and family practices. In Raquelle's opinion, these practices are helpful to enacting her parenting values and aspirations for her son's learning. In her interviews, she recounts the support she's derived from the Even Start program.

Before, I always wanted him to read books, but with this program, I am able to sit down with him and ask what is the book about. Ask him what the author is, and what the purpose of the book and ask him some details. **Before, I could only tell him, "Go read the books." But now I know how to sit down with him.**

Emblematic of those learners bound by the Socializing way of knowing, Raquelle internalizes the Even Start curriculum components *as models* of teaching and learning. Modeling values and viewing oneself as a role model for how a child will relate to education is characteristic of these learners and different from a more Instrumental interpretation of education, in which a parent might incorporate information about reading or learning in a rule-bound, concrete, strategic way. Raquelle understands herself to be a role model motivating her son to do his homework. In providing this educational support to her son and using the skills she learned in the Even Start program, she is consolidating and embodying her mother's belief about the importance of education.

I said, "You see, I'm doing my homework, so that's why you have to do your homework." And he is very, very good in doing his homework.

Parents operating from the Socializing way of knowing appear to teach their children the way they are taught. In other words, they import the way their teachers have taught them as a guide in educating and sharing information with their children. Furthermore, these adults seem to apply the same criteria to themselves that they apply to their teachers. When asked, "What makes a good teacher?" (a topic we will discuss more fully later, when we explore the idea of learning supports), many of these students remarked that they wanted their teachers to be able to teach information multiple ways and attentive to their learning style. Here, Raquelle reports learning a similar way of connecting to and supporting her son's unique learning solutions.

We have a workshop on Friday each week. The second grade teacher. He shows us how to help our kids and how to do math with them. There are many ways to show it to them. So, they try to show you a way they know so you know how to stay and listen to them [the children] . . . the teacher explains the way they [the children] know. You can show them your way. . . . Show the different ways, not saying to them “your way is not good.” . . . Any way you can solve the problem, you know.

Raquelle is receptive to the experiential learning approach Even Start offers its parents and children. Several learners who demonstrate a Socializing way of knowing comment on and enthusiastically adopt this new philosophy of learning. Moreover, we do not hear such comments in the interviews of those parents growing from Instrumentalism. We believe the Socializing learners’ capacity for generalization and abstraction, and their ability to think about thinking enables them to take an appreciative perspective on the value of this new mode of learning. These parents identify and understand the experiential approach as a distinct model or philosophy of instruction rather than regard the program activities as separate or effective practical strategies for enhanced parent involvement or child management. Here, Raquelle comments on the way she understands her son learning in an active, contextualized way that’s quite different from how she was taught as a child and now prefers. Striking in Raquelle’s words is her recognition that in undertaking this new way of teaching she is adopting a new teaching and learning philosophy that is integrative, interactive, and developmentally sensitive to her son’s intellectual growth. Although she is internalizing the Even Start approach as her own, we suggest an important part of her appreciation for this mode of learning and teaching is fueled by her desire to be the best possible teacher for her son. In so doing, she is better able to fulfill her mother’s ardent belief that parents support the education of their children.

And what I like for the kids, you know, in those days, in my age, we didn’t have too much freedom like the little kids to do certain things. And here, in this program, when you are cooking something or if you try to make playdough, the kids can mix it with you . . . they can measure and they can start thinking about this when they are little.

“Fitting In”—Developing parenting values in opposition to family of origin beliefs and practices

Not all of the learners operating from a Socializing way of knowing sought to parent the ways their families did. Both Anna and Felicia recounted personal histories of problematic and disappointing child rearing, inclining them to develop more nurturant and nonpunitive relations with their own children. In a sense, the Even Start program offered these women an opportunity to internalize different models of discipline and parent–child interactions than they’d witnessed as children. While (as we have suggested many times before), adults bound by a Socializing way of knowing are especially disposed to take in the values of the social surround, the Even Start child-focused parenting philosophy may validate and support the women’s move away from familial practices and values they found undesirable.

Across their interviews, both Anna and Felicia emphasize wanting to understand their children, make them happy, and be in tune with them emotionally. This focus on their children’s psychological well-being is typical of the way Socializing knowers orient to their children’s world (Newberger, 1980). These parents characteristically define their parental “success” through harmonious parent–child relations. Moreover, Socializing parents’ feelings of competence are often

determined by their children's approval of their actions (Kegan, 1994). We wonder whether the emphasis these women place on relational in-tuneness and parent-child mutuality is accentuated by the combination of their developmental position *and* their personal history—specifically, their reaction against difficult childhood experiences they perceived as less than nurturant. Their childhood experiences direct them to prize and create affirming relationships with their children in which their daughters or sons feel validated and understood.

For Anna, both understanding her children and having them understand the values she is trying to teach are key components to developing a nurturing relationship.

Try to talk to them [children] until they can really understand. Sometimes I think kids just don't understand, or they [the parents] don't have each one [their children] to understand. And I think parents shouldn't give up. If you just talk to a kid, and they don't listen, that doesn't mean that you are supposed to give up on them, you know? Keep helping them, until [they] understand.

In her interviews, Anna recalls the distress of witnessing her relatives harshly physically punish a male cousin. These recollections have stayed with her and undergird her desires to parent differently and adopt alternative approaches to discipline, as intimated to above.

My relatives used to, how do you say, kick, no, whipping my cousin. Yeah, I don't do that, cause I hate when they do that . . . I hate it when they spank . . . I think there's other ways you can punish the child for doing something. You don't have to spank. I remember, one day she . . . still today this is in my mind and I feeling shocked . . . he beating so much . . . and then he cry. I said, I'm not going to hit my kids.

Felicia too, depicted a story of disappointment. Here she describes how she felt her mother could not provide what she needed and how she therefore wants to offer her children what she did not receive as a child. Felicia describes the way the Even Start program has helped her develop and consolidate her goal to parent differently than her mother.

We have a very good relationship with my childrens . . . So I want, everything for my children. I want you know, the best, the best thing. So, I'm try to be the good mother. . . . **before when I was young, I couldn't get, I couldn't get something, what my mother couldn't give me. I want to give everything for my children,** so that 's why I'm try to do everything for them, what they can help. **I don't want them to have my experience, you know?** [*And do you feel that, since you've started at Even Start?*] **Yeah, because we talk a lot about that.** We talk about discipline. We talk about how we can be good mother. We talk about reading book because, . . . in my country, it's unusual to read a books for the children's. They don't use too much this kind of relationship. But over here, everybody books, you know. And my children's love books . . .

A month ago I think, we start to talk about discipline. It was beautiful because each parents start to tell their own experience. Every parents was to share how they

handled the problem, if for them work, how they children said, everything . . . And we talk a lot about that. We share experience, and we get a lot of advices too, from my teacher and from anybody. So it was beautiful because you know, when somebody's parents all the time, **for me, I need to learn how can I help my son. How can I educate my son. I want the best for my children's.** I want to give them the very good education. So I don't want to see my son or my daughter like to, you know, bad kids, so it was beautiful. . . . Because I learn a lot. I am feeling like too, "oh I'm not the only person what happened to me." They give some some advices and they give me some ideas. **What can I try to, you know, to educate, to discipline my children's,** what kind of ways can do when my childrens misbehave . . . Sometimes they work, sometimes no . . . So I keep trying many things what they can help me. So in that class about the discipline we learn about a lot. . . . Everybody talk about what we can do . . . **how the kids feeling, how we can teach the kids feeling for [others]** . . . [*Do you feel like they're good ideas when you try them?*] Yeah, definitely, **because I'm agree with.**

Learning ways to help their children (within the realm of discipline or through learning together) supports Anna and Felicia in their identity as nurturing, understanding, empathic parents. Neither mother wants to rely on authoritarian or harsh, punitive approaches to parenting. Like Elena, both women interpret teaching and working with their children as means to establish and deepen their closeness with them. Once again, we note an overlap of developmental position and personal experience. Specifically, we discern the coincidence between the developmentally driven orientation toward mutuality (here understood as closeness) and these women's desire to establish a parent-child relationship predicated upon meeting their children's emotional and psychological needs. We hypothesize this desire is fueled by Anna's and Felicia's reported childhood histories of not having their needs met and witnessing distressing forms of punishment.

When asked to comment on which of the five components of the Even Start program she found most helpful, Felicia has difficulty choosing. But her belief in developing a close bond is the key to her selection.

Well, everything is important to me. All five parts are very good. But if I need to choose one of them, I think it's the relation, the part when we have a children's and parents [parent and child time]. Yeah, I like it. Because we spend the time with our children's for different things, like, we made things; we share everything. . . . The whole parents stay with the kids, we share, we sing, we read a book, we have some activities so parents, children do. The childrens draw. We cut. So we do many kind activities. So, you know it's a . . . **I'm feeling so close with my son, and my son feeling close with me. We share many things. That's what I mean.** Yeah, and we can learn how we can read a book for our children's because the teacher read for them. . . . **We make like this feeling, to my son is feeling more close to me.** And he feeling like to . . . he saw me like to another friend, not really mom. Mom, friend, everything . . . I don't know in English the word, sorry.

Anna, too, strives to maintain closeness by helping her children and through activities she learns from Even Start's home visitor program.

Kids always like to feel like their parents understand or can do things . . . You can read together with your kids. They [the home visitor] bring you books, stories, and you can sit down. Like, we sit down here and can read together with your kids.

Like working together, like, we can make things, then your child can give you an idea about you can explain to them what you doing and then help. . . . I think you should pay attention to the kids, sometimes they need help, sometimes when my kids come to me and ask me to do things, **I leave everything and try to help them.**

"Fitting In"—Substituting program parenting values

Sarita is from Southern Asia and the mother of a young boy in the Even Start preschool program. Like Felicia, she is an ESOL learner. However, Sarita is the one parent operating from the Socializing way of knowing who does seem to substitute the Even Start programs approach and values for those she previously held. Unlike other students in this developmental position, she does not recount stories about the way her family taught or disciplined her. Thus, we do not really know whether Sarita's adoption of the Even Start approach to education and discipline reflects a consolidation of her own family's values, a move toward developing values set in opposition to that which her family believed, or the internalization of a wholly new outlook toward parenting.

It appears she is developing a completely novel understanding of children's developmental needs and a new insight into how children may learn through experience. For Sarita, this exposure seems revelatory. Here, Sarita compares the Even Start approach to teaching and learning with that of her home country.

In my country, it's different. They teach a different way. . . . Because in my country, they have a book for, for example, like, children they have maybe, first year, they have particular book, you have to they say, you can read this page, 1, 2, 3. You have to remember and . . . **you have to memorize it. . . . And in my country, like this. They teach that way. And in this country, it's very different. They don't have any particular book that you have to read . . .** they're playing. They're playing but they learn something, you know, children. . . . Maybe they're playing counting and alphabet. Alphabet is they're playing the singing. But they learn, also they learn alphabet. You know, A B C D—it's like a song. Yeah, he [her son] feels happy. Children, **they don't pressure their minds. They're playing but they learn something. . . . But in my country, it's like pressure.**

In my country when children goes to school just read, read and write and like only, all day. They have to. No playing, no any other activity, just read and writing like that. And here you have recess time, you have free time, you have many activities. You know they learn. I think in my country and here, it's here, children's learn many things . . . if they are playing but they learn

something. . . . You know, like they play with blocks . . . there's many shapes, triangles, circle, and it's like that. Just they play, but they want to teach us that they say , "Oh, square, and so triangle." . . . **They never forced the children, but in my country I think they force them.** And you know, [here] we play with the dice and penny, they learn change. How to make change and what, which one quarter, which one dime, what it's like, they learn like dice, they learn count. . .

When we meet with children and how you feel as children, and children bring many activity, and we have them, and **I learn many things about like here how to teach children.**

[*Can you think of something or a way in which you have changed the most as a parent since you started?*] **You know, if I force him, he don't, he doesn't learn. He maybe he learn, and he forget it. If I learn about the playing and like here, and they can learn, and they can understand.**

Sarita has observed the way her son learns in his Even Start preschool classroom. She believes this experiential, interactive, mutual, relational form of learning and education is the most worthwhile and is most beneficial to true learning. Through interactive discovery, children learn and understand; when forced, they forget. She adopts this approach to teach her son. Here, it seems she *is* internalizing a wholly new philosophy of the way learning happens. She is ripe to do so, given the developmental tendency to take in others' values as her own, a benchmark feature of the Socializing way of knowing. Also fascinating is that Sarita seems to be internalizing a new perspective on the respective roles of women and children. In particular, she is adopting a new view about the importance of considering the ideas, preferences, and emotions of young children as an essential part of guiding them. This is the internalization of a different, less authoritarian philosophy about children.

Yeah, in my country, parents, . . . woman, they stay home, and only men can go out. They can work, and woman she need to do housework and take care of children. And in this country, I saw every family, and when I come here and when we meet with children and parents' time, we talking, we discuss about things. **I'm really happy about this, and how to teach. In my country, children they teach different way. . . . In my country sometimes they, it's very different. Here is always polite, yeah, parents, they polite to children. And children polite to the parents. But in my country, children they never talk.** For example, if children they want something, if a parent say, "No. You don't. . . . I don't want it." And children they never say again, "I want that." . . . **And in my country, just if parents say something, you have to do. Yeah, no matter what. I think it's best here. Yeah, I need to understand my children's mind. Sometimes they are upset. They are sad. I need to understand them. But in my country they never . . . they try, but not like this way.**

Sometimes you want to (give) some gift for children and you can ask, "What kind of gift you want? What do you like?" **But in my country, some families they ask and they discuss with, but usually . . . just they bought it and they give to children.**

. . . **but in this country, it's very different. They always ask children, you know?**
. . . yeah, **ask what they think.**

Sarita also applies this new understanding of children and their developmental needs to the realm of discipline and teaching. Through the Even Start program, Sarita seems to have learned that while she needs to be consistent in setting limits for her son, she also needs to take his feelings into account when enforcing the limits. Thus, she no longer seems satisfied merely asserting power to make her son do his homework. While she now orients and is highly attuned to the internal psychological motivations for her son's behavior, she also focuses on the way her son thinks about their relationship. In the excerpt below, Sarita states she believes her son is happy knowing she understands his feelings. This ability to take a third-person perspective on her relationship with her son links to the perspective-taking abilities of parents bound by the Socializing way of knowing. Here, Sarita depicts the changes in her view of teaching and guiding.

Maybe my son, he's tired, and I said, "Do your homework." And he said, "No. I can't do now." And if I force him, it's going to be, you know, I'm upset and he upset. He will never do it. Because he feel tired and he feel . . . if I said nicely to my son, "Rashid, did you do your homework?" And if he said, "Mommy, I'm tired," and I understand that yes, maybe he's tired. "Okay, you can do after five minutes, you can have just now your free time whatever you want to play or something." **It makes happy for him. He understand, mommy is understand my feelings.** If I say, "No, you have to do that right now," maybe he said, "No, no." . . . Sometimes I have to [be] strong. Not always my son's, what he wants. I don't have to do everything he wants. And sometimes, I have to strict with him, **but I need to understand his feelings and how he is, what's going on.**

Yes, if I tell him you have to do this and he, . . . if he said "No, I don't know it," and then if I say, "No, you have to" . . . but maybe he will feel . . . he don't feel good, but I say, I force him, you know? That's maybe doesn't help. If I said, "Okay, take your time you can do it later, not here." And he will feel like this is good.

The Even Start approach seems to have transformed Sarita's understanding of disciplining, nurturing, and teaching her son. She generalizes the Even Start child-focused approach that encourages parents to check their children's wishes across several different parenting responsibilities. She reports she is thinking differently about the realms of teaching and guiding than she previously did. For these reasons, we believe Sarita has substituted the Even Start values and no longer subscribes to the norms of her home culture. However, while the particulars of her values have changed, that she is replacing one set of cultural norms for another is consistent with the developmental literature (Kegan, 1994). Sarita follows what we have previously depicted as the "conservative impulse" of absorbing information in a way that is consistent with and preserves one's way of knowing (Kegan, 1994; Marris, 1974; Piaget, 1952). In Sarita's case, she has incorporated a new "truth" about child-rearing based on the teachings of expert authorities at Even Start (Belenky, et al., 1986). In this sense, she does seem to fit the expectations of the Even Start program (Street, 1997). Nevertheless, Sarita states over and over that she prefers these parenting ideals.

Growing Toward and Reaching Self-Authorship

“Reading the world”—Consolidating and elaborating one’s own parenting philosophy and integrated bicultural critical consciousness

Learners growing toward Self-Authorship respond to the Even Start parenting curriculum somewhat differently in subtle and highly nuanced ways. While these more Self-Authored parents might adopt the program’s school-based practices or information about approaches to parental discipline, they use this information to either validate or consolidate their *own emergent theories* or to expand *their self-created* philosophy of parenting. They *do not* seem to *substitute* the Even Start approach for one they held previously, as we surmise Sarita does.

Earlier in this chapter we introduced Linn, an Asian ABE student who is the mother of several young children. She is at a different place along the developmental continuum than her peers who are bound by the Socializing way of knowing. While she shares many features of this developmental position, she is also edging toward Self-Authorship. We find that Linn takes in and makes use of the Even Start information in ways typical of parents growing towards Self-Authorship. Linn incorporates knowledge of children’s development, the value of reading, and the Even Start model of child-focused education to consolidate and amplify her own distinct and emergent theory of parenting.

Listening closely to Linn’s words and concerns about parenting, guiding, and the value of education for her children, we discern a shift away from her home country’s definition of success and philosophy of education.

Our country emphasize on education is a more competitive. It’s so, so strong. Most of parent push their children to study, study, study because they have to pass the test to go to the more high level school. . . . Most of the people want to go to college. I think 90 percent people go to the college, want to go. But it is limited, they have only limited school, so the competitive is very strong. After graduated when they go to the company, they have a lot better on the high level school, so most of people want to go to high level school. . . . I say in last interview, when I live in my country, my parent is the same thing, pushing me to study more and more. **At that time I followed my parents’ value. But in my mind, I don’t like that. When I move here to U.S.A., the education system is more comfortable the student. They are respect students, student’s way, student’s mind, they respect student’s individually.** And also I think in the U.S.A. to go to the higher level school is not only way to success their life. **So I am happy with this.**

Here, Linn expresses her understanding that there may be multiple definitions of success and multiple attitudes toward education. To us, this insight reflects not merely a shift in values but her shift away from Socializing knowers’ tendency to believe in and be defined by one truth or one right way. Linn’s developing Self-Authored capacities enable her to take this critical stance on both her parents’ and her culture’s mode of pushing children to succeed and compete educationally. Linn’s distinct developmental capacities enable her to reflect on her former orientation to conform. She can now step back and show perspective on the ways she previously subordinated her own beliefs to adhere to her parents’ expectations and societal values. Linn is no longer wholly defined or directed by these expectations, and her reflection upon her former accepting stance further suggests she is defining and consolidating a self-created view of education and success. This is a subtly different

orientation than that expressed by parents who are Socializing knowers. While some of those adults *are* standing against (or in alignment with) their culture's or family's values, their stance is more a *product of reaction* to that which defined them rather than a more distanced Self-Authoring belief.

Moreover, Linn seems to be saying that her move to the U.S. and exposure to a different educational approach through participation in the Even Start program have validated and allowed her to give voice to privately held beliefs. Her own ideas about education focus on self-determination, and she believes the U.S. education system supports this belief because it is more respectful of the student's mind and individuality. The values she prizes implicitly promote self-direction.

Here, Linn articulates her values and standards for success, which involve enjoyment of life. These values affect her perspective on guiding and teaching her children and, we believe, undergird her friendly attitude toward Even Start's experiential, child-centered, noncompetitive approach to education.

Me and my husband think if many people say that you have success, but my fear is that I'm not happy. I think it's not success. . . . Even though many people say that you need success, he feel happy and enjoy his life. This is success. . . . **where I lived in my country everyone think [different]** . . . and everybody want to be success, so **they have many compete in school. Everybody want to be a good professional, get a good job, want to go to best school,** and when I move here, . . . American people I think doesn't care of the kind of life. **American people want to enjoy their life. . . . Yeah, we [she and her husband] think the same way for the children. I thought in my country it's not good. That the parenting in my country, I don't like it there. So after move here I'm content to meet this American education system.** . . . Also I know some people in the U.S.A., their parents want to maybe, for example, high-level people want to[be] sure their children go to high-level living, but most of American people, they emphasize their content with their life, enjoy their whole life.

Once again, Linn seems to be standing against the values of her home country. She links success (for herself and her children) to personal happiness rather than in approbation derived from fulfilling societally sanctioned professional roles or high social status, as we recall was important for Trudie. She explicitly criticizes the ways parents in her home country promote this value, force their children to compete, and pressure their children to perform and conform academically. Linn prefers "going the child's way." Here, she describes her belief that parents need to respect their children's opinions.

[*And you say parenting is different here because "they go the child's way" . . . can you say what you mean by that?*] For example, the parent want to, their children is going to be a doctor, but their children doesn't like that, **the parent need to, um, respect their opinion.** Then their children make enjoy their life and also . . . they and happy with their life.

In this excerpt, we note that Linn brings a kind of psychological distance to her role as parent. She seems to be saying that parents need to see their children as separate from themselves and that

they should refrain from forcing their children into living out their own hoped-for professional trajectories. Thus, Linn implies that a parent's role in guiding her children is to encourage them to find their own choices and life paths. From a developmental perspective, such an insight requires an adult's awareness that a child's successes (or lack thereof) are distinct from and not determinative of one's own. This is an understanding we equate with Self-Authorship. This capacity to take the child's perspective into account, to have empathy for yet not define or relate to one's child solely through one's own needs, is highly compatible with the Even Start parenting curriculum on discipline and teaching.

As is fairly typical of parents growing toward Self-Authorship, Linn incorporates the developmental information she learns at Even Start not as a set of facts or rules to make her children behave but as a means to expand her own understanding of children's motivation and behavior. This helps Linn enact her value of "going the child's way." Still transitioning toward a more fully self-directing way of knowing, Linn seems to rely on expert information about children's developmental capacities and needs. Yet with this knowledge, she is able to stand back and embark on a self-generated critique and assessment of the expectations she holds for her children. Thus, we surmise that Linn uses this expert information to hone and elaborate on an emerging philosophy about the nature of the child and parental responsibility. This seems reflective of the way learners moving toward Self-Authorship will differently take in and use a set of widely held ideas or "parenting know-how" (such as those taught in the Even Start program) to *intentionally* strengthen their own perspectives and parenting competence.

If I can understand my children's development stage . . . **sometimes I expect my children higher level stage.** But after I know the children's development things, I can understand my children's mistakes and their misbehavior. I can understand.

For many parents, the Even Start parenting curriculum's focus on reading with one's child is a new and important idea that may not be stressed in their cultures. Like the parents bound by the Socializing way of knowing, Linn articulates the ways she has come to believe in the importance of reading. However, unlike her peers operating from this developmental position, Linn relies on her experience of self-change through reading as evidence of its transformative capacity. She does not merely internalize her teachers' exhortations to read with one's children as the basis for her own beliefs. Yet, Linn also seems to be suggesting that what she reads (what knowledgeable authors of a text assert) has tremendous power for her and can change her. Thus, we might say she still is prone to internalize "expert" information as an important source of truth and guidance for her self-definition. Such tendency to rely on one's own subjective experience as a source of truth *and to simultaneously* rely on expert knowledge is in keeping with individuals beginning their transition into a more Self-Authoring way of knowing. Here as also revealed in the other interview excerpts, the Even Start program seems to be syntonically validating, and elaborating of Linn's developing views on teaching, learning, and guiding.

After I joining this program, I emphasized the reading for children. Of course, I think reading is a very important thing, but I didn't have many information about the reading. But this program, **every time when I read something, I'm changed.** I got some information from the reading. So I think reading is a very important for the children too. So I want to try to read to my children. . . . **I know I'm changing because some reading. So I want to show to my children reading can change**

your life. Most of time, I talk to my children. Reading is very important for your life. I say it a lot.

In contrast to Socializing parents or those, like Linn, who are in transition from this way of knowing, parents who have reached Self-Authorship, like Dalia, rely on themselves and their own judgment as the primary source of knowledge. As Dalia emphatically states, “I am my own role model, and I try to be role models for my children.” Like Linn, Dalia uses information she gains through the Even Start program to improve her competence as a parent. However, unlike Linn, Dalia makes her own assessment of what’s appropriate both for her daughter and herself. She does not look to expert knowledge to inform or guide her expectations for her daughter. Rather, Dalia independently critiques her tendency to limit her daughter’s activities. This self-critique emanates from Dalia’s capacity to step back from her relationship with her daughter, observe her own actions, and evaluate her parenting behavior according to a larger set of Self-Authored expectations and beliefs she holds as a parent: in this case, that an important part of guiding is to allow a child to learn and develop independence. Thus, Dalia reflects on and assesses her own fearful response and finds it wanting and inhibiting of her daughter’s autonomy. She subordinates her worry to her self-generated superordinate value of promoting her daughter’s sense of mastery.

And then she [her daughter] learned how to use scissors, which I was very scared at home to let her use them. And which she knew how but not as good as she is now because she comes in and she uses it every morning, and she cut papers and she goes and she make nice pattern, and I know it was because more so that she comes here [to Even Start], she is doing it. **Because at home I was doing the stuff more. She was more doing the watching me doing it** and learn from that, or I would be doing it with her. **And that didn’t really give her her independence. I know I did the same thing when my son was little. I didn’t want to let him do stuff.** Then they taught him stuff in the nursery school. I couldn’t believe what he was ready for.

Dalia also exemplifies the distinctive way Self-Authored parents translated and bound the knowledge they gain in the Even Start program. As we described earlier, Socializing knowers tend to take in information in a more wholesale or “cookbook” way. They frequently teach their children as they were taught, presenting information or activities in the form or model used in their Even Start program. Dalia appears to share information differently. In the excerpt below, Dalia describes the confluence between what she is learning in the Even Start program and what her children are learning in their schools. Dalia seems delighted and amazed by such a coincidence but she keeps this to herself and out of discussions with her children. She understands and anticipates her children’s reactions to her teaching them what she has learned in school. She regulates and tempers what she tells her children about her own classroom instruction. She is aware and mindful of how her children learn, what they will hear, and what they tolerate. Thus, she’s very deliberate about the way she teaches her children, bounding the information she shares to ensure her children keep learning. Simultaneously, Dalia observes herself, noting how her own education coincides or runs parallel to that of her children. She understands her own learning strengthens her sense of self-authority and parental competence.

This insight, in turn, reinforces her desire to keep learning and “refresh her mind.”¹¹ This capacity to take a perspective on setting limits (both for oneself and one’s children) is consistent with Self-Authoring parents’ approach to guiding.

[*So what do your kids think of your being in this program?*] Me being here, with the thing about it, “Mommy goes to school.” And then they get to hear what I learn every day. So I, it’s just coincidence all the time. It’s like things I learn in school, and then I go home, I get to use those things I learned in school with my kids. Sometime it’s just coincidence, incidents that happens to them and, or they are asking me a question, and it has to do with whatever I learned in school. Always. I mean, I was like, “Wow, where was I before, or what was happening before?” It’s just so, sometime it was like, “Whoa.” Because I know. **I know what’s happening. But they don’t know.** But when they ask me a question, my eyes go, they are like, “Mommy, what’s the matter?” **But I don’t want to tell them, this is what I learned in school. Then they don’t want to hear it. So I have to just explain it to them.** Like they would ask me questions like from the dictionary and something I had to look in the dictionary when I was in school today. And then I can answer it to them. **It just tells me more why I should refresh my mind and come here all the time,** even I can’t get as much as I could a little bit at a time. Yes, it happens to me all the time. . . . I can remember my son coming home. First thing he says to me, “Mommy this and that.” And I’m like, I did this earlier.

Like Linn, Dalia has her own definition of success and her own notion of what it means to “become somebody.” Indeed, Dalia seems to be voicing the same values Linn stresses as important for children: “going the child’s way” and respecting children’s opinions. Like Linn, Dalia views guiding her children as encouraging them to make their own career choices and find their own life paths. She neither expects or requires her children to fulfill her blueprint for their career choices nor hopes they will strive to fit social expectations. This is a different notion of identity development than parents either growing from Instrumentalism or bound by a Socializing way of knowing expressed. For example, Trudie seemed to equate “becoming somebody” with both attaining material rewards and acquiring approval or status through socially valued occupational roles. In contrast, Dalia is concerned about developing competence. She wants her children to do something (e.g., a career) really well, regardless of what that might be. Dalia links “becoming someone” to becoming masterful, and it is mastery that is equated with success. Dalia’s conception of identity development and what it means to support one’s children orients to encouraging their self-determination. In our view, Dalia’s drive toward mastery and competence and her insistence that, regardless of their occupational choice, her children be engaged and expert is emblematic of Self-Authoring individuals’ focus on maximizing their potential, upholding their standards, and expanding and deepening their competence.

Well, sometimes he [her older son] says, “Oh, I want to be a police officer.” You know, sometimes he says, “I want to be a fireman.” All those dreams that he has of completing a degree, you know, being a detective or being an inspector, **whatever**

¹¹ This developmental interpretation is largely drawn from the process sheets of N. Popp’s structural analysis of Dalia’s interview text. In several cases, we have used Popp’s exact wording, since we were hard pressed to improve the analysis ourselves.

he wants to be, you know. I want those things to come true for him. So to me, that's being somebody. And even if he's just doing something that's not professional, you know, whatever that might be, I want him to be able to do it in a fashionly way that it's done, not somebody's going to be doing something today and doing something tomorrow . . . Do something for a long time. Not just, "today I want to and tomorrow I don't want to." You know, and **be very professional in whatever he chooses to do. Being successful at it . . . because no matter what you do, you can know it so well.** You can write a book about it, you know? **You can be successful even being a housewife, even raising kids. You can be successful about everything.**

Most of the learners we interviewed expressed a strong desire to guide their children. Yet as we have consistently argued, their concept of guiding was shaped, in part, by their developmental position. For example, parents bound by the Socializing way of knowing appeared to focus on helping their children be good people, empathic and aware of others' feelings. We wonder whether the ability to conceive of guiding as shepherding a child's identity instead of shaping or modifying a child's behaviors requires a minimum of a Socializing way of knowing. We imagine this is so because identity appears connected to the abstract concept that people's individual (idiosyncratic) and discrete behaviors, emotions, thoughts, and interactions all cohere into something greater than simply concrete action-oriented tendencies. Rather, they represent one's ideals, values, and internal psychological perspectives toward oneself and the world. Such a requirement for abstract thought in tandem with the capacity to generalize specific behaviors into the concept of personality necessitates that a person operate from the Socializing way of knowing.

Almost all the learners growing from Socializing ways of knowing into Self-Authorship seem to be increasingly reflective about the complexity of setting the terms of their own and their children's identity. Recall Linn's narrative,

[And you said you teach your children about your culture?] **This is very difficult question.** Yeah sometimes I worry about that situation. I so, so many Asian children have, like that kind of problem. **They lost their identity in the U.S.A., so they have many problems in this country.** But me and my husband believe if they have a strong identity, I'm an Asian and I'm and American-Asian, I'm American. **If they have a strong identity, they can [have] American culture and Asian culture. . . . But if they don't have much [of both cultures], . . . they don't know who they are, they not Asian, they not American. . . .** So because of that, me and my husband also want to teach our culture and our language. But in that situation, he [her son] can success for his life.

Like Linn, immigrant parents growing toward or reaching Self-Authorship appear to have a qualitatively different understanding of their own and their children's acculturation processes as well as a different stance toward their parental role responsibilities of guiding. They see themselves as cultural translators and mediators and actively construct an integrated bicultural identity for their children. This active reflection upon and synthesis of their home country's culture with U.S. cultural norms and values is distinct from parents either growing from Instrumentalism or bound by Socializing ways of knowing.

As described earlier, across our interviews, the students bound by the Socializing way of knowing seemed to prefer and accept the Even Start approach to learning and parenting. While it is true that for the majority of these parents the Even Start parenting curriculum was syntonic with their own views, a critique of Even Start or U.S. parenting practices and values was notably absent in these students' narratives. It may be that (in part) these students' greater acceptance of U.S. cultural practices reflects the way that Socializing parents may identify with the operating cultural norms and values. In contrast, more Self-Authoring parents *do not* readily, unquestioningly internalize the norms or parenting approaches of their adopted country. Rather, they carefully assess and retain those aspects of each culture they believe their children should know.

Hamid, an ABE learner from the sub-Sahara, and a parent of many children, provides a good example of this active critical stance. He expresses a strong belief that his children and others from his home country should embrace their bicultural identity. In other words, he greatly respects and appreciates the cultural literacy to which he is exposed, but he will select and assess the cultural components he will teach his children.

the best thing for me, I studied . . . we have the African and American kids here. So I feel in the future, **I want to teach two cultures**, what it is exactly . . . even if not teach, I love it, to have the community teach African-American kids what exactly is culture. . . . We have a wonderful culture in Africa, what is different from American . . . the American and African culture . . . **the kids have to know their own custom, culture, own history [and] they have to know they are American, they have to know the American culture**, what it is, what America is, that is my hope.

Hamid understands his role responsibilities as a parent as preserving his children's knowledge of his home country's culture while supporting them in their identity as Americans. He seems to stress a complex insight that in merely adapting or adopting the values of another culture as one's own, one can risk subordinating one's beliefs, heritage, and ultimately one's dignity.

Important for me, my family have to, my kids get enough education and be successful. . . . Yes, and [get an] education, and how they live in America, in the system. . . . **That means how the kid, how they live with, you know, other culture.** . . . And what is exactly [for them] different and typical, and they are, so what exactly for them and typical, when they are African, how [they are] different and what [they do], and how they get [help] them and how they get help from Americans and so in America [because their own country is different]. . . . Some people, **they think only American if you get good education and they get enough [things]. . . . That's fine. That's the only thing, but not to me.** I like the, you know that's a little good that they, you know, the more things they know in America because they are American, that's a [good thing] but, **you know, I don't like it if they lose their own culture, their own history . . . They lose their own dignity and maybe they live under somebody's culture. That's not my [way].** [*You are saying, tell me if I understand you, you want your kids to learn a lot about America. That's good, but you want them to hold on to their own culture.?*] That's right. [*And you said, because if they don't, maybe they lose their own dignity?*] That's

right. [*And sort of who they are? How do you come to this? Not everybody believes this.*] **Because, if you lose yours, you have to run in somebody's system. That's not a right thing.**

Hamid's excerpt reveals a distinct relationship to power and authority. Unlike those parent-learners bound by the Socializing way of knowing, Hamid does not believe a person should necessarily abide by any authority or institutional prescription. Rather, Hamid proclaims his right to claim and the need to maintain the traditions and history he equates with his cultural identity and dignity. Hamid's statement is reminiscent of Weinstein-Shr's (1995, p. 12) observation that immigrant learners face particular challenges to and potential losses of "intergenerational relationships and transmission of cultural knowledge." Yet Hamid actively works against such losses and asserts the salience and value of passing on the wisdom, experience, and traditions of his culture as key to developing his children's identity. Only when learners are moving toward Self-Authorship do we begin to hear such a perspective in their interviews.

Ahara, an ESOL learner also from the sub-Saharan, similarly chooses to preserve some aspects of her home country culture in her children's lives, while supporting them in adopting some American values. She occasionally teaches her eight year old daughter how to wash dishes and cook, behaviors traditionally taught to girls in Ahara's home culture. Ahara describes difference in gender roles and adult-child responsibilities and expectations between her home country and the U.S. and how she reconciles them. Striking in Ahara's dialogue is her active synthesis of values from both her home country and the U.S. Moreover, Ahara seems to apply her knowledge of children's development (we presume she's gained through the Even Start program) to the gender-role expectations for children in her culture. Thus, wishing her daughter maintain some of the traditions with which she grew up, Ahara recalibrates the cultural expectations that girls do housework so they are developmentally appropriate for her daughter. In so doing, she demonstrates her capacity to stand outside the cultural expectations and norms of both countries and to reflect upon and evaluate them. Ahara selects elements from each country's parenting practices she deems important and integrates them into her own philosophy of how she wishes to raise her daughter in the United States. These capacities—especially her distance from the cultural norms and practices—and her abilities to synthesize and reconfigure her philosophy according to self-generated values, link to the Self-Authoring features of her developmental position.

Because in this country and my country different culture, everything different. You don't have it in this country, the family they not live around you, just the children. In the back home child helping you, your husband, he didn't have kids [to] help . . . **They [the kids] clean at home a lot, just do what you want, do that in the back home. . . . But in this country the children, doesn't do anything. . . .** Now my daughter eight years old. **My country, eight years old they cook, they help clean up the house they was the dish. . . . Everything strict in my country . . .** But this country, they don't do . . . Just I showing [her daughter] I teach her, you have to clean up, you have to take care . . . Because she born in this country, but I teach her how to do, how to help . . . **I don't want her to cook in the kitchen . . . because she too young . . . but I teaching her to wash a dish . . . just small, small thing, to pick up the toys.**

Like Hamid, Ahara wants her children to retain and have an awareness of the ways that children in her home country are reared. To facilitate this cultural awareness, Ahara takes her children to her home country to learn firsthand how children are raised there and how she was raised at their age. This is a proactive step in educating her children about their cultural heritage.

Important to me about my children. They grow up this country. . . . Yeah, I'm think important to me, how to take care of them . . . to do safe things . . . how to teach them good way, grow up this country. **Because this country, they have too many different cultures, too many drug, violence, many things.** So it's important [to me] to [keep] my children safe. To teach to behave [s] good kids. . . . **Just because these children they born this country, they grow up this country, just they know about this country. I feel my family need to know about back home, my family, how I grow up when I was the same age as them,** and I visit with my children to my country, how look like the country, how my family, how I grow up in this country [in her own home country]. And they [her children] like this country.

Like other individuals moving toward Self-Authorship, Ahara is critical of U.S. norms and neither totally accepts nor adopts the American way of life. Rather, she seems to suggest she has a set of core values she wants to impart to her children and evaluates those elements of each culture she feels are syntonetic with her self-determined beliefs and morals. She defines this fashioning of her children's values as a critical part of her parenting role responsibilities. She neither cedes this responsibility to others nor believes others automatically share her beliefs or ideology. Here, Ahara describes some of the values she feels are important for her children to learn.

And . . . they need to know . . . how they behave and what is [good] people, good children, how they behave. They need have good education, good things. Not good behavior . . . they learn bad things, and just drink, drug, and . . . violence, just for looking something . . . the bad things. **And I teach them what important to me . . . I just spend my time with them to teach my children to value . . . You have to teach them many time, not one time. Because children they need to know what they do, their parents they give their children love . . . and uh I give them good education to how to grow up . . . every time, I'm trying! . . . and I trying teach them just to value . . . and not all the people teach the children good, some . . . not like that, that's my opinion, I try everyday to teach what I grow up, what I do and what they learn, [so] they going to be smart. . . . Just, I don't just listen to outside rules. I have my own rules . . . Just because I have to, I saw this country many things and I have my own and I compare.**

Hamid, Ahara, and to a slightly lesser degree, Linn, consider both cultures' philosophical strengths and weaknesses, discerning which aspects of each they wish to incorporate in their children's development. They do not see their teachers, texts, or institutions as the explicit cultural instructors for them and their children and do not expect their teachers or the Even Start program to inform them how they should adopt or enact particular cultural practices. In other words, while these students greatly respect and appreciate the cultural literacy to which they are exposed, they see themselves as the architects of their children's cultural identity. This capacity to engage, reflect upon, and critique both cultures reflects their own developmental complexity. Once again, in this way, these more Self-

Authoring students are distinct from their peers in that they base parenting decisions on superordinate internally generated values about what is best for their children. They make these decisions knowing that individuals construct culture and they can choose from multiple cultural “truths.”

Summary of Forms of Internalization of Parenting Curriculum

Across their interviews, the ABE and ESOL learners in our study frequently and spontaneously expressed their own distinctive views of guiding and teaching their children. To a large extent, their current perspectives seem informed by their cultural background, families’ teaching, and own experiences of discipline and learning. Yet our reading of these parents’ interviews also reveals that the learners’ developmental position importantly shapes their conceptions of guiding, understanding of their children’s development, and ways they respond to, take in, and use the teachings of the Even Start parenting curriculum. In other words, these parents’ developmental positions influence the ways they internalize information gleaned through the Even Start program and the cultural-social surround.

Fitting in and Following the Rules of the Cultural Context—Growing From Instrumentalism

As we’ve noted, parents growing from Instrumentalism are simultaneously bound to a more concrete interpretation of information and desire to internalize the values of the social surround (i.e., the values of their home country, their adopted country, or literacy program). Their internalizations demonstrate features of both Instrumental and the Socializing ways of knowing. For example, in the realm of discipline, as we saw with Yvette, these parents use and take in concrete parenting strategies and rules that produce the child behavior they wish to promote. This interpretive approach reflects the more Instrumental side of the incorporation process. These parents may also employ strategies in ways that help them check in with their children’s motives and tune in to their moods. This is a move toward the Socializing knower’s orientation to putting oneself in the shoes of the other and internalizing someone else’s response as implicating one’s own.

We observed that a few Instrumentalist parents were able to hold conflicting beliefs about discipline simultaneously. It may be that the concrete and rule-bound elements of the Instrumental way of knowing enable an individual growing away from this developmental position to keep conflicting or differing values on separate bands of experience. Moreover, the concrete compartmentalizing features of this frame of knowing may allow a person to enact one set of value-driven behaviors in one context and another in a different context. As we described earlier, Trudie was quite comfortable simultaneously holding two very distinct approaches to discipline and punishment, those of her home country and those of the Even Start program. Earlier, we suggested that Trudie might see herself following the Even Start discipline approach in the U.S. while she might use physical punishment in her home country. We also surmised that one’s personal history of discipline and learning might incline an individual moving from Instrumentalism to adopting one set of cultural practices and values over another. This was the case with Yvette who, although from the same Caribbean country as Trudie, sought to incorporate the Even Start philosophy approach to limit-setting rather than maintain the discipline approach of her home country.

Fitting in, Aligning with, and Internalizing Cultural Values—Socializing Ways of Knowing

We also suggested that individuals bound by the Socializing way of knowing are most likely to internalize the norms of their psychosocial surround. This seems to represent an individual’s tendency to align with or move against the values and norms of their home country. As we suggested previously, this observation is similar to Gadsden’s (1996, p. 2) statement that individuals construct

their futures “within or oppositional to the life-course trajectory of their families.” We wish to point out, however, that at heart, whether building upon their family’s values or moving toward those of their host culture or literacy program, parent-learners bound by the Socializing way of knowing are still responding to the set of values or norms to which they were originally exposed.

We found that many of the study participants moving toward internalizing the Even Start approach to discipline and learning were, in fact, consolidating and elaborating the views and values of their families of origin, particularly their mothers. Others were consolidating emergent values and approaches established in opposition to their personal experience. Whether the values aligned with or were distinct from those of their home country, the Even Start program validated these learners’ self-described ascendant or developing perspectives on teaching and guiding their children.

We did not hear in the narratives of these Socializing learners any struggle to maintain preferred home culture values that were in opposition to the values propounded by the Even Start program. In the sample of learners we interviewed, these conflicts never came up. We hypothesize that the either/or nature of the Socializing way of knowing, in which knowledge or values are understood as right or wrong and true or untrue, would make such a conflict very difficult for these learners to resolve. We also surmise that, faced with choosing between conflicting preferred family or home country values and values promoted by a literacy program and/or host culture, these learners *might* substitute the values of their current social context. Because it is difficult for learners in this developmental position to hold competing views or “truths” simultaneously, and thus they feel they must choose (Belenky et al., 1986). We support this conjecture with the theoretical insight (Kegan, 1982, 1994) that individuals bound by the Socializing way of knowing define themselves through the values and expectations of others. Kegan (1982, p. 96) writes how choosing between competing values or expectations can pose difficulties for Socializing knowers. For these individuals, such conflicts are problematic because

. . . ambivalence or . . . conflicts are not really conflicts between what I want and what someone else wants [as they are for Instrumentalist knowers] . . . they turn out to be conflicts between what I want to do **as part of this shared reality** and what I want to do **as part of that shared reality**. To ask someone [in this way of knowing] to resolve such a conflict by bringing both shared realities before herself is to name precisely the limits of this way of [knowing].

As Kegan goes on to explain, “bringing before oneself” would entail an ability to take a perspective on and be separate from these multiple values and expectations—the shared reality—that defines and determines the Socializing knower’s sense of self and ideals. This distance, perspective-taking, and critique is beyond the reach of these knowers. Feminist researchers Belenky, et al. (1986, pp. 48–49) make the same interpretation. Describing the women in their study who were also bound by this way of knowing, they write,

one can see the self only as mirrored in the eyes of others, the urgency is great to live up to others’ expectations, in the hope of preventing others from forming a dim view. Thus, [these] women . . . listen carefully and try hard to live up to the images that others have held up for them. They are especially at the mercy of authorities’ judgements.

For these Socializing knowers, difference and distinction may be experienced as threatening to oneself and may incline them to strive to *fit in* much in the manner Street (1997) and other critical theorists (Auerbach, 1997; Taylor, 1997) suggest. We also conjecture that, as feminist constructive-developmental researchers, Belenky, et al. (1986) posit, if two different important authorities present these parents with contradictory views or philosophies of equal value they will tend to go with what most people believe or with the ideals of the authority who wields the most status. This is our interpretation of Sarita's response of substituting the Even Start approach to discipline, education, and view of the nature of the child for the thinking and philosophy of her home culture.

Even having said this, we reiterate and maintain our assertion that this wholesale substitution is most like critical theorists' observations of the ways learners may abandon their own cultural practices. As our data suggests and we have repeatedly argued, for some of these Socializing learners, the internalization of literacy program or host culture values may be about developing, consolidating, or elaborating emergent or existing views that may be syntonetic with their own family of origin's philosophy. Thus, we stress the need to add dimension to the concept of "fitting in" and urge restraint in automatically equating internalization with the abandonment of one's culture. When assessing a person's internalization of programmatic or new cultural norms, it may be helpful to ask how she or he may be "fitting in" to a particular set of values that relate to a particular personal history, previous experience, and prior set of family or cultural approaches. Nevertheless, the Socializing knower's tendency to readily internalize values of the psychosocial-educational context, combined with their reliance on expert authority, points to the need for educators to be especially mindful and reflective about the ways the norms and ideals they teach will be adopted and enacted by these learners. As our own research suggests, teachers may powerfully influence Socializing learners' attitudes toward themselves and their children.

"Reading the World"—Growing Toward and Reaching Self-Authorship

Finally, we hypothesize that not until the advent of Self-Authorship—that is to say, not until features of the Self-Authoring way of knowing significantly contour the interpretative meaning frame of an individual—can someone engage in or demonstrate a consciously active, independent critique of cultural norms and values. This was the case for the learners in our study. While some participants who were either moving toward or had reached the Socializing way of knowing did, in fact, reject family or cultural beliefs, we interpret these rejections as responses to personally uncomfortable experiences with family and/or cultural practices. In contrast, the critiques mounted by learners moving toward or already operating from Self-Authoring ways of knowing had a different tenor. They evidenced an intellectual and emotional distance. These critiques entailed a tendency to compare and at times contrast differing and conflicting cultural values. No longer defining themselves solely through the expectations of psychosocial surround, these more Self-Authoring adults were able to step back, assess, and evaluate a proposed philosophy of discipline, a view of children's development, or an educational approach in relation to their self-created ideology or personal vision of parenting. Kegan (1994, p. 90) writes about these "bigger visions" that Self-Authoring adults who are parents may create.

These bigger "visions" are not just values. They are "values *about* values." They are systems by which we can choose among our values when they conflict. . . . The ability thus to subordinate, regulate and indeed create (rather than be created by) our values and ideals, the ability to [take a perspective] on our values and ideals rather than [be made up or run by them] must necessarily be an expression of a [Self-

Authoring] way of knowing . . . the mental making of an ideology or explicit system of belief.

As we previously mentioned, the more Self-Authoring parents sought to attain cultural literacy and knowledge of the workings of American institutions. In our view, this desire to learn about the American system links to their general understanding that knowledge represents and reflects thought systems. Implicit in such an awareness is that different systems of thought coexist and knowledge itself is a construction and contextual. Thus, these learners realize the same set of ideas may be interpreted differently, depending on the framework, preferences, or bias of, for example, an individual, a teacher, or a social system. In other words, learners who were moving toward or had reached Self-Authorship exhibited the developmental capacity to critically interpret knowledge and reflect on their own or the host country's cultural values or norms. They were able to use the Even Start parenting and ABE/ESOL curriculum to "read the world"—a capacity that critical theorists such as Freire and Macedo (1987) depict as crucial in literacy learning.

The learners in our study who were growing toward or had reached Self-Authorship were actively engaged as constructors of their children's identities. These parents were able to stand back, evaluate, and "read" (or interpret) the two cultures' norms according to their self-created ideologies, their bigger visions. These Self-Authoring parents selected and integrated the elements, beliefs, values, and practices they deemed important to their own and their children's bicultural identities. There was a process of active reconfiguration and reconstruction of the ideological terms set before them. This is a considerably different stance than that of the Socializing parents, who tended to take at face value the models offered by the program or psychosocial surround, accepting or rejecting them in a rather either/or manner.

Critical literacy theorist Bernardo Ferdman (1990) writes about the relationship between English literacy learning, acculturation, and identity. Ferdman suggests that there may be a bidirectional relationship between cultural identity and literacy education in which each influences and mediates the other. Considering the complex interaction of a learner's cultural identity and the values and ideas a literacy program teaches, he asks, "How do the particular pedagogical approach, the texts that are used and the purpose of literacy as communicated by the school relate to the learner's motives and sense of identity? . . . Must the learner change the nature of his or her self-concept in order to do what is asked [by the curriculum]?" (1990, p. 198). Based on the analysis of the Even Start students' response to the parenting education curriculum, we believe learners are actively and differently engaged with the curriculum and will differently experience curriculum requirements. As we have consistently argued, developmental position (i.e., one's way of knowing) powerfully predicts how these learners relate to the program's implicit values, educational practices, learning expectations, and beliefs about parenting and knowledge—all elements that many literacy researchers (Lytle, 1991; Ullman, 1997; McKay & Weinstein-Shr, 1993) concur have bearing on a person's self-concept. Much like Ferdman, we understand changes in the learners' self-concept and culturally linked parenting identity and values as the complex result of multiple mutually influencing forces. However, our data suggests that a learner's personal history, cultural, and/or family of origin's values in combination with her own developmental position influence how she internalizes and incorporates the teachings of the program and the parenting norms of the host culture.

Generally speaking, the Even Start parents seem to assimilate information and adopt aspects of the parenting curriculum into their construction of their role as parent consistent with their developmental position—they follow the "conservative impulse" (Marris, 1974, Piaget, 1952). In so

doing, they may consolidate or elaborate their particular parenting practices, views, or values within that given way of knowing. Thus, to a large extent, we believe a learner's developmental position filters and bounds the form and breadth of changes in self-concept and parenting identity that occur through Even Start program participation. Faced with many cultural challenges to their social identities, these ABE and ESOL students seem to feel the Even Start program strengthens their self-concept and their identity, authority, and efficacy as parents.

Nevertheless, the Even Start program seems to promote and reward a parenting approach premised on mutuality, empathy, and the ability to take and internalize one's child's perspective as a guide for one's own behaviors and beliefs. Thus, the parenting component of the curriculum may implicitly require and expect a minimum developmental level—that of the Socializing way of knowing. Therefore, the program may foster the more Socializing aspects of the transition between Instrumental and the Socializing ways of knowing. Additionally, from the reports of several students within the ESOL and ABE classes (and from our discussions with the teachers), we discern that the overall ABE/ESOL curriculum intentionally embraces multicultural perspectives and regularly explores the institutional workings, expectations, and traditions of different cultures. In this sense, we might surmise that both the ABE and ESOL classroom curricula implicitly reinforce the value and importance of multiple perspectives and multiple truths. We understand this as a challenge to Socializing knowers' tendency to see one truth and one reality. In sum, we surmise that the Even Start program gently invites developmental growth for learners across a variety of developmental positions. Such invitations to growth frequently entail and even promote changes in self-concept. While the program may invite growth, it also offers an array of developmental supports and a great deal of confirmation to parent-learners at different developmental positions. In this next section, we investigate the ways the Even Start program invites and engenders multiple forms of growth for the learners we interviewed in the ABE and ESOL classes. Additionally, we describe the variety of supports the students in our study reported as helpful to their learning.

IV. SUPPORTIVE AND GROWTH-PROMOTING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: “SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CLASSROOM”

Recently, a small number of literacy researchers have undertaken and begun to call for investigations of literacy learners' beliefs (Gambrell & Heathinton, 1981; Johnston, 1985; Lytle, 1991; Mikulecky & Ehlinger, 1986). Susan Lytle (1990, p. 120), whose focus is adults' literacy development, defines literacy learner beliefs as “adults' own evolving conceptual frameworks or theories about language, literacy, teaching and learning.” She depicts learner beliefs as an important dimension of literacy development in adulthood. In our study, we wanted to ascertain what the ABE and ESOL learners said they wanted and expected from their teachers. In essence we wished to know these students' conceptions or theories of good teaching, guidance, and support. In reply (and in a way that was similar to students across the two other research sites), the Even Start learners in our study within and across the ABE and ESOL classes repeatedly commented on the important role their teachers played in encouraging and enhancing their learning. Particularly notable was that across the learners' characterizations of supportive teaching, patterns emerged that reflected students' instructional preferences, views of teacher concern, and conceptions of teacher responsibility.

Moreover, specific patterns of teacher expectations and views of support were shared by learners bound by a common developmental position. Thus, the Even Start ABE/ESOL learners in our

study articulated teaching theories consistent with prior developmental literature and research on adult learners of other contexts and social, economic, and educational backgrounds (Belenky et al., 1986; Broderick, 1996; Lasker, 1975; Kegan, 1994; Perry, 1970; Weathersby, 1976). This was somewhat surprising, given that the Even Start students we interviewed had considerably diverse educational backgrounds within and across the two classes. For example, two of the students (Elena and Felicia) had university degrees, while a number (Hamid and Ahara) had relatively little schooling. Several students (Jean and Ho) reported previous negative school histories fraught with feelings of failure and replete with a perceived lack of teacher support and interest. Other students, such as Elena and Linn, recounted pressured and competitive past school experiences.

Even though the learners' perceptions of teacher support and responsibility seem to fall along developmental lines, certain preferences overlap across the ways of knowing. This overlap results from at least two factors. First, as we have previously explained, the majority of the students we interviewed at the Even Start site share features of the Socializing way of knowing. Most students were either growing toward, bound by, or moving out of this developmental position. Therefore, it is understandable that they may also share some similar expectations of their teachers. Second, we wonder if the recurring focus on the practical and mechanical aspects of teacher support that permeates the learner's narratives, regardless of developmental position reflects the fact that almost all of these students are immigrants and working hard to master the skills of the English literacy (i.e., reading, writing, speaking). Thus, students repeatedly mention their wish for teacher guidance in these more mechanical aspects of learning. Finally, we hypothesize that, in this instance, much like the learners' construals of the challenges they face, students of different developmental positions articulate a kind of nesting of concerns, expectations, and requirements for teacher help. In other words, students operating from more Self-Authoring ways of knowing may describe some similar expectations to those learners growing from Instrumental and/or Socializing ways of knowing, but they will express other expectations distinctive of their developmental position.

Once again, to help the reader clearly determine how a particular way of knowing may shape the students' understanding of teacher responsibilities and support, we highlight and showcase the differences and simultaneously seek to capture those similarities that seem important to these learners' descriptions.

Students' Understanding of Teacher Support and the Teacher-Student Relationship

Growing Away from Instrumentalism

What the students expect from their teachers and their conceptions of teacher support

The teacher as the source of learning: How the teacher "makes you learn"

For learners growing away from Instrumentalism, the teacher is granted a place of central authority in the learning process and is seen as the source of learning. The teacher provides direct instruction, concrete examples, information, and resources; shows different ways of problem solving; and answers students' questions. Knowledge and information tend to be understood as a kind of product, a series of skills the teacher gives or shares with her students. Thus, the teacher is viewed as a kind of trainer or instructor or, as so many of these students stated, "the teacher makes you learn." Students operating from this developmental position tend to cast learning as a one-way transaction, in which the teacher is

responsible for giving students information and facts and making them learn. The students receive the product of knowledge.

The teacher is viewed as the source of support for a student's motivation. One essential way the teacher encourages or motivates the students is in setting classroom structure and holding students to classroom rules. It is notable that for these participants, motivation and confidence are understood as *things* coming from an outside source to the self instead of intrinsic to the self. For example, when asked what makes a good teacher, Trudie states, "The teacher makes sure you come on time, do your homework, you learn." Trudie seems to feel the teacher holds the student to the behavioral and academic requirements and rules of the classroom that, in turn, help her learn. This external structure provides the scaffolding for her motivation.

Yvette says the way her teachers tell her she can "take her time" gives her confidence. Confidence seems less an internal psychological state and more a way of feeling one's agency in being able *to do*. An external permission-giving source, in the form of her teacher's verbal directive, engenders confidence in Yvette.

They give you time to know better. But some questions sometimes that they ask, I don't know, I don't understand. They say, "Take your time, you can [answer] when you take your time, you can do something." They say, "Don't be afraid, don't say you not come again. You can take time . . . not say you can't learn." And **they put it in your head**, you change your mind, you'd like to do something.

Yvette explains how her teachers encourage her to think she can learn. However, the way that she describes this encouragement suggests she views her teachers' directive as a commodity. Her teachers "put it in her head," as if they put the words there that tell her she can learn and stay in the program. Casting confidence in such concrete transactive terms is considerably different from the ways that Socializing students speak of their teachers' support. For those students, the mutuality of the teacher-student relationship provides confidence in itself. Yet in this case, Yvette seems a kind of receiver in which she *is given* the words of confidence which she both "gets" and takes.

This transactional view of learning and understanding of the teacher's role filters through these students' descriptions of how their teachers help them learn and the way they see the teacher as the foremost authority. Trudie is the clearest spokesperson for the sole authority of the teacher: "The teacher is my only resource . . . the friend can't teach you." Trudie goes on to describe the way her teacher helps her learn:

[My teacher] . . . has knowledge which good for the other class. Anything we don't understand, she try **to make us understand it**. And when we write something and it's no good, **she help us the right way to write it**.

[My teacher] is always there with the reading, writing activity . . . sometimes she find articles in the newspaper and explains it and **tells you what that means**, you understand better.

[My teacher] **give me reading and making me read with her**, give explain her what I read and if I understand the reading.

Listening to Trudie, one hears the teacher's authority as primary. The teacher is cast as central to the students' learning; she transmits the information and the students take it in. The students, in turn, feed back what they've learned. It is a kind of "I take, you take" listening approach and "You give, I take" learning attitude. This is also reflective of the Instrumentalist's conception of knowledge as skills and specific facts.

Instrumental learners rely on their teachers to tell them what to do and how to do it. They want direct instruction and clear explanations. They expect and appreciate constructive feedback about the "right way" to learn and demonstrate their knowledge. In this way, the teacher demonstrates her authority; she is the knowledge bearer and tells the students what they need to know. Consistent with these learners' notion of truth, students growing from Instrumentalism assume there is one best interpretation or explanation. They want the teacher to give them the meaning of what they're learning or reading. They view such direct instruction as support for their learning.

On the other side of the teacher-student relationship, students growing from Instrumentalism for the most part depict their role and responsibilities in practical behavioral concrete terms. Trudie names the student's obligations this way:

[A good student must] come on time, do your homework, respect the teacher, you do what she told you to do.

Yvette similarly describes the student's relationship to the teacher and the learning enterprise.

. . . you do homework, you make up your mind to learn something . . . you have to listen and pay attention, something you don't understand or don't know, you can ask and they can explain you what they mean . . . but you have to listen and you have to be polite.

Students growing from Instrumentalism see the teacher as the monitor of their learning progress; the teacher keeps the students on track, and her evaluations tell them how well they're learning. When asked how she knows when she's learned something, Trudie states,

When you read, the teacher don't give you any corrections. . . . She [the teacher] always try to correct you when you speak . . . and always help you to understand and make sure you come on time . . . and when she give you evaluation and your evaluation, she told you . . . you can see how you work.

For these students the structure of evaluations, teacher corrections of written work and speech, and teacher's approach of telling the meaning of certain readings provides a kind of mechanical skill and task-scaffolding they require and consider supportive of their learning.

Curiously the Socializing and more Self-Authoring learners *do not* describe the teacher's role responsibilities *solely* in these more transactive concrete terms. In their perceptions of teacher support and feedback, these Instrumental students seem to articulate, as Perry (1970) suggests, qualitatively

different interpretations of their classroom world.¹² Few of the other students mentioned a quasi-enforcer quality to the teacher–student relationship. In fact, students bound by the Socializing and Self-Authoring positions specifically recounted the mutual and reciprocal quality of the teacher–student relationship as critical to their learning progress.

Because these students equate knowledge with skill acquisition, they find the classroom structure, which provides ample opportunity for practice, and the many examples the teachers give especially useful. Yvette describes the rule-based examples as helpful to learning, “[teachers] give you good examples what you can do, what not to do.”

Jean, like Yvette, also cites concrete activities that seem to enhance her learning.

The different activities. [The teachers] show you different ways to do it. Like there was a book they were reading about bread, and they actually did an activity with it of making bread. I find that helpful, of different ways, when you read a book, of different activities that can go with the book.

Jean, who is transitioning toward the Socializing way of knowing, understands the different examples the teacher shows the students as beneficial to building a repertoire of “how tos” to work with her children. She does not remark on her teachers’ need for many ways of teaching to relate most effectively to the students’ diverse ways of understanding. Learners operating solely from the Socializing way of knowing say a teacher’s repertoire of techniques is helpful. Again, any of these literacy learners will appreciate demonstrations of and exposure to new ways they and their children can learn (especially as some of these students have been educated within a different sort of educational system, in which the teacher informs the student what s/he should know). However, what seems subtly different for these students is that examples are most helpful because they comprise a discrete set of steps or strategies, which help learning. None of these students seem to step back and reflect on how having multiple ways to do something and explore an idea represents a different conception of the *process* of learning.

Students’ perceptions of the teacher-student relationship

How the teacher supports and cares: The teacher gives you what you need

For the majority of the students growing away from the Instrumental way of knowing, the teacher–student relationship was conceived as the teacher giving to the student. This sense of support is different from the way that Socializing students understand the teacher–student relationship. For them, teaching and learning is premised on mutuality, trust, and direct expressions of the teacher’s care for personal aspects of the student’s life. For the more Instrumentalist students, the support (and perceptions of care and interest) the teacher provides seems related to what the *teacher does* for the students to scaffold learning.

Yvette recounts the ways that her teacher’s encouragement provides the “push” for student learning and continued motivation.

¹² For a fuller explication of Perry’s (1970) scheme see Helsing’s, Broderick’s and Hammerman’s section entitled “A Developmental Lens” and the “Five Core Premises” they describe in their chapter in this monograph.

[My teacher] reads a story to the class and after you read you can make a story by yourself, without the paper . . . what this mean . . . everything you're not doing well for the writing, but [my teacher] give something to push, push, push, for everything push, she say, you can improve your writing.

As noted earlier, the teacher's interaction with the students provides the confidence to continue to learn. Yet this interaction is cast in more one-way transactive "doing" terms in which the teacher gives confidence and motivation to the students.

Jean, who may be slightly further along in the transition toward the Socializing way of knowing, portrays the structure of support and her teacher's help in a slightly different way. Here, in a way reminiscent of students operating from the Socializing way of knowing, she discusses the benefits of how her teacher goes over the material. Yet Jean's depiction is less about the way "going over" stands for the teacher's investment in her or represents the teacher's validation of her ability. In Jean's discussion of how her teacher helps her, she seems to indicate that in going over the material, the teacher aids her agency and prevents a sense of helplessness.

Jean poignantly describes her teacher sitting with her to show different ways of doing a math problem and emphasizes that the teacher will not leave until she knows Jean understands the problem. This is a difference, she says, between her learning experiences in high school and Even Start. Jean describes the scaffolding and support her teacher provides:

[My teacher] sat down and showed me the ways to do (this geometry problem) with a ruler or a little circle thing, or a calculator, or just different ways of doing it in your head or on paper . . . It was important because I was stuck. My experience in high school is they show you once, and if you don't understand once, they don't help you again. And at least [my teacher] **makes sure you get it before she leaves you to do it on your own.** And I think that's helpful for me.

This support is critical to Jean's confidence and sense that she can learn. Interestingly, Elena, (who operates from the Socializing way of knowing) recounts how she, too, felt unsupported in her high school classes. Strikingly different, though, are their interpretations. While both women felt somewhat demoralized by their high school experiences, Jean talks more concretely about the help she now receives from her teacher, who gives her what she needs to get the knowledge. This giving by the teacher so the student "may get" is understood as support and a kind of caring. Elena recounts how this teacher understands and never humiliates her or makes her feel stupid. This teacher-student dynamic makes Elena feel able to ask questions and comfortable making mistakes. In Elena's construction of the teacher's help, she is focused less on the concrete information she receives and more on the internal psychological validation she receives for her own knowledge and learning process. One is a more concrete take on the supportive presence and help of the teacher, the other, a more abstract internalizing of the teacher's regard. Both understandings, however, are perceived as supports and esteem boosters. In each case, the teacher protects the student from feeling helpless or unworthy.

Students growing from Instrumentalism perceive that giving time and attention to students is a demonstration of support and positive teacher-student relations. Indira, an ESOL student from

Southern Asia, believes the teacher has a responsibility to give students her time. She seems to feel teachers should focus attention on the students with the greatest needs and interest. Speaking about her son's trouble learning to use the computer, Indira links the teacher's care for and interest in her son's learning to the [lack of] time she sets aside to help him.

Teacher don't have time . . . (my son) is in class he attend, but he don't use computer, how can he? This is responsibility of teacher. But teacher don't give the time. My thinking, my opinion is who the student is with, the full time is spent (with) who need it, who is interested. Teacher told me, but teacher don't have her time. How (then) the teacher make the student good of English, good of knowledge.

For learners growing from Instrumentalism, support seems measured in the equality of treatment the teacher accords her students. Teacher support, interest, and fairness link to students receiving equal time, equal praise, or equal advice. Fairness, support, and care are seen as equivalent. For students in transition to the Socializing way of knowing but still making sense in more concrete ways, fairness may be understood as a kind of measurable quantity. The sense of whether the teacher cares may rest or fall on observations such as Yvette's of her teacher's behaviors and interactions with other students.

I think Even Start is good, but sometimes in my class . . . teacher is (praising) only one student in class, "Oh, she is good. She is good". . . Teacher is always . . . "Student is correct. She is good." But sometimes only one student is good. . . . She is only six months learning English, . . . and I get hurt feelings. This is not good feeling . . . She don't use good word for me but (for) another she use.

Every student are same. You are teacher. You give the same advice. Only the one student is not important for you. Lot of students here. How make the future in this student? This is your responsibility, how can I teach?

For some of these more Instrumental students, the teacher demonstrates her support for and interest in her students by solving the student's problems. Here, Indira equates her teacher's interest [or lack of it] with help in solving a problem in her son's school.

My teacher very nice teacher. She help me and sometime she ask, "Any problem?" But she not solve this problem. I depended (upon) a teacher and principal [at son's school?] to solve this problem. But teacher is not interested, you cannot solve.

Some of the students bound by the Socializing way of knowing mention the ways their teachers go beyond their roles and advocate for them when they feel overwhelmed or exploited by an insensitive institution. When their teachers speak out on their behalf, these students say they feel emboldened and validated. In contrast, Indira seems to expect her teachers to solve her problems, and when her teacher's action is not forthcoming, she sees this as a lack of support, interest, and care.

Socializing Ways of Knowing

What the students expect from their teachers and their conceptions of teacher support

The teacher as the source of learning: How the teacher “helps you understand”

Similar to their Instrumentalist peers, the learners operating from the Socializing way of knowing see the teacher as a main source of authority. To be sure, they continue to view the concrete practical-mechanical aspect of instruction as important. We understand this focus on the more concrete elements of learning as these students’ sense that the teacher is the source and expert on what one *should know* to be a fluent speaker and literate person. For the literacy learners at Even Start, who are mostly members of a foreign culture and learning a new language, the teacher takes on the expert’s role of helping students master the technical skills of speaking and writing. As we’ve said, almost all of the students across the developmental positions remarked that they expected their teacher to attend to the more mechanical aspects of teaching, such as checking the assignments and correcting papers and their homework.

Socializing students state they wanted their teachers to be flexible and to use several ways and a variety of examples in teaching them. As Felicia appreciatively reports,

she gives a lot of suggestions so we can work about that. We don’t . . . she doesn’t really follow the rules. She work how we can learn.

Unlike the way students growing from Instrumentalism understand the teacher role, Socializing students do not conceive it primarily as a rule-bound trainer or an enforcer who “makes you learn.” Rather, teachers are seen as guides or encouragers who are “patient, kind, and help you understand.” This relational aspect of learning seems particularly important to the students in this developmental position. For the most part, Socializing students believe their knowledge originates outside themselves and give the teacher responsibility for what they should know and even should want to learn—still receptive sense of how learning happens. The most consistent element expressed about “how the teacher helps you learn” related to how these students perceived the teacher’s personality as inherently kind and supportive. They saw this nurturing and supportive teacher–student relationship to be critical to their learning. Anna’s view of the teacher is emblematic of how a student at this way of knowing may still believe the teacher directs and is at the source of her internal motivation.

A good teacher is someone who cares about your learning, about the progress you’re making . . . Like, if you don’t understand something, they help you . . . They can help you to do better. Like sometimes [my teacher] always say like, like she always look up what we do for the year, and if we have to work on something, so **she tells us, she says, like, we been doing this, now if you have to do more reading or more writing.** She says you been doing this, you’re doing better in this now you have to work on . . . or sometimes she ask us what we can, how we can [learn] . . . Sometimes they don’t know what you really owe, where you are or what you really want . . . they do know, but . . . I think they don’t want to, to be bothered [to say you] really have to do this . . . **Some teachers want you to tell them what you want to do, like if you think that, “Well, I’m not good in math, I’d like to work on my math” . . . They ask you, “How do you feel?” I mean, I think sometimes you don’t even know you like that.** You don’t think about it, they

come and ask you and . . . oh, that make you think about something, oh yes, because you don't think, you just . . . Like, [my teacher] show me I have to do work on my writing because I don't do that too well.

For many learners in this developmental position, teachers are the authorities and let you know when you've learned something. Anna assumes her teacher is more aware of her learning needs than she is and appreciates her teacher's assertiveness. In fact, Anna takes her teacher's stance as support and caring. Some teachers may expect students to be more fully self-directing, but Anna points out the way her teacher's feedback makes her think of things in a new and different way. Like many Socializing learners, Anna seems to locate the authority for what she knows, when she's learned something, and what she needs to know and learn in an expert other: the teacher. A more Instrumental construction of the teacher's role might see the teacher as the expert who evaluates your work and tells you what to learn. Anna appears to reflect upon the way that a teacher asking her students, "What do you want to know?" sometimes can help a student learn more about herself and her learning. This suggests a less concrete and more mutual understanding. Nevertheless, these students share their Instrumentalist peers' appreciation of teacher direction.

As Anna says, feeling their teacher cared for them and their progress was of great importance. This idea continuously surfaced as critical to the learning process for the ABE and ESOL learners in this developmental position. A consistent theme is that the teacher's support and care is the foundation of the students' overall belief that the teacher is invested in them and their learning.

Like, they [the teachers] help you learn, to learn what they're teaching you . . . If you don't understand something . . . you could go over until, until you understand it. . . . Just she always ready to answer your question. She want to, she's always waiting to talk . . . to ask what small [thing] you don't understand what can she help you with . . . They help you or they give you special time without school where they can help you if you don't understand something . . . if you don't understand, you just come to them and then they sit down with you and help you to do it, to understand what you are learning . . . and showing you how to do if you don't understand how to do it.

Not unlike students growing from Instrumentalism, Socializing knowers understand teacher support as going over the material, giving the student time, and being available to explain how to do the work. Yet, going over the material is somewhat more than participating in the drill of skill-learning. For students in this developmental position, teacher supports seem equated most strongly with the relational aspects of the teacher-student interaction. Elena put it this way:

My teacher, she's great, she works with you no matter who you are, and she doesn't give up on the students.

She knows so much. You can ask her anything and she knows. . . . and she's so interested in your learning that you learn. She cares so much.

Going over the material and working with the students appears to be interpreted as the way a teacher demonstrates care. These students seem to view the teacher as a kind of abiding presence who has knowledge and implicitly regards the learning progress of her students as important. Elena seems to articulate that the teacher's willingness to work with every student is internalized as care for the student, that the student, in turn, internalizes as a kind of positive regard for herself and her own learning. This notion that a teacher invests in you as a person and takes you and your learning seriously seems to undergird these students' ability to take themselves seriously. Perhaps because so many of these students are foreign-born and have met with difficult circumstances and, in some cases, racist responses, it is especially critical that their teacher never "give up" on them.

Unlike their more Instrumental peers, Socializing learners conceived the learning process and the teacher-student relationship as more reciprocally interactive. In a sense, these learners believed they could and should be more active participants in asking the teachers to help them with specific knowledge they wanted to learn. Raquelle sees her teacher primarily as a respected expert and learning resource. However, she also describes the relationship between teacher and learner as active and mutual. She appreciates that she can bring her interests to her teacher and that her teacher welcomes, works with, and validates these interests.

The hard words so I brought them to her so she can explain to us. And sometimes when I have time I read some history and she corrects them for me, the vocabulary . . . Last time for the summer and something I asked her to do and everybody can profit from what we've been doing.

Felicia, who is in the ESOL class, feels similarly. Asked what helps her learn, she describes how her teacher is responsive to the students' suggestions.

We ask her, please if we can practice more in that things, and conversation, and reading, I don't know, past tense, future tense. We told her. We give to her a lot of suggestions. . . . Yeah, and she work with us. She say, "All right."

In a way quite distinct from those learners more on the Instrumental side of the developmental continuum, these students do not believe the "teacher makes you learn." Raquelle describes this viewpoint.

If they don't want to do the work, the teacher is not going to push them. Because they're not kids, they're adults . . . maybe she (the teacher) think she going to hurt their feeling or she not going to be happy. So if you do, you do it, if you don't so something she can't [make you learn].

Students' perceptions of the teacher–student relationship

How the teacher supports: Personal caring and personal advocacy

"The teacher helps you feel important and accepted...she never forget you."

"They listen to you . . . she helps us in different problems, not just English."

For learners operating from the Socializing way of knowing, mutuality, trust, and care are the salient features of the teacher–student relationship. These students believe the teacher supports the students by establishing a context of care and empathy. Socializing knowers tend to focus and comment on their teacher's personal qualities. The qualities they most value are kindness, nurturance, and patience. These seem to help the students feel comfortable and create an inclusive, nonshaming atmosphere of acceptance in which students feel free to ask questions and make mistakes. The students seem to gain a sense of personal power or permission from their teacher's implicit acceptance. In a way, the teachers almost "lend the students their learning egos." Again, while we would imagine that many learners appreciate and require a welcoming environment, these students' perception that their teachers care and are kind may be critical to their view of support and their engagement in learning. We surmise that the primacy teachers' personal qualities have for these learners relates to the fact that individuals operating from the Socializing way of knowing tend to evaluate themselves according the evaluations of others. From a developmental standpoint (Kegan, 1982), one's identity, including one's identity as a student, is *made up of others'* opinions of oneself. The two are inseparable—"how I feel about myself is inextricably connected to how you feel about me." Thus, it is notable that all of the students in this developmental position mention the value of their teachers' kindness, patience, care, and acceptance.

Moreover, for these learners, teachers' acceptance may serve to correct past negative encounters. Elena, one of the most highly educated ABE students, compares the atmosphere of care and unconditional regard her current literacy teacher creates with the competitive learning environment she recalls her high school teachers established.

[Everyone in the class] is so nice, and that's something that [my teacher] makes happen, you know? . . . because she makes everybody feel so important, that no matter if you're new, no matter if you're short, small, fat, pretty, ugly, you know,

whatever, everybody's the same—very important in the class. When somebody comes and she just introduced all of us and everybody has to introduce, she's talking about something important, like somebody from the PBS channel come in . . . some, some students came late. She [the teacher] doesn't say, like, "You're late." . . . So she stopped and said, "Oh this is __, she's from this country" . . . and everybody is very important, you know?

Elena contrasts this feeling of acceptance with recollections of feeling shamed and stupid in high school.

I remember I didn't know English when I was in high school, and in my English class, I was shaking all the time, like, "If he asks me that, I don't know, and oh my God, I'm going to be stupid." Oh, it's terrible, the feeling.

These ABE and ESOL literacy students describe the sense of trust in their classrooms. One can imagine how the perceived unconditional regard especially aids these students in hearing the teacher's feedback about mistakes and comments about what they have yet to master. For students in this developmental position, feedback can be devastating. At worst, it can feel like negative criticism or exacerbate feelings of helplessness, that one is stupid and doesn't know. In an atmosphere of trust, caring, and patience, these students appreciate correction and may be able to begin to disentangle not knowing certain material and literacy skills from not being able to know, to separate having trouble with the material or ideas from feeling like a troublesome person or a poor student.

Across their interviews, these learners share appreciation for the fact that their teachers listen, are respectful, and involve themselves personally in their students' lives. This personal relationship fuels these learners' trust and connection to the class. Felicia describes the primacy that a personal teacher-student relationship has for learners at this particular developmental position.

They listen to you . . . she helps us in different problems, not just English. She helps us in different things is we have problem and **she never forget us, for example, in birthdays.** [*Why is that important?*] They, we have a lot of [trust].

Here Raquelle describes the way feeling respected aids learning.

When I met [my teacher] I said she's a good teacher, people can learn and explore everything if you want from her. Because she's really good with people and she had a lot of respect for us, even if we are adults. And she respects us very much and anything, any problems you have, you can explain to [her]. She's always tries to help you. She's a very good teacher, a really, really good teacher.

Along with Felicia and Raquelle, other students consistently and explicitly mention that their teachers' help with their personal problems is important. These Socializing knowers feel emboldened and encouraged by their teachers' advocacy and intervention on their behalf. We surmise that for these students, the teachers' intervention provides models of proactive behavior and self-assertion, which these students may internalize. Moreover, such advocacy implicitly validates the students' concerns and their right to speak out. While any student might feel distressed and disempowered by confusing or outright marginalizing experiences, an individual bound by this developmental position

might be especially vulnerable to intimidation by others, believing she should not voice her confusion or feelings of injustice for fear of offending others or garnering disapproval. Elena is particularly vocal about the ways her teacher has helped her manage a difficult situation and navigate the local traffic system.

In my class there's one teacher, and she's very supportive, very super nice, a great teacher . . . just everything good you can say. Even things that maybe she doesn't have to deal with, she helps you, you know? I remember I always drive here, and I had my car, and my car was towed once, so I didn't know what to do at all, you know, like I didn't know where to go, I didn't know anything. So they helped me a lot with that, and they told me where it could be where it was exactly, they located my car. They told me the way how to get there . . . Everything you need, they help.

Elena goes on to recount another situation in which her teacher advocated for another student.

I remember . . . something happened to a girl in the other program and the other group. She was coming on the bus with her son, and the bus driver was really, really rude. . . . and she was telling the bus driver, "Please, calm down." Everybody was like crazy . . . once, he turned left, and her son banged his head, like real hard, because he was really rude driving. And so she even cried. She was real upset because she thought she was unpowerful to do something against him, you know. So she came here and she said that to my teacher, and my teacher called the transportation department, and she told everything that happened and really was complaining about the way he was driving. So it was very good, you know.

In contrast to their Instrumental peers, students bound by the Socializing way of knowing appreciate the way their teachers introduce them to larger ideas instead of just focusing on skill development. These students seem to want the curriculum content to incorporate knowledge and information that is relevant and helpful to the larger context of their lives. Elena comments on the way a culturally relevant curriculum is different from what she learned in her home country. She prefers the U.S. model, finding it enables her to be more culturally competent as a person and a parent.

It's like a very different way of learning. Like, when you are in high school and you are here. Because I think here you are learning more important things. Like, you know what I mean? In high school you have to have, like, eight subjects everyday, you know. **But here you just learn what is important for you at the moment and why and as a person in the society, in the community.**

. . . here because we are parents, they always teach us things that help us, like if they talk about science, so they speak, we read, we do research and talk about like some problem, like diabetes, like asthma that a lot of people in my group have children with asthma, so they learn more things about asthma . . . **So it's nothing that you don't need I your real life.** They are things that you use. . . . and they are things that your children will learn in school and we can help them with. You feel

frustrated when your children do at home homework and then you have no idea how to help them, you know?

As we acknowledged in the previous section on guiding and teaching, several of these learners mention that this knowledge was important to enhancing their parenting capabilities. Additionally, learners operating from the Socializing way of knowing appreciate the ways the teachers' assignments invite them to reflect upon and voice their opinions about U.S. cultural practices. This response to the work their teachers provide is unlike that of their Instrumental peers, who make no such remarks.

Elena provides a good example. Here, she recounts appreciation that her teacher shared information about a current government initiative to support child development. What she enjoys the most, however, are the questions her teacher appends to the article describing this initiative. These questions invite Elena to reflect on and express her own opinion of this initiative.

Yes . . . everyday they teach us. . . . the teacher give like a little bit of everything and also every day she gives us like a paper maybe from the medicine or maybe from the newspaper, something that she thinks is very interesting and has something to do with the particular time or thing we are doing. . . . the last paper she gave us was a paper about, I think something about the governor is trying to help the newborn babies, like give them to mothers, a basket to all the mothers that have a newborn baby, a basket with classical music, storybooks, you know. So it's telling that, no matter if it is very, very small, it is good for them to listen to classical music because . . . the classical music makes the babies more smarter in the future . . . And also when they are like eight, seven months old you should read to them because maybe you think they are not understanding but they are getting used to the reading and enjoying since they are so small. . . . **then it is a page with questions and the last question says, make a letter to the governor, like . . . agreeing or disagreeing with him and tell him which is the best part you think about what he is doing and how come he can improve it or if there is something wrong. It is very interesting.**

Belenky et al. (1986) comment on the way knowers in this developmental position begin to claim the authority of their own minds through just such invitations to express personal opinions. Although the expert authority—the teacher—may be implicitly validating some cultural values and information, she is simultaneously supporting and explicitly promoting the importance of differentiating one's own ideas from those of the accepted and powerful authorities.

Growing Toward and Reaching Self-Authoring Ways of Knowing

What the students expect from their teachers and their conceptions of the teacher support

The teacher as one source of learning: “She learns from me, I learn from her”

The Self-Authoring students seem to bring their capacities for critical reflection, independent evaluation, and self-directedness to their expectations for and assessments of their teachers and the learning process. Unlike their classmates, Self-Authoring learners did not conceive of their teacher(s) as the primary or sole authority for their learning. Teachers were an important but not the only source of learning. These students were able to *simultaneously* respect their teachers’ authority and knowledge and entertain the possibility that their teachers may not “know everything.”

Dalia provides a good example. She states:

Sometimes [the teacher] didn’t get a chance to do the research, so I knew a little more If she don’t know something, she will get on the computer, she will find the books at the library or at the [literacy] center. Sometimes she has to find answers elsewhere.

Dalia seems unthreatened by the fact that her teacher, whom she greatly respects, sometimes has to look things up. This stance toward the teacher as knowledgeable yet fallible is different from the more Instrumental or Socializing students’ view. As we previously noted, Belenky et al. (1986) and Perry (1970) suggest individuals who are in the Socializing position commonly perceive their teachers as experts and authorities who know the “truth.” These students typically find it difficult to consider their teachers in anything less than global, either/or, dualistic terms that sound like this description.

They [the teachers] are always more or less right . . . they assume that all authorities are infinitely capable of receiving and retaining “the right answer” with impeccable precision . . . they see only blacks or whites, but never shades of gray. (Belenky et al. pp. 39-40; p. 41).

In keeping with this belief in teacher as authority-expert, students who construct their world from either Instrumental or Socializing perspectives tend to perceive the teacher–student relationship as more receptive and authority bound. To recall the words of Elena, “My teacher . . . she knows so much. You can ask her anything and she knows.” In contrast, the Self-Authoring learners understood that students sometimes know more than their teachers and that teachers learn from students just as students learn from their teachers.

As previously mentioned, many of the students who were Instrumental or Socializing knowers relied on their teachers to direct their learning. The structure and help provided by the teacher were integral sources of their motivation to learn. Although Self-Authoring and Socializing learners share an appreciation of their teachers’ willingness to address their interests, Self-Authoring students frequently came in with their own learning agenda and notions of subjects to study. Unlike their peers, Self-Authoring students held themselves responsible for their own learning progress. One student, Ho, describes the shift he experienced toward developing a more internally generated motivation for learning.

Before, I thought . . . teachers . . . you know, they supposed to know, that what I would think. But now I know it's up to you. If you don't want to learn, nobody can tell you nothing. Nobody can put nothing in your head unless you want them to give [it].

Dalia details the way she feels she can share her own learning interests with her teacher, who is very responsive. For this student, her teacher's willingness to help her meet her own goals is an act of support. However, this support is not the source of her motivation to learn. Dalia's motivation comes from within.

. . . if I have a question . . . before I had to search . . . I have tried that, not knowing how . . . trying to figure out on my own, by just looking at the example [here in the interview Dalia offers many examples of difficulties she's had trying to understand and learn fractions]. But now I can come here [come to the classroom and the program] and say, "Hey, [says her teacher's name], look what I found. Show me how to do this" . . . and she could help me with the problem.

In general, these students seem very aware of both their learning styles and the limits of their independently pursued knowledge. They take a perspective on the ways that, as ESOL and ABE learners, they may become blind to their own mistakes. Unlike their peers, they do not depend on the teacher to tell them when they've learned something. Rather, they conceive of the teacher as a resource to help reveal the errors and lapses in their understandings, given their self-recognized tendency to overlook some of their learning gaps. This is a significantly different stance toward their learning process than the other students hold. Here, these Self-Authoring learners realize that they may be unaware of their learning problems and seek a respected resource to help them improve their breadth of knowledge. They are able to step back and take a perspective on themselves as knowers and learners, and actively seek feedback and constructive criticism to become more competent students. In a sense, these students conceive of the teacher as one who aids in their learning process versus someone who imparts what they should know. Dalia put it this way,

When you're learning on your own, when you make a mistake, you're the only one who knows you make a mistake and sometimes you don't even know if you made a mistake. But when you're learning with somebody [the teacher] that can help you and give you new ideas how the word is written and how you read it, how to find it in the dictionary and where the word came from . . . I know now when to read and pause . . . which before, I never think about or put any punctuation and commas, and I didn't want to put that dot on the "i" . . . and even if you sometimes you're trying to correct your own writing, you can become blind over doing it because you don't know, because you're doing it and you're the one who's correcting it, you overlook things.

Hamid echoes a similar insight and belief about what he appreciates and expects from a teacher vis-a-vis his own learning process.

You do yourself, but someone has to advise you or helping you. Maybe you don't know something somewhere, maybe you're not seeing something.

Students' perceptions of the teacher–student relationship

How the teacher supports: She attends to the learning needs, strengths, and weaknesses of each student

“She pay attention to everything of the student . . . A good teacher understands different possibility to [help] students understand.”

Building on their conceptions of the teacher as someone who helps advise and facilitate one's learning process, Self-Authoring students construe the teacher–student relationship somewhat distinctly from their peers. Students growing from Instrumentalism felt attended to when the teacher gave them the concrete skills they needed. Students operating from the Socializing way of knowing constructed the teacher's support as linked to their teachers' empathy, patience, and unconditional regard. Supportive teacher–student interactions were cast in relational terms located in the teacher's personal qualities. For those students, the teacher's patience symbolized her nurturance and validated them as capable learners. In contrast, Self-Authoring learners seemed to connect their notions of teacher support to their own

theories of the learning and teaching process. Thus, their expectations for teacher attention and scaffolding derive not from a primary need to be nurtured but from self-generated ideas about the process of education, which they consider a path to self-actualization, enhanced personal mastery, and self-discovery.

These students believed their teacher's support primarily emanated from her skills and interest in focusing on individual students' abilities. Thus, Self-Authoring students' visions of and expectations for teacher support related to their assessment of their teacher's professionalism and expertise. These students brought this evaluation to their understanding of how and whether the teacher effectively engaged with each student to remediate weaknesses and develop strengths. In a way distinct from their peers, they held their teachers accountable for meeting the needs of each student and to balance individual attention with the needs of the group. To these Self-Authoring learners, such attention demonstrated the teacher's investment in both her profession and her students.

Across her interviews, Ahara consistently describes what she thinks comprises good teaching and support for learning. She relies on her own evaluations of the way her teachers assess and address the students' learning abilities. This reliance on her own standards and authority indicates the way individuals in this developmental position see themselves as the source of their values. Ahara describes what she expects and requires of her teachers.

I saw them [the teachers] what they doing by my eyes, and I work with them . . . How good [they are], how they nice, what they say, what they do. [A good teacher] has to pay attention for all the students the same thing. And you have to know who need more help, how this student have English, because you have all people working with you.

. . . very important to ask the strengths. She teach not the same last year. She teach different way every year. **What she compares the strengths and what they [the students] need and . . . those strengths they [the students] wanted.**

For Ahara, a good teacher has a flexible teaching style that may change from year to year to better meet the students' needs. Ahara believes a good and supportive teacher simultaneously balances the needs, learning requirements, and personal goals of each student with the needs of the whole group.

Ho, an ABE student from Southern Asia, articulates a similar belief. Here he describes what he considers good teaching:

A really good teacher have to know what the students like, like their ideas or their explanations. They [the teachers] have to understand them. . . . A good teacher is good as long as she understands different possibility or different ways to make students understand the way she taught or explained any topic . . . Because some teacher can just stood up there and explain all day and students sit down here and wouldn't pick up a thing . . . when I stop into any new classes or anything, I'm always aware of is, is that a good teacher? Will I have problem with her? I always ask that and answer just for myself.

Ho also has a complex understanding of the ways that the teaching and learning process happens. He understands that teachers need to use different methods depending on student learning styles. He construes the learning process as supportive (or unproblematic) when there is a good fit between the teachers' approach and the students' way of learning and understanding. He has his own criteria for this and assesses whether his teachers will offer this support. He wonders whether a particular teacher will be good for him. Ho expresses the shared understanding among Self-Authoring learners that support is about the teacher's ability to maximize and build upon the students' learning strengths.

Hamid likewise locates teacher support and concern in the ability and interest in meeting each student's learning needs and agenda.

You [the teacher] have to pay attention to what the student is saying . . . maybe you teaching something, you talking something else . . . maybe students don't like it . . . teachers have to know what they're teaching . . . [pay] attention to everything of the student . . . exactly how some high, some low, and the low ones you have to push. They have to get to that goal. . . . You have to make sure they get the same attention.

Hamid develops his criteria about what is helpful and supportive one step further and describes the value in the teacher paying ". . . attention to everything of the student." Later he suggests, as do several Self-Authoring learners, that supportive teachers understand the students' life context and make allowances for the complexities and priorities of their lives.

[The teacher] have to know some have a family . . . who have a family have too much problem . . . why this person may be late some times, maybe why leave early.

One can read this statement as a belief that a supportive and engaged teacher needs to respect learners as people. Perhaps this is a bid for recognition of one's whole self premised in the capacity to define one's identity as the composite of many selves and many roles. This is a distinctly different construction of the teacher-student relationship than that of Socializing students, who look to their teachers for validation and acceptance. Socializing knowers also mention they want their teachers to consider their life situation, but their meaning is somewhat different. As we suggested, these students appreciate their teacher's involvement in their whole lives. They especially welcome their teacher's advocacy and help in navigating difficult circumstances. Self-Authoring students do not seem to seek this mode of advocacy. The sort of teacher engagement Self-Authoring students seem to desire is a kind of equalizing recognition. In the above excerpt, Hamid seems to state his requirement that his teachers understand, respect, and dignify the complexities inherent in an adult learners' life. He wants his teachers to consider the many competing role responsibilities learners balance. In sum, Self-Authoring students' interest in teacher qualities and definitions of support are linked to how they expect their teachers to join their drive for competence and mastery.

Learners who are growing toward or have reached Self-Authorship still want their teachers to spend time correcting their skills, even if this is not their primary definition of support. They also continue to mention their teacher's personal qualities of patience and understanding as helpful. Good instruction is construed as a good mix of skills, ideas, teacher concern, and care all enfolded into an expectation that teachers be proficient in their subject and attentive to individual and group learning needs. Linn, who is transitioning to Self-Authorship, notes her expectations for support and good teaching.

Good teacher have to proficient her subject, also loving and understanding of students. Have to prepare for the classroom, organize the class. Have to know how to explain if the student can't understand when have to give another example, another message.

She understands all students. I think she have more patience and more sympathy for the student. Most of the time she encourages the students. When I write something, some homework, she reads it carefully and she checks my grammar and vocabulary and she said to me, "It's very wonderful job." She encouraged me and at that time I want to, I can do. So it's very good for me.

Hamid and Linn seem to connect the teacher's personal qualities to explicit scaffolding of their capacities. Hamid states:

Good teachers have good face . . . that is big help for a student . . . some are fast, some are slow . . . you have to know which one is weak, which one is strong.

How the teacher supports: She sets a context of stimulation, ideas, and challenges

“Every day the teacher had new ideas . . . learning wasn’t just one way, everything is perfect.”

Unlike their classmates operating from the Socializing way of knowing, who want their teacher to create an atmosphere of empathy and unconditional regard, Self-Authoring students seek a learning atmosphere marked by educational challenges and constructive feedback. Unlike their peers, these students consistently note they want their teachers to establish a learning context of ideas, stimulation, and creativity. Teachers provide the structure for the students’ self-directed learning and the informational backdrop for students’ interests. These students appreciate it when their teachers integrate cultural information with academic content. Self-authoring students focus on knowledge that includes but goes beyond skills. As previously discussed, they expect and hope their teachers will create a space for studying contextual-social cultural knowledge, which they actively use to acculturate.

Hamid demonstrates how important such a mix of skill and contextual learning can be for students in this developmental position. He recounts a story in which he transferred from Even Start to a different ABE program, hoping it would provide even greater challenge and knowledge. Hamid was disappointed by the other literacy program’s curriculum. In his view, the program he transferred to, and ultimately dropped out of, did not offer Even Start’s rich interdisciplinary background. He felt this other less satisfying literacy center focused more on skill learning than acquisition of broad knowledge. Learners who, like Hamid, are in this developmental position, typically rely on their own judgements and standards to ascertain when they are being appropriately challenged and stimulated.

I leave [Even Start] last year . . . I transfer to the other program. . . . but I don’t like what they teaching, no. . . . because I saw [it was] back too down. [*It was too simple?*] Yes . . . and when I went there . . . this is what it looked to me like wasting time and I left. . . . [I was learning] more at Even Start...yes, we studied social studies, science, history. . . . [*You wanted more information about subjects than just about reading and writing?*] Yes, exactly, that’s it. . . . [at Even Start] we have different nationalities there . . . yes, from Africa, from the Caribbean, from Europe, even from United States. . . . That was wonderful . . . studying different cultures, different history, what it is exactly the people, how they live in different areas . . . Yes, we all of the time talk about culture, especially what is the government of the country, how they are run, what they do.

It is interesting to remember that Elena and several learners operating from the Socializing way of knowing also appreciated learning personally relevant information. Yet we discern a subtle difference in the Self-Authoring calls for an integrated, broad-based curriculum. In keeping with these learners’ capacity for systems thinking, they may particularly prize learning about the ways various cultures and governing institutions operate so they can actively participate in their adopted culture. As these students have an understanding of the constructed nature of culture, broad exposure to other cultures may facilitate their ability to intentionally compose their own cultural identity, a key task for these individuals. Yet gaining a broad-based education in which literacy skills are integrated into a larger curriculum may be syntonetic with how these students conceive of education as a contextual process of self-enhancement and overall enrichment.

Dalia, like Hamid, operates solely from the Self-Authoring position. She also expresses excitement and pleasure in her exposure to such broad-based knowledge. She particularly values the way her teacher introduces new ideas and current information into the classroom.

I always believe . . . good teachers make a good school. It's really people that make things good. It's not good things that make people good. So I think it's having good teachers and having people who are really always looking for new things to teach us. And always trying to makes us do things like using the computers, and go on the Internet.

My teacher's ideas of work to do [has helped her learn the most]. **She stays up to date with everything in the newspaper and the Internet and what's going on around the world and what's up in [our city], in different cities,** and we celebrate every holiday, **we learn new vocabulary and we get test on them.**

Every day the teacher had new ideas, bringing up new homework, teaching us about new things. She was very creative on giving us assignments. **It became very interesting. Every day I was learning something new.**

We wonder whether Self-Authoring literacy learners may require their teachers to set a curricular context mix of stimulating ideas and skills because they grapple with two important learning goals. Dalia is a good example of the ways these students may bring their Self-Authoring way of knowing to bear upon simultaneously expanding their minds and closing their knowledge gaps and "informational blindness." We surmise that Self-Authoring learners' developmental position 1) enables them to reflect on and create their own trajectory for learning areas in which they would like to become expert and 2) allows them to take a perspective on the learning lags and "educational blindspots" they want to remediate. Listening to Dalia, we see her Self-Authoring capacities serve her particularly well in charting a learning agenda and generating enthusiasm for both information she lacks and the inherent value of acquiring new and emerging knowledge. You might say she displays a kind of internal developmental motivation for addressing her learning lags and interests.

Dalia has a typical Self-Authoring learner's awareness of the evolving, contextual nature of information and knowledge. This is a complex conception of the source of knowledge and beyond the way her Instrumental and Socializing classmates construe it. Once again, we believe such awareness undergirds and further fuels Self-Authoring learners' desire to simultaneously expand their knowledge base and master basic literacy skills. Teachers who do not offer or create opportunities to integrate skills and content in the curriculum risk being negatively evaluated as unchallenging and unstimulating.

Hamid also reveals this complex understanding of the nature of knowledge, unique to Self-Authoring students. He brings together two distinct ideas. Hamid questions a teacher's inherent expertise—a markedly different stance than that of his classmates bound by different developmental positions, who tend to see the teacher as the expert and infallible guide as well as spokesperson for the "truth." Hamid also expresses the unique Self-Authoring perspective that knowledge is constructed and reflective of the particular interpreter's perspective and bias. Thus, Hamid demonstrates a developmentally linked insight that Self-Authoring students may find stimulating (and others may find

threatening): the notion that history can be interpreted differently by different people. Instead of assuming there is one historical story line that must be understood to “know” history, the Self-Authoring learner can grapple with history as a variety of renditions, and that context determines what is remembered, how it is remembered, and whether it is “official” history.

In speaking with an interviewer about how he knows when he’s learned something, Hamid interjects the idea that there may be competing and different interpretations of ideas (here, history) that teachers transmit. He also knows that teachers are not “value neutral” in the way they teach. Such a realization may also amplify these students’ appreciation for learning contexts in which teachers encourage multiple perspectives.

But you know the history, maybe history stands on two sides. There is some true history and some made history . . . if you want to know the history you have to go back and know what different tools, different ideas, different ways you have to look at [how] that’s true or not . . . you know if I teach you something . . . maybe history, right? but maybe I’m lying . . . Well if I become a teacher, I will teach the truth. I don’t like a lie.

Dalia articulates a similar insight into how there are competing interpretations of and multiple perspectives on any idea. Like Hamid, she suggests these are helpful.

[In class] we can see the right of [a problem] and the bad of [it], you know? It wasn’t just . . . one way . . . everything was perfect.

Finally, learners growing toward or reaching Self-Authorship consider their teachers role models and exemplars. But unlike the way Socializing knowers may focus on the personal qualities of their teachers and/or adapt models of advocacy or internalize their teachers’ instructional approaches or values, Self-Authoring students seem to conceive of their teachers as mentors or models for self-directed paths to self-actualization and the realization of their potential. They appreciate teachers who give them opportunities to meet and connect with individuals with a certain degree of mastery and competence. Dalia describes the motivating power such exemplar models may have.

When the education lady came by . . . that was very important . . . because I’m mostly intimidated when people are smarter than me . . . but I think I grew out of it . . . You can hear about people all the time, but until you talk to them and realize, she had kids like me, and works hard and that really influenced me of going home and work[ing] even harder because if she make it, I could be able to make it, too. And she was another bigger influence because she is my racial background.

Students’ Understandings of Peer Support and Group Scaffolding

One of the unique features of the Even Start program is its open-ended nature. Students may remain in the program for different amounts of time depending on their learning pace and progress. Thus, the sample of learners we interviewed varied considerably in the number of months they had participated in ABE or ESOL classes before the study. Despite this open-ended quality to the classroom experience and the possibility for changes in the group configuration, there seemed to be a palpable and certainly a student-reported sense of group cohesion. The peer groups within each class had the

tenor of a cohort. They persisted as and identified themselves as a group of students actively engaged with and committed to each others' learning and well-being. The majority of the Even Start students we interviewed deemed this group experience important. Like students at our other research sites, the Even Start learners indicated they greatly appreciated their respective ABE and ESOL classmates' academic and emotional support. It is important to restate that although the ESOL and ABE classes were taught by different teachers, these teachers reported a shared dedication to creating a welcoming and responsive classroom atmosphere in which students respectfully listen to and helpfully engage with their peers. To this end, the teachers regularly discuss classroom dynamics at their staff meetings. Here, the ESOL teacher depicts the sort of atmosphere she strives to facilitate.

My goals are really to . . . be able to continue to refine that process, that give and take—what motivates people, what keeps them going, how you keep people bouncing off each other so that, that kind of atmosphere you see here, **so people feel they're not only getting something for themselves, but they're giving to someone else.** Because not only is that a good idea, so to speak, but **it helps everybody learn.** It makes everybody feel . . . **the more you feel you have to contribute, the more you're learning yourself, the more giving to others—to,** that's what makes the world work anyway, when it does, and not having that is what makes it not work—that's oversimplified. **So I care about it.** So my goal is to continue working on that, refining that, looking for ways to make that happen.

From our readings of the students' comments, it would seem that the ABE and ESOL teachers are successful in establishing this supportive atmosphere of "give and take." Moreover, the Even Start program structure intentionally incorporates opportunities for student sharing through the parent and child time and the parent discussion/support group components, which occurred weekly.

Although the Even Start program has two distinct classes, students with the same developmental position, regardless of their class placement, reported similar ways they believed their peers enhanced their learning and comfort. In other words, students perceptions of peer support seemed defined by their way of knowing. Analyzing the learners' descriptions of their cohort experience, we discern that peer group interactions overall served to scaffold individual learning while offering social support.¹³ However, how the particulars of such scaffolding and support were perceived differently depended on the students' way of knowing. Next, we describe the forms of peer support the students said they received and found helpful. We also highlight the ways such scaffolding affected the information they learned and the interpretive lens or way of knowing that filtered acquisition of new knowledge.

¹³ Our colleagues in Chapter Six have noted similar functions of the cohort in their chapter on the Polaroid site. For a fuller description of what they delineate as the three functions of the cohort, we refer the reader to their chapter in this monograph.

Growing Away from Instrumentalism

Students who are growing away from Instrumental ways of knowing mention the ways the group experience affords opportunities for exchange of information and concrete help. Especially through the parent discussion time, peers act as resources to each other, offering ideas and practical solutions about handling parenting problems. Yvette, an ESOL student, describes the “give and take” exchange of information in which there is a sharing of opinions and advice.

You have an idea but another person has an idea and can help you. Is a good idea, it can help you change.

Sometimes I have discussion with other students. You give your opinion. I give my opinion, they give their opinions. Sometimes I discuss . . . If you like that you can take something, something good you take it. If it's something they know . . . you see it that way, you can do this.

We surmise that for learners growing from Instrumentalism, like Yvette, this sort of informational exchange successfully fosters a collaborative approach to learning that joins these students' preference for rules and guidelines and stretches their tendency to focus solely on their own needs. On the one hand, such sharing speaks to these learners' notion that an idea's value lies within the idea itself and it is recognized by its utilitarian nature. The parent discussion/support group time is helpful because one can get ideas that work; it is a market-like construction of information exchange. As Yvette indicates, students share ideas, strategies, and rules that can help change the parent's and/or child's behavior, in a sort of product-oriented approach to help. On the other hand, this information exchange fosters a growing awareness of the different perspectives each student brings to the group and may encourage a student in this developmental position to begin to see things as others may.

Moreover, the group exchange of practical information is premised on the notion that sharing and listening to each other's differing ideas may provide helpful information for oneself. Collaborative learning may be viewed as Instrumentally valuable. Thus, for these learners, like Yvette, who are transitioning into the Socializing way of knowing, the cohort experience, which explicitly requires sharing diverse views and opinions, nurtures tolerance for and appreciation of multiple perspectives. It may also scaffold the beginning steps to internalize others' values, opinions, and ideals as implicitly mattering to oneself. This is something we earlier noted was true for Yvette in the way the group helped her reflect on and incorporate the value of being patient with her son. Trudie, an ABE learner, comments on the way the parent discussion group helps her take in the Even Start value of understanding one's child's development. She similarly seems to adopt such peer advice in a “how to” way.

The parent discussions help you more understand how to help your child development, by their reading, writing and . . . you can go home and help them, so then you learn from the child . . . you read more with the child, show the game.

The exchange within the cohort also supports a simultaneous understanding and appreciation of one's own culture and cultural diversity, again understood in rather concrete terms. Here Yvette depicts the expanded understanding she gains by talking about different cultures with her peers. Through this exchange, she gets a fuller sense of how her home country and those of the other students are similar and different. She believes this understanding is important because of its utilitarian value.

In a way that may be typical for learners bound by a more Instrumental perspective, Yvette depicts the concrete, observable differences of dress and behaviors that distinguish one culture from another rather than describing the cultural practices and customs as reflecting distinct values. Nevertheless, this peer-sharing fosters her cultural literacy.

You know some cultures have the custom but my culture, no. You know, some culture like another people have costume, for is to show your culture, but my culture you can wear anything, is special dress for wedding . . . different costumes for the culture . . . I think it's a good idea to learn something you don't know . . . it's important, you didn't go to all the culture, but you need to know if . . . you have idea to visit, you will know how they work.

Finally, a few of the more Instrumental learners within the ABE and ESOL classes point to the social support and camaraderie their peers provide. For Yvette, the feeling of friendship within the class is important because it makes it easy to share. She also notes the commonalities among the students, despite their cultural diversity—everyone is a parent. Yvette seems to appreciate the community of concern the cohort embodies. When a student misses a day of class, classmates inquire as to her well-being.

We work together with our friend . . . we talk together and everybody is friends . . . we share food from different culture, we sit together . . . make little party . . . when some friend not come and not at school we ask our teacher, what happened to her if she not come? But the first times nobody know everybody, but after we was together, we share some things . . . other people, surprise when they say something, you say, "Oh." But some people have something is same [in] my country . . . But if not share something, you don't know . . . if you have some idea you can share, you can share something good they can take . . . we discuss . . . because everybody has children too.

For Jean, the ABE classroom atmosphere is one of safety and welcome. She, too, receives considerable social support from her classmates and articulates a feeling akin to that of the more solidly Socializing peers. For Jean, the environment of peer support is "like being at home."

[Coming back to school] It was[scary] at first, but everybody here made if . . . they welcomed you in. It was a scary thing, ok, I'm going to go back to school, is it going to be okay? You know, you see new faces, but, no, everybody welcomed everybody in. So it, it was nice. It felt like being at home.

We hypothesize that the cohorts' emotional and social support, which norm peer friendship and the home-like group feeling, resonates with these learners' transition toward Socializing ways of knowing. Socializing knowers feel especially affirmed through empathic connection and communities of acceptance and similarity. Thus, it may be that for students growing away from Instrumentalism, such a communal atmosphere amplifies, scaffolds, and promotes the move toward the Socializing developmental perspective.

Socializing Ways of Knowing

Those students bound by the Socializing way of knowing consistently emphasize the relational aspects of peer support. For these learners, the cohort experience serves as a way of decreasing isolation, venting pressures of life, and easing the transition into U.S. culture. Many of these students liken their class atmosphere to being in a family in which they feel known, recognized, and appreciated. Felicia passionately describes the care and personal regard she derives from the cohort. She implies her teacher sets this tone of welcome and personal interest, which the students readily adopt.

The school is not really the school. **The school is like your family**, . . . so everybody know each other. Everybody trade—no like she is my classmate, “Hi, how you doing, bye.” You know, we take care everybody. We know each person . . . [My teacher] bought cake for everybody, every birthday we remember.

Everybody want to talk with them [when a new student arrives] with her, him . . . you know if they can feel comfortable with us if they can feel . . . like to you know, “This is my family. Welcome to family!”

For so many of these students, the classroom is a safe haven of friendship and connection. Elena, too, derives social support from the group.

. . . when I’m here I feel like, not like, but kind of like a family.

. . . everybody here cares so much for each other and I think that’s so good. . . . they become like part of your family . . . maybe not your family, not that much, but your friends.

Sarita echoes the same sentiment,

[*How is it now for you with all the students?*] You know, they are friendly. They talk with me if I couldn’t understand something, they help me. They help me . . . they explain to me. And we always talking about, we are come from every other country, different country, and when we talk about country, about family, and it’s really help. And like a friend. Yeah, and now, I’m happy.

Such a context of care and connection is syntonic with Socializing knowers’ developmental orientation to mutuality, reciprocity, and attunement to others’ feelings. Moreover, immigrant learners operating from this position may find the family-like atmosphere especially corrective to the potential distress of acculturation. For individuals bound by this developmental perspective, perceptions of being different, outsiders, or marginalized are particularly threatening to the self. We surmise the family ambience may provide a kind of transitional community of care that smoothes the process of acculturating into a new social-political system.

For a few learners, peer support also provides emotional scaffolding and regulation. In the context of the cohort, Elena, for example, comes to understand and gain perspective on the difficulties of her own situation. Newly arrived in the U.S. and parenting alone for the first time without her mother’s help, Elena feels overwhelmed and stressed by her situation. While she draws comfort from knowing others are in a similar situation, realizing other students have even more stressful

circumstances seems to give Elena perspective on her own situation, and she begins to feel less run by it.

And I see here that everybody, I'm not the only one, you know . . . that everybody in my situation the same as me, like because it's my life changed 100 percent. When I was in my country, it was very different. You know what I mean? Like, if I was tired, my mother go something, or my children are to school. **She can help me with everything. . . . I mean here, in the beginning when I moved, I said, "oh my God, I'm going to get crazy"** . . . But then when I came to the program, I knew everybody was just in the same position as me. . . . it's a consolation for you, you know what I mean? . . . But anyway, **when I saw that it comforted me a little bit.** . . . Yes, that it was not just me—that everybody in this country lives the same way as me. And then I realized . . . **this is what I have to live without getting crazy.** Yes, when I saw that, I was everybody is just like me. Living here . . . everybody lives in a small place, **everybody had to deal with children and things** . . . I have two [children] but some of them have eight, seven, five, you know. Yes imagine. So I say, "Oh my God, I'm like this" . . . in my class I have friends that they have to support three, five, like. I am learning, you know.

Earlier in this chapter, we recounted how the home visitor program and parenting curriculum helped Elena learn ways to both redirect her son's ebullient behavior and interact with her children in a satisfying way for extended periods of time. Although we cannot know from Elena's statement above, it is interesting to speculate whether the skills she's gained from the program, combined with the cohort's support and modeling, help her regulate the stress she feels in having to manage her children alone. By observing others in similar parenting circumstances and listening to their suggestions, Elena may recapture a kind of auxiliary authority and external source of emotional regulation she originally derived through her mother's support and guidance but lost upon moving to the U.S. Kegan (1994) comments on the way that "communities of mind" bound by common values, norms, and practices may provide the developmental scaffolding we would associate with the emotional containment Elena describes. He writes:

. . . the community's collective consciousness itself . . . is the source of order, direction, vision, role-creation, limit-setting, boundary management, and developmental facilitation. . . . The vision or overarching theory or ideology that directs life is provided via a corporate canon or creed that exists not in some lifeless text or impotent shrine, but in the body of practice, sanction, and prohibition coursing though daily life. . . . such "information" [often] communicates itself in the very fabric or ground of living. We see how we are supposed to handle this or that situation, and how we are "supposed to" is how we suppose we should as well. Handling this or that situation in the supposed ways is not merely the solving of this or that problem but the very expression of our atonement or in-tunement with our community. (p. 104)

Kegan states further that for Socializing knowers, such information, which is woven into the fabric of daily life, represents an important way they may "be supported to resolve the [Self-Authoring] tasks of adult life, such as those intrinsic to parenting" (ibid.). Extrapolating from his

insight, we wonder whether Elena discerns from the *fabric of classroom life* and the *cohort community consciousness*, the way she, as the primary caretaker, *should* manage her own stress and patiently respond to her children's abundant energy. For Socializing knowers like Elena, the cohort may represent a kind of "Self-Authoring borrowable mind" (Kegan, p. 105).

We believe it is important that this *cohort community consciousness* offers an internalizable model of how other immigrant parents manage and cope with similar difficulties while it offers emotional acceptance. Modeling a new approach in the context of empathy and care seems to underlie Elena's emergent capacity to enact limit-setting on both her children and her own emotional distress. This modeling of and support for new responses and interpretations of stress implicitly situates the students' life experiences as a source of knowledge and expertise. Elena may be internalizing the notion that, in fact, students as well as teachers or elders (such as her mother) may be credible knowledge holders and have sufficient wisdom to resolve their own problems. Thus, we surmise that Elena is emboldened in yet a third way to begin, when she is developmentally ready, to conceive of herself as an authority on her own parenting practices. While Elena is not yet conceptualizing herself in this manner, we hypothesize that her experience within the cohort community consciousness may help her move psychologically toward this understanding in the future.

A few other students receive a different kind of emotional information through participation in the cohort. For Anna, the supportive peer interactions provide a context in which she may take a perspective on the way she may misperceive or misjudge her classmates. This interpersonal context enables her to strengthen her "relational intelligence." Describing some of the ways she's changed, Anna speaks about her observations of her classmates and the process of judging others.

Sometimes when you don't know people, you judge them . . . when you know the person better, probably you feel another way about that person. I probably was wrong about what I think about that person, just because you don't know the person . . . then sometimes you just [think] "Oh, she has a look" . . . sometimes that happened to me . . . when you talk to the person, you can see that person from the way you judge, just taking a look at the person . . . When I first came to the class, I was . . . I feel more embarrassed with the students, now I get used to them. I've been here with them for [a while] then I don't feel so embarrassed like I was before.

Almost all of the students mention the cohort and the parent discussion/ support group as an important opportunity for peer supported learning and a chance to expand their repertoire of parenting practices. For Socializing learners, these discussions appear to support their preference for models and "how to" suggestions while simultaneously encouraging sharing of diverse experiences and perspectives. Across the classes and within their narratives, they highlight the valuable learning they receive from their classmates.

For parent time, it's really nice. Everybody has different discussion, different ideas and you learn from them and they learn from you and it give you some time to relax yourself and not to worry about home. So when you come to this program you're happy in a lot of different ways. (Raquelle, ABE student)

You can learn from other parents, like experience from the kids and things like that

. . . Other parents can share their experience, I think it's a good idea because somebody learn. You can get a lot from others to help you. (Anna, ABE student)

A month ago I think, we start to talk about discipline. It was beautiful because each parents start to tell their own experience. Every parents was to share how they handled the problem, if for them work, how they children said, everything . . . And we talk a lot about that. We share experience, and we get a lot of advices too, from my teacher and from anybody . . . Because I learn a lot. I am feeling like, too, "Oh I'm not the only person what happened to me." . . . So in that class about the discipline we learn about a lot. . . . Everybody talk about what we can do . . . how the kids feeling, how we can teach the kids feeling for [others]. (Felicia, ESOL student)

These discussions call on students to share their opinions and expertise. In doing so, there is a subtle invitation to the learners to begin to rely on their own authority and parenting knowledge. However, the peer exploration of opinions and experiences seems bounded by the overarching Even Start developmental parenting approach. Nevertheless, these learners find support, companionship, and help through these regular discussion times. Felicia describes the complex way the students share their opinions within the larger context of the "borrowable mind."

[parents' discussion group] It's a very good idea because everybody have examples. Everybody have a different situation. So they can share with us.

You know, everybody not agree. That they say, "Oh, no. I think that . . ." You know, we share if somebody not agree, so we talk about that. And you know, help. Help with, sometimes another mother, maybe she doesn't, you know, she took a wrong way. So we try to help her, explain.

Finally, Socializing knowers, like their more Instrumental peers, appreciate the recognition and exploration of cultural differences which permeate cohort sharing and filter through the parenting discussions. Sarita, an ESOL parent, alludes to the ways that multicultural perspectives toward parenting are integrated into the discussion. Additionally, cultural literacy becomes a salient feature of peer learning.

. . . we come from different country that have different culture . . . Everything different. We discuss and we learn something from, **maybe other country is good, maybe other parents they teach something is different. I will try that, and everybody is different.**

Well, because we talking about, we learn many things, we come from many countries and we can learn or we, we are talking about their country and also we learn many countries' culture and many, many things . . . Yes, other people come from other countries. They have different culture, different opinion, everything is different. And we know. . . . We enjoy it. We learn too. We enjoy it with other students, they come form other country. We don't know their culture, their customs and when they are talking about their culture and their country, we know it and we

learn . . . They want to know how in my country and so like I can tell them. They learn too, my country's culture.

Once again, the combination of peer discussion of cultural differences and the celebration of unique cultural perspectives importantly validates and affirms these students' heritage. We earlier noted British anthropologist Brian Street's (1997) concern about the potential subversion of immigrant learners' appreciation for their home country culture within literacy programs. At the Even Start program we researched, teachers and peer sharing seem to lend authority and significance to both the student's home culture literacy practices and legitimate cultural knowledge as a valuable, practical, and an important academic focus. Such explicit backing of cultural literacy by those in authority is particularly important for Socializing knowers who still tend to see their instructors as the shapers and directors of the knowledge they should know and learn.

Growing Toward and Reaching Self-Authorship

In contrast to their Socializing peers, learners who were growing toward and reaching Self-Authorship did not spontaneously describe or emphasize the cohort's family-like atmosphere. While these more Self-Authoring learners noted their peers' welcoming attitudes, they most appreciated the expression of feelings, information, and ideas, which they used in service of self-understanding, social support, and self-expansion.

Linn, perhaps the most vocal in depicting the emotional support she gleans from her classmates, says:

I enjoy the relations with the other students. Time we meet three times a week, and then sometimes we can share our life, my life, each life, and also . . . we are not American people, so sometimes we can share our anxiety and our stress about language, and that's good.

Hamid and Ho describe their ABE peers as friendly, nice, and a group that's easily entered.

All the time is you know, very nice group, everybody was friendly. (Hamid)

[*What does the group mean to you?*] Good. Enjoy them. Most of them have wonderful ideas and they wanna [be good] parents too. Of course anytime anywhere . . . if you new, kind of shock, embarrass in a way, but then you get used to it, they so friendly. (Ho)

Dalia, like Ho, links peer support as the background to enhanced learning. She views her classmates as a kind of push to motivate herself more.

It's a good program because it's like a support group. I feel very supported here, that I am to learn because that's something I didn't have before. I was the only one supporting myself to learn, the only one pushing myself in the back. I'm not saying people are on my back pushing me, but they are there for me, so the fact that **they are there for me to learn, that makes it even easier for me to push yourself** and say, there are people here to support me, and that's going to give me a hand to help me.

Overall, these learners view their peers as educational resources, particularly during the parent discussion time. Similar to their Socializing peers, learners transitioning toward Self-Authorship appreciate sharing a range of parenting knowledge and experience. Linn comments on the value of these discussion times.

This program sometimes we had a parent discussion time, we discuss their child is happy, that their child is acting. We can share each other and sometimes we read the magazine about the latest development about the reading problem. After reading them, I can adapt my children.

Ho, who perhaps has the least parenting experience among the learners, also appreciates receiving suggestions from his classmates.

Sometimes we learn stuff from other parents, new ideas and information . . . [*So how did they teach you about patience?*] Oh, I give you example. Like they have a how to be a good parent. Last time we discuss. When [my son] want to read a book or whatever, or colored pencils, if he don't like it, perhaps you put it away for a while and then try to make something else for him to do instead of let him sit there and get bored with it and throw things around. So just pick something out and later jump back to the topic again. So you can just go back anytime, instead of "No, you can't do it." We discuss about it in parenting class last time. And we get different ideas from other parents.

For some learners, like Dalia, the ideas of others are integrated with one's own.

Like I was getting other people's ideas, and then I was trying to put my ideas, I was getting more ideas.

Self-Authoring learners appreciate the intellectual and cultural diversity the peer group brings to discussions of parenting and the more academic learning. These students seem to seek out differences of opinion, culture, and experience instead of finding comfort in similarity and sameness. We hypothesize that this appreciation of difference is in keeping with a more Self-Authoring stance toward learning, in which an individual may view such diversity as providing opportunities for growth through strengthening and/or comparing of one's ideas and beliefs with those of another.

Ahara believes such a focus on difference is important to her learning as an individual acculturating into a new country and as a parent. Over and over, she expresses her preference for peer discussion that centers on issues of cultural difference.

. . . [the other students] have different culture. They have different language but when you meet them, they learn from me. I learn from them. . . [*which are you most interested in?*] [Parent discussions] because they have different people, they have different idea.

They're helping me a lot. Very important adult talking how discuss issues children, how to learn, how the system in America is different. Because I have different culture . . . in other class they learn many things about another people, for different country, different opinions.

Ho describes his attitude toward differences of opinions which, as noted above, he both appreciates and evaluates.

I . . . listen to other peoples' opinions and ideas, but compare their ideas and my ideas . . . think about it see what would happen.

Ultimately, it may be possible that the cohort experience is of less importance to learners growing toward and reaching Self-Authorship. Both Dalia and Ho indicate that while they value the support and ideas of their peers, they primarily rely on their own independent judgement, self-authority, and self-defined learning agenda. Dalia relays her understanding of the difficulty she encountered when expressing her opinions freely, sometimes to the irritation of her peers. Dalia eventually left the program for what she described as scheduling conflicts with her daughter's school.

I think it bothered them I was there. I mean even toward the end, I felt comfortable there . . . but they didn't feel comfortable with me until I was gone. I guess because my knowledge, I didn't hide it. I share it too much. And I feel like some of the students in the class wanted me to keep it to myself, what I know. . . . but I showed them that I still have a lot to learn . . . no matter what anybody else thinks or said, it didn't matter to me because I was there and I was gaining something.

When asked to characterize the influence of the cohort upon his learning, Ho explains:

I don't pay attention, I've never been too concerned about them . . . I think I'm enjoy too much of what I had learned to so I don't pay attention to other people that much.

In summary, learners who are transitioning to or have reached Self-Authorship appreciate the diversity the peer group offers. They note the welcoming and friendly atmosphere the cohort provides and seem to view this as a backdrop to their own self-motivated learning. These discussions join their preference for exposure to multiple perspectives and sharing personal experience and insight. Peer discussions help these learners expand their self-understanding. Additionally, Self-Authoring students view peer sharing as a vehicle for analyzing and critiquing information. Self-Authoring students appreciate this sort of forum for critical thinking and reflection, which they understand as important to enhancing their competence as parents and learners. However, Self-Authoring learners may ultimately be able to stand apart from group approval if their expressions of opinion or belief are not well received.

Safety and Accountability in the Classroom: Supportive Learning Environments

Marsha Chevalier (1994), an instructor of literacy methods at the University of Delaware, raises what she asserts may be a common but not well explored instructional dilemma adult ESOL (and we would include ABE) educators face:

“. . . how to establish an affectively safe learning environment while holding students academically accountable?” (p. 1). Citing the work of Prabhu (1992), Chevalier (1994) characterizes this “safety-accountability dilemma” as located in the tension between two competing student and teacher goals: “protection and learning.” She writes,

On the one hand, learners, especially adult learners, entrust their self-esteem to the teacher’s care and expect, rightfully, that it will be handled gently . . . On the other hand, learners also entrust the direction and facilitation of their learning process to the teacher and expect, also rightfully, that their individual gaps in knowledge and skill will in time be bridged. (p.12)

As developmental psychologists also interested in developmental approaches to adult education, we recognize this instructional dilemma as familiar. We suggest that applying adult developmental theory may be particularly illuminating and helpful in recasting these tensions *not* as mutually exclusive but as variations in the ways learners, bound by different ways of knowing, may differently construe and experience classroom safety and the facilitation of learning. We reconceive dilemmas of safety and accountability as concerns about teacher and peer support and challenge. The questions then become these: What are the different ways learners at different developmental positions construct ideas of safety (or support) and facilitation of their learning (or challenge)? How much support and how much challenge should an optimal learning environment offer its students?

In considering such questions, it is important to clarify what we mean by optimal learning environments, support, and challenge. Here, we draw upon the work of Kegan (1982, 1994) and Daloz (1986). Our notion of optimal learning environments specifically derives from and builds upon Kegan’s (1982) concept of the holding environment, which he defines as the psychosocial context in which and out of which a person grows. The holding environment simultaneously relates to how the person makes sense (her way of knowing) and the literal social psychological surround (of support and challenge) in which she finds herself. Applied to the field of education, a holding environment is a comprehensive learning milieu. It entails a dynamic relationship between the learner’s way of knowing and the educational context through which she is learning and growing. This context includes, for example, such educational elements as teacher–student and peer relationships, curricular and programmatic expectations, and norms inherent in any pedagogical ideology.

To better understand our definitions of support and challenge we refer to the writing of Laurent Daloz (1986, p. 215), who describes educational support as:

. . . the activity . . . of providing a place where the student can contact her need for fundamental trust . . . It means moving to confirm the student’s sense of worth and helping her to see that she is both okay where she is and capable of moving ahead when she chooses.

In other words, support joins and acknowledges a person's way of knowing, affirming how she thinks or feels. Educational challenge relates to moderately challenging how a person makes sense and feels just enough so as to provoke cognitive dissonance, or a "gap between one's perceptions and expectations" (Daloz, 1986, p 223). From a developmental educator's point of view, we challenge with the hope of raising questions, creating some internal conflict, and exposing the learner to new perspectives so she may eventually grow beyond her current way of knowing. Optimal learning environments offer a good mix of support and challenge appropriate to an individual learner's developmental position as well as a good mix for a classroom of learners who likely operate from different ways of knowing.

A key idea here is that learners at different levels of development will understand and define support and challenge differently. Thus, if we offer the same support to two students who are at different levels of understanding, it's likely that each person will experience this support differently. For example, being praised for following the intention of an assignment and admired for a job well done might feel quite supportive to a learner who operates from a Socializing way of understanding. As we've described elsewhere, for a student with this way of understanding, the teacher's evaluation is synonymous with her own self-evaluation. On the other hand, a student who operates from a more Self-Authoring way of knowing might find such praise unhelpful. This student might prefer a teacher's direct feedback and detailed constructive criticism as valuable and caring support. For this student, the teacher's evaluation is helpful insofar as it enables the enhancement of her own competence according to her own standards. Self-Authoring students would most probably look for more than the teacher's personal affirmation and admiration. This seemed the case for the Self-Authoring learners at the Even Start site. We suggest that in creating learning contexts of safety and accountability it may be both advantageous and important to know a person's developmental position to offer appropriate supports and challenges that will be understood and experienced as helpful.

In our study, the Even Start students report a range of desired supports and challenges that coincide and are consistent with those described in the developmental literature. Moreover, as we have argued, we found the ESOL and ABE learners in our study who operated from distinct developmental positions construed peer and teacher supports differently, while learners bound by the same way of knowing expressed desires for peer and teacher supports that were quite similar.

Developmental perspectives on teaching and learning may therefore inform the design of optimal learning environments in another important way. When educators consider the *goodness of fit* between the expectations of the program and the expectations *and developmental readiness or capacity* of the learner they successfully address potential dilemmas of safety-accountability. In our view, learning is enhanced when there is a *good match* between the learner's developmental position and the implicit developmental demands of the program. Here we are speaking about paying attention to the developmental capacity, curricular expectations, learning tasks, and teachers' requirements of the learner. As several adult educators caution (Daloz, 1986; Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991; Weathersby, 1976), if a program's expectations aim far beyond a learner's developmental position, she may become threatened and retreat. Conversely, if a program's expectations are too low, a student may become disengaged. Thus, knowledge of a student's developmental position in concert with an awareness of the program's implicit developmental demands may help educators offer the most appropriate educational supports and safety while they reasonably challenge and facilitate students' learning progress.

To better understand this question of "goodness of fit" between learner development and program expectation, we offer this table below which highlights the developmentally sensitive

supports and challenges of optimal learning environments for students at different developmental positions. It represents a synthesis of developmental educators' thinking and research of the ways optimal learning environments may simultaneously join a student's way of knowing and appropriately encourage or challenge him to grow beyond his existing perspective. We also advise the reader that, for learners who are transitioning between two ways of knowing, the contextual supports and challenges need also span the developmental positions.

Table 4: Optimal Learning Environments

Optimal Learning Environments: Components of Support and Challenge	
Context Supports & Affirms:	Context Challenges & Requires:
<p>Instrumental ways of knowing <u>Focus on</u> goals, needs, information, activities, skills that yield concrete results, showing “how to” <u>Provides</u> highly structured learning environment where teacher focuses learner attention and success through concrete examples, rules, guidelines about how things should be done <u>Teacher acts as</u> instructor, trainer, and role model</p>	<p><u>Encourages shift away from</u> weddedness to self-interest, needs, concrete view of knowledge solely as means to self-gain <u>Links</u> consideration and internalization of others’ perspectives, needs, ideas, feelings as means to achieving successful results</p>
<p>Socializing ways of knowing <u>Focus on</u> capacity for abstract thinking and generalizations, concern for others, reliance on teacher authority, desire to please teacher (i.e., be a good student) <u>Provides</u> structured program which mixes presentation of skills and general information with opportunities to analyze information, reflect on, and critique different points of view, debate opposing positions <u>Teacher acts as</u> role model, guide, and mentor</p>	<p><u>Encourages shift away from</u> reliance on authorities and experts as sole knowledge holders; gives permission for and challenges learners to rely on own expertise and knowledge; encourages and requires questioning of expert knowledge; fosters critical thinking and multiple perspectives</p>
<p>Self-Authoring ways of knowing <u>Focus on</u> affirmation and promotion of individual’s view of self as theory maker and constructor of ideas and opinions; welcomes personally generated insights and learner created paradigms <u>Provides</u> open learning environment contexts for reflection, discontinuities, paradoxes, and process <u>Teacher acts as</u> mentor, exemplar model, facilitator</p>	<p><u>Encourages shift away from</u> learner’s over-identification w/ own ideas, theories, values; encourages self-critique, self-awareness, and understanding of constructed, relativistic nature of one’s preferred beliefs, values, ideas <u>Links</u> self-mastery and enhanced competence to process-oriented understanding/approach through dialogic, dialectical forms of learning</p>

Adapted from Daloz, (1980); Kegan, (1982, 1994); Popp & Portnow (1998); Portnow, K. (1996); R. Weathersby, (1976).

Effective Components of Support and Challenge in the Even Start Program

The Even Start learners' depictions of their preferred and actual teacher and peer supports, as well as the student and teacher interview data in tandem with our understanding of the five program components and curricular mix of skill and theme-based learning,¹⁴ all suggest that the Even Start family literacy program successfully joins the majority of the students' way of knowing. We find that, overall, students feel well-met and well scaffolded. We earlier suggested and continue to wonder whether certain key aspects of the program especially challenge learners growing from Instrumentalism while they support and simultaneously invite the growth of students bound by the Socializing way of knowing. While such an in-depth review of all of the program features is beyond the scope of this chapter, we will next highlight some cross-cutting developmental supports and reconsider a few features of the Even Start literacy program that seem noteworthy as developmental challenges.

Parent and Child Simultaneous Learning (programmatic supports)

The Even Start program structure enables adults and children to learn at the center simultaneously. Parents attend their ABE or ESOL class while their children participate in the preschool program. While this design may not seem immediately significant, quite a number of adult students reported feeling this feature was quite important to their learning, and in some cases, to their continued attendance in the program. Interpreting their statements through a developmental perspective, we surmise that this structural feature is an important and respectful developmental support. It certainly is mentioned frequently by learners who are either bound by the Socializing way of knowing or moving toward and reaching Self-Authorship.

The best part is I can study with my son. If before . . . I couldn't study, it was because the old school doesn't have a child care . . . So that's why I can study, otherwise I can't. The best thing is because I'm a mother, I have two children's and before nobody can help me about baby, you know, child cares for them. But his program have a child care. So I can study, and I can stay with my son too. . . . I was excited, I was, "Oh boy! I can't believe it." Finally I get my school. Finally I can learn English. I was like that Everything was beautiful for me. (Felicia, Socializing knower)

Yeah, I also I thought what I'm going to do, you know? You know, I thought I was not going to be able to study back here. Because I thought my kids too small, the small one . . . There was the people told me then that I have to pay here for taking of him during the day for a month and I say I'm not going to pay that much money. So I have to stay with him the whole day. So, I'm going to be, I'm going to get dumb, you know, doing nothing. (Elena, Socializing knower)

If he didn't like to, to the classroom, I have to give up my class because of my children. That's very important for me. (Linn, transitioning to Self-Authorship)

¹⁴ We base this interpretation upon our analysis of longitudinal student interview data, interviews with teachers in which they describe their program goals, a few classroom observations, and our review of a small sample of classroom assignments.

In our view, students like Felicia and Elena, who are bound by the Socializing way of knowing, as well as those who are in transition toward Self-Authorship, like Linn, especially benefit from attending a literacy program with their children. Learners bound by or transitioning out of Socializing ways of knowing tend to feel pulled and stressed by competing loyalties and role demands and may have a hard time prioritizing these competing requests for their care. It is common for women who make sense from these positions to subordinate their own needs in favor of the needs of their spouse, partner, or children (Gilligan, 1982, Rockhill, 1991). When a literacy program offers these learners an opportunity to attend to their own learning needs while they simultaneously support the learning needs of their children, the programmatic structure forestalls the likelihood that these students will abandon their own development for the sake of their children. In this way, the program may contribute to retaining these students while it resolves a key dilemma for them.

Teacher Response to Students' Competing Role Demands (teacher supports)

By the same token, the teacher's personal response to these students' expressed pressures, given their complex lives and competing role demands as well as the "reasonable" expectations for extracurricular work (such as homework), make a great difference in the students' perceptions of support, consideration, and safety in the classroom. Once again, if students bound by or moving from Socializing ways of knowing feel they are neither meeting their teacher's expectations, the program's requirements, or their families' needs for care, they may experience a particularly high degree of stress, as others' approval and positive evaluation implicates the way these students evaluate themselves. However, we also assert that students growing from Instrumentalism and those reaching toward or operating from Self-Authorship will appreciate teacher acknowledgement of the pressures they face in their multiple roles as parents and students. In our view, learners' different developmental positions importantly direct the ways they interpret their teachers' sensitivity to their life stress.

So since November, December, January . . . it was very hard for me to be . . . with my kids in the tiny apartment and you know with that plus having classes that giving me stress or problems, I couldn't stand it. So I'm so happy in this program.

Because there is nothing that gives you stress or give you a hard time. So that's something I like so much about this program that you learn but it is also very relaxed. (Elena, Socializing knower)

That's one of the most things I like from the program. **That it's not stressful at all.** It's very relaxed. Here because they know we're parents, so we don't have that much homework. They teach us what they can during the morning and we learn and we share everything. [*So you felt very supported by the program?*] Exactly. (Elena)

Every morning I am very busy to ready for all my family members. I have to help with the homework. Then I have to prepare for dinner. And then my life schedule is like that. **So I don't have much time to study at home.** I want to study more at home, but I don't have much time to study at home. (Linn, transitioning to Self-Authorship)

She [the teacher] always kind, **she understand my situation.** Always she listens and she understand. **If I'm missed a class, she teach me the missing part. If she**

has the time. At least she told me what they did study during the class. Yeah, then making me more comfortable because I miss sometime during the time, that makes me more catch up the classroom. Always she served the student, she want to listen to the student. (Linn)

The understanding make more good relations with the teacher and students. It makes me very comfortable to learn here. **If I didn't have a really good relations with [my teacher], when I miss that many classes I don't want to go to the school again. Because I want to stay home because the school is going faster, and I can't catch up there.** But [my teacher] sometimes call me, what's happen to your family and then I explain my situation. So she sympathize with me. . . . If the teacher understand the student's weakness, and she don't have enough time to study at home, and if the teacher understand the student's situation, the teacher give another, shows another choice to student [that's helpful and makes it easier to learn]. (Linn)

. . . you have to know some have a family . . . who have a family have too much problem . . . why this person may be late, sometimes, maybe why leave early. (Hamid, Self-Authoring knower)

Several literacy researchers (Gadsden, 1996; Malicky & Norman, 1996) have commented on the need for literacy programs to recognize the complexity of the lives of adult literacy learners. We believe Even Start affords such recognition to its students through its programmatic structure and the teachers' response to students' own expression of the challenges they face in balancing multiple responsibilities. We view this teacher attention to the difficulties inherent in some adult literacy learners' lives as a way they understand and respect their students' decisions and priorities.¹⁵ For example, as Hamid reports, sometimes he may put his family first and he may be late to class or need to leave early, even though he is dedicated to his own learning.

Curricular Mix of Skills and Theme-based Learning (curricular support and challenge)

According to both students and teachers, the Even Start curriculum integrates specific skill learning and more thematic and experiential educational approaches. We see this as a helpful curricular mix that joins the learning preferences and capacities of the majority of students. This mix specifically connects to a more Instrumental focus on skill learning that yield results, and several of the students growing from Instrumentalism appreciate the concrete examples their teachers and peers offer. These examples and skills support Instrumental knowers' drive to "become somebody" which, as we saw earlier, often translated into learning how to "do" things and gain literacy skills. Literacy skill learning also supported Socializing knowers desire to better connect empathically with their children. However, the incorporation of theme-based topics is important to and joins Socializing and Self-Authoring knowers' developmental interests. Earlier in this chapter, we recounted Elena's pleasure in

¹⁵ We do not mean to suggest that teachers always agree with student decisions. Based on our teacher interviews, we note that sometimes teachers help the students reflect on and evaluate their responsibilities, including their school work. Thus, students are scaffolded to set realistic goals for themselves and understand the consequences of not meeting these goals.

learning information that was personally salient and helped her with her “real life.” Dalia, too, appreciated learning relevant and current information that maximizes her potential.

While students across developmental levels may appreciate this blend of learning material, we believe such a mix gently challenges students growing from Instrumentalism and may help expand the reflective thinking and self-perspective of Socializing knowers. By offering assignments that require students to put themselves at the center of their own writing and thinking and by asking them to consider and write about their own views and reflect on their lives, we believe Instrumental learners are subtly pushed to engage in learning that transcends mere learning of practical skills. Moreover, while Socializing knowers may appreciate the opportunity to reflect on their feelings and experiences, asking them to make these the subject of their work tacitly acknowledges the value of their knowledge and encourages them to literally see themselves as the authors of their own story. Additionally, assignments that require these learners to offer their opinions encourage and validate the sense that they are legitimate knowers and implicitly call into question the notion that there is one truth.

Linn, who is transitioning toward Self-Authorship, is particularly articulate about the transformative power of some of these assignments. They help her to “make her mind more wide.”

To get another new ideas, to learn new things, is happy with me. Yes. To know new something. [*What helps you when you're learning?*] If it makes my mind more wide.

And then I got assignment [to think about her childhood] and talk with friend. When I got assignment, I record my childhood. I can record my childhood and ask her ages time and then, it's a very good because that same way, this time, I'm thinking on the present in this life and when I recall my back life, I think my feeling very emotionally and also I miss my old friend and then I decided to have touch with my friend continuously.

Teacher Feedback, Class Evaluations, and Invitations to Set the Learning Agenda (teacher support and challenge)

Chevalier (1994) raises important questions about how teachers may give supportive feedback to their students. In our study, the students consistently seem to suggest that their ESOL and ABE teachers give direct, constructive, yet supportive feedback. Contrary to what Chevalier seems to believe, the students in our study seek feedback from their teachers and the way this feedback is delivered does not appear to put their self-esteem at risk. Students want to know how to speak properly. They like to have their vocabulary tests corrected and be shown how to do something. They like to get a sense of their own blindspots in learning, as Dalia indicates. Yet these teachers may successfully support and challenge their learners in the ways they deliver feedback and invite student evaluations of class learning. While learners at all developmental positions seem to appreciate clear and direct feedback, students growing from Instrumentalism and those bound by Socializing ways of knowing might find such clarity especially helpful, as they tend to rely more fully on the teacher's expertise in assessing what they need to know.

I know that if I have something, like, uh, if we are like, uh, learning science, if we have, you know, from the book or the homework, and you can read the homework

and you figure it out, and then the teacher she say if something missing, she check it. If everything alright she tell you. You try your best, you do a good job.
(Raquelle, Socializing knower)

The teachers also seem able to join the Socializing students' need for supportive nonthreatening criticism which is accompanied by a recognition of the student's ability and implicit motivation and desire to please.

When I was in school before, everything was so stressful, you know, like tests and if the teacher's going to ask about this, if I don't know I'm going to be stupid in front of the class. And here it's so relaxed. That's something good I have. She never says, "No, no, you're wrong." Any classroom it's always just, "That's wrong," and [they] just stop you. And she [her current ABE teacher] says, "Well, I understand your point of view but I want something more complex or that could give more of what I mean." So that's something so good in her . . . that she's always supportive and doesn't make you feel like a fool. (Elena, Socializing knower)

However, in the context of support and trust, Socializing knowers may find teachers' invitations to critique the class learning progress an exciting challenge to their reliance on the teacher as sole authority—a subtle challenge to their way of knowing. Here, Felicia describes the way her ESOL teacher gives permission for and challenges her students to give input on the way they learn best and help shape the learning agenda. In so doing, this teacher implicitly challenges these learners' reliance on her as the sole evaluator. Her intervention encourages the students to believe in their own critiques and self-knowledge. It is important to note that both teachers invite student contributions to the learning agenda, and both also direct their students to learning tasks they need to accomplish. *They offer a developmental range of teacher direction* to students who are operating from different developmental positions.

My teacher, she's terrific. She's perfect. Both are perfect. [My teacher] is not like, you know "Every day we need to do . . ." like she has stuff everyday she do the same thing. We change it. Everybody give some suggestion. What we can do. How we learn faster . . . You know, we try different ways. Every like two, three, four months, I don't know exactly, but every three months we say, "okay, at this point work with us. If we work, when we did that we learn more than before." So we try. We ask her, please if we can practice more in that things, and conversation, and reading, I don't know, past tense, future tense. We told her. We give to her a lot of suggestions. . . . Yeah, and she work with us. She say, "All right." So she try and she get information, and we still need to work. . . . Like, she doesn't follow the rules about teaching, you know what I mean? She works with us, and it's for everybody works, if everybody learn more faster with one way, so we took that way. We still to do that way. (Felicia, ESOL Socializing knower)

Classroom Atmosphere (peer support and challenge)

The two Even Start classrooms are marked by a welcoming atmosphere. As we noted, many students in each class describe the learning environment to be "like a family," filled with feelings of friendship. For the most part, the students recount the cohort as helpful and supportive, though some more Self-

Authoring learners were less concerned with the group experience. Yet as a developmental intervention we understand the cohort and welcoming class ambience to be very significant for learners growing from Instrumentalism and those operating from Socializing ways of knowing. The sense of group, collaborative learning and sharing of ideas developmentally challenges Instrumental knowers' weddedness to their own singular perspective and focus on their needs. For Socializing learners, the cohort provides opportunities to reflect on and critique differing points of view in a safe context. It challenges their way of knowing by inviting them to offer their own opinions, experience, and expertise. It validates their Self-Authority and shifts their focus from seeing the teacher as the primary source of knowledge.

Additionally, the cohort may implicitly support and join a prevailing cultural value of the majority of the Even Start immigrant students—the value of interdependence and specifically the construal of personal agency as linked to a view of oneself as interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). When the students share their expertise to help their classmates, they are scaffolding their own and others' agency in the context of collaboration and interdependence. This sort of peer-supported learning seems to be a developmentally and culturally inclusive structure promoting both *independence* and *interdependence* of mind.

Parenting Education Curriculum (curricular support and challenge)

Finally, we have argued that the Even Start parenting curriculum targets and rewards an approach to parenting premised on empathy and the parental capacity to take and internalize one's child's perspective as a guide for one's own behaviors and beliefs. We earlier hypothesized that in setting these expectations, the parenting curriculum affirms, joins, and orients to the Socializing way of knowing. We have additionally asserted that the implicit developmental demands of the curriculum therefore challenge learners transitioning between Instrumentalism into more Socializing ways of knowing.

Let us for the last time recall Yvette, an ESOL student growing away from Instrumentalism who is a dedicated parent struggling to adopt patience with her son. Let us recall the way Yvette, with the supportive scaffolding of her peers, strives to incorporate the Even Start philosophy and approach to discipline, limit-setting, and punishment. And let us recall that this philosophy entails trying to listen to her child's perspective, to understand his mind and motives in a way that is distinct from the cultural norms of Yvette's home country. Yvette is motivated to incorporate a parenting stance that, as it turns out, is most syntonous with her own preference and desire to parent differently than she herself was parented. In Yvette's case, we find evidence that *certain curricular ideas* (such as the notion of patience) *have implicit developmental demands* and that, with the proper support, these ideas may ignite developmental motion. As we have already suggested, the ideas join, challenge, and, as we saw with Yvette, may build upon and further elaborate an individual's emergent way of knowing.

The Motion of Development: Consolidation, Elaboration, Transformation

Must growth only come through a reconfiguration or transformation of a person's way of knowing? In our analysis of the Even Start students' responses to the parenting curriculum, we noticed that Socializing knowers readily internalized the program philosophy norms because these aligned with the students' emergent ideals. In some instances, the program norms validated values that seemed somehow sequestered yet preferred by the learners. In this latter case, we surmised that students, like Yvette, had determined their parenting would differ from their own experiences of being parented,

their home country's expectations, or their observations of less-than-satisfactory parental approaches to discipline and limit setting. In some cases, Socializing learners and even some learners growing toward Self-Authorship—for example, Linn—seemed to internalize norms that were interpreted *through their current ways of knowing*. In other words, the Even Start program most immediately affected *what* the students took in as values, but *not* their way of knowing itself. Yet in internalizing these parenting approaches, we also believe the students were further consolidating or elaborating their emergent beliefs. And we see this consolidation and elaboration as a microdevelopmental movement *within a given way of knowing* that may offer an individual *greater virtuosity* within a particular developmental position.

We also see such a “deepening” of developmental capacity as necessarily taking place within the context of ample support and confirmation. This is particularly necessary for the literacy learners in our study, who, as immigrants to the U.S., are facing multiple sociocultural challenges. We make such a statement because, based upon our data, it seems the learners in our study, as several literacy researchers have suggested (Chevalier, 1994; Chiang, 1991; Ullman, 1997; Weinstein-Shr, 1986), experience affective challenges in dealing with the process of acculturation. Moreover, we concur with Ullman (1997, p.1), who suggests that issues of social identity are preeminent in literacy learners' lives. These multiple psychosocial and political challenges may be disequilibrating. Daloz (1986) has described the potentially growth inhibiting effects that stress and disorganizing affective challenges may produce, in contrast with contexts of support and safety. He writes:

Under stress, we tend to slip back; we tighten our grip on what feels most secure. When we feel safe, on the other hand, we can relax and reach out. That's why a supportive tone . . . is so important. It lets the student move to her leading edge. (p. 219)

Thus, it may be that for these Even Start literacy learners, the important and considerable consolidation and elaboration of their ideas, perspectives, and values—developmental changes themselves—transpired most smoothly because of *the high confirmation or support* they received in tandem with *moderate classroom challenge*.

Optimal learning environments include an appropriate mix of support and challenge and scaffolding, *sensitive to developmental position and life circumstance*, potentially setting the context for optimal learner performance. In such contexts, increases in individual development may gradually proceed through growth plateaus as well as through the emergence, consolidation, or elaboration of skills, ideas, values, and perspectives into ever-widening integrated systems of thought and understanding (Kitchener & Fischer, 1990). Viewed in this way, *developmentally sensitive contexts then may encourage growth within and/or between ways of knowing*.

V. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Throughout this chapter, we have articulated the impact of developmental position—a person’s way of knowing—on learner instructional preferences, goals, and enactment of social identity. We have additionally suggested that for the Even Start adult ABE and ESOL family literacy learners, a context of high confirmation and moderate challenge supported the emergence, consolidation, and elaboration of ways of knowing as well as the development of discrete skills, ideas, and values. We have further argued that any learning environment that is “good enough” must link to and join the student’s developmental position while it invites growth from current ways of knowing. Our research with adult literacy learners suggests that students who operate from different developmental positions will appreciate and benefit from different forms and degrees of safety, confirmation, support, and challenge. In each case, a fuller understanding of students’ ways of knowing, which undergird their educational and self-aspirations as well as their expressions of personal agency, is helpful and important to teachers and program designers striving to create optimal learning environments.

We return to the insight of Ullman (1997), who reminds us that literacy learners, especially immigrant literacy learners, bring their complex changing social identities into their literacy classes. Building upon Ullman’s ideas, we suggest that the programmatic, curricular, teacher, and peer supports and challenges students meet in the classroom are all important influences upon their self-recreation and the ways they view their past and their future. We believe developmental perspectives on adult ABE and ESOL education may powerfully aid students in creating and re-creating futures of increased possibility.

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