Disturbing Development Through Drawing

Preservice Teachers' Visual Representation of Childhood and Their Links to Teaching

Debbie Sonu

Abstract

This study analyzes a set of drawings of childhood memories and brief accompanying narratives created by 16 preservice student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program in the United States and focuses primarily on the forms, metaphors, and symbolic representations that beginning teachers use to represent the time of childhood. As argued, a reach into one's own childhood surfaces a wide range of continuities and discontinuities that can disrupt settler colonial theories of stage-wise developmentalism as the primary logic undergirding teaching and learning, an approach commonly found in many teacher education programs. Theoretically grounded in Michel Foucault's concept of the truth-demonstration, this article presents original drawings that represent five distinct forms and ends with pedagogical implications for how teacher educators can use such artifacts and methods to productively critique normalizing frameworks of how children should be.

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Introduction

The colonial project of tracking social difference is anchored to imbricated processes that elaborate normative categories under the banner of liberal governance and management (Lowe, 2015). As far back as the 17th century, narratives about civilization and advancement in the United States have capitalized on classifications of race, gender, and labor exploitation to reinforce the viability of the rational subject as the political aim of modern society (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Wynter, 2003). These very myths, created in the name of science and developmentalism, have emerged over time as a sea of educational policies and practices that shape the schooling of young children and are especially detrimental for those who fail to fit within constructions of success, achievement, and even citizenry (Nolte-Odhiambo, 2016; Willinsky, 1998). Not only is developmentalism what made the advent of public schooling possible (Baker, 1999), but it continues to dominate how schools are structured and is pervasive within foundational education coursework that begins teacher training with development psychology as the basis for theories of teaching, learning, and childhood.

As more than a singular movement, developmentalism, of which there are multiple strands, is primarily a logic about the course of human growth over time "in which new abilities and proficiencies were thought to unfold in set steps or be acquired in a series of stages" (Baker, 1999, p. 798). With roots in the Enlightenment, philosophers, naturalists, and physicians began to focus their attention on the child as an object of empirical study tied to the making of the modern adult. A new science that prefigured the developmental approach flourished, justifying Euro-Western interventions to contour, build, and, in essence, manage the preferred child according to scientifically derived states of maturation and humanlike attributes (Benzaquén, 2004). Alongside imperial beliefs about who is capable of carrying society toward less primitive, more civilized, and more rational advancements (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), childhood, despite all its varying iterations, came to be defined as the beginning of an imagined potentiality that not only followed a series of normative expectations but also suggested the child as a kind of ignorant or innocent future possibility (Dyer, 2017; Nolte-Odhiambo, 2016; Rollo, 2018).

In an effort to rethink the purposes, possibilities, and consequences of developmentalism in education, scholars of critical childhood, postcolonial, and reconceptualist camps of curriculum studies (Cannella, 2005; Pihama & Lee-Morgan, 2019; Taylor, 2013; Woodhead, 2013) have launched important critiques that challenge totalizing forms of knowledge production, particularly when they prioritize achievement and foreclose on the plurality of human existence. In current educational contexts, teachers are often charged to evaluate and position children against predetermined goals that may run counter to the ways they express the inner qualities of their own social worlds. As Lisa Farley (2018) has argued, the lived experiences of children will always exceed categorization, "as they are complexly

embodied, fraught with conflict, affected by interpretation, animated by social context, and enmeshed in relations of power" (p. 120). This does not necessarily mean jettisoning development altogether (Walkerdine, 1993) but instead compels teachers to be critical of any claim to truth about the course of development as a natural valuation applied to all.

Examining how preservice elementary school teachers represent their own childhood pasts is one way to understand the penetration of developmentalism into conceptions of childhood. This study builds on decades of research on the intricate entanglements between childhood memories and the perspectives and practices of adults aspiring to teach young children (Boldt & Salvio, 2006; Britzman, 1991b; Sonu, 2021; Sonu et al., 2020). As a case study of one class, it analyzes drawings of childhood memories and brief accompanying written descriptions created by 16 preservice student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at one large public university in the northeastern corridor of the United States and focuses primarily on the forms, metaphors, and symbolic representations that beginning teachers use to represent the time of childhood. As found, this set of crafted visuals and narratives of childhood shows a wider range of continuities and discontinuities than those represented by stage-wise developmentalism. Participants used curves, blots, splits, and scenes that did not always follow causal linearity or a series of steps aimed at maturity, cognition, and reason. These drawings show that even as developmentalism assumes an authoritative voice over the intervention of human existence, a reach back into one's own childhood surfaces a diverse array of theories that can rupture unitary explanation and carve out room for a more expansive relation to the children in one's own classroom.

Albeit far from a solution, I argue that the use of narrated drawings, as both artifact and method, offers teacher educators a heuristic tool to explore the limits, consequences, and complicities of any norm-based universal that presumes an unbroken line from childhood to teacher. What are the underlying theories of development that are directly and metaphorically expressed within preservice teachers' visual representations and narratives of childhood? Do those learning to teach represent their own childhoods in ways that differ from the linearly drawn pathways often found in teacher training? While challenging the reliance on data as self-evident or authentic, I observe alongside Claudia Mitchell and Sandra Weber (1999) that memory practices, especially when supported through visual methods, can provoke a learning experience that enables teachers to think critically about the contours of their own development and interrogate the taken-for-granted foundations that undergird what are considered scientifically based processes of learning and growth.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in the discursive construction and circulation of knowledge that makes developmentalism evident as a demonstration of scientific truth (Foucault, 1978; Rabinow & Rose, 2006). Theories on development are not merely individual expressions. They are located within specific historical

of a speculative "settler futurity" (Ishiguro, 2016, p. 15), solidifying the right to exclusively occupy land and establish claims to belonging (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Within the context of 19th-century industrialization, key figures in psychology and members of the economic and cultural elite, such as Edward Thorndike, G. Stanley Hall, and John Franklin Bobbitt, aimed to scientifically prove intellectual superiority and classed division as a matter of heredity (Winfield, 2012). Influenced by Charles Darwin's (1859) *On the Origin of Species*, social policy and scientific publications adopted the language of the fittest to contour public knowledge around a linear line of civilized development, privileging those with wealth and influence on one end, while, on the other, positioning linguistic, cultural, racial, and gendered diversity as an obstacle to the advancement of the nation-state, even humanity itself.

As such, when psychology and education became formally intertwined in the academy, the meaning of development was not new. Many fields of scientific reasoning, including biology, anthropology, and history, mobilized theories of development that emerged in tandem with interest in the child as the primary locus of educational study. With childhood as the harbinger of a nation yet to come, the appeal to science and development shifted the model of education from knowledge learned in schools to the child as the subject around whom knowledge should be ordered (Baker, 1998). Even within debates over teaching as an art or teaching as a science, Baker argues that the underlying logic of both camps was tethered to the ontological belief that the child developed in time through techniques of scientific study that emerged as a pivotal part of public school reform efforts.

Although many postcolonial and critical scholars critique Michel Foucault for his neglect of racism as central to modern-making, his repudiation of normative epistemologies serves a useful purpose when interrogating how the invisibility and pervasiveness of power not only function from and through state institutions but manifest in the mentalities, rationalities, processes, and practices through which subjects of a population are measured, organized, and epistemically governed (Andreotti, 2014; Said, 2003). In the years of his earlier work, Foucault (1977, 1978) sought to transform theories of power from a direct political function of the state to a discursive circulation of knowledge that governs the subject into a mutual constitution with disciplinary society. Such reconceived forms of power penetrate into "capillary" points of existence where power reaches into the very grain of individuals and inserts itself into everyday thoughts and actions (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). Therefore the dominance of one idea, such as developmentalism, serves as a "truth-demonstration" that maintains two key features: the omnipresence of truth (that truth exists and is universally everywhere) and potentiality (that truth as a scientific conception depends on the instruments, categories, and language of its proposition, rather than the subject itself; Foucault, as cited in Lorenzini, 2016). By controlling for what and who are acceptable and deviant, the population as a whole surfaces as the unit of social intervention, with new epistemic frames and ideological structures in the management of the masses.

Forwarding ahead to more contemporary work, scholars have begun to critique the damaging effects of developmentalism for children on the other side of the mythical norm (Burman, 2017; MacLure et al., 2012; Walkerdine, 2009). A growing body of research has shown how Black children, fixed between danger and deficit, become subject to "adultifying" practices that make their futures particularly vulnerable and precarious (Dumas & Nelson, 2016). Working with children's gendering practices, Mindy Blaise (2014) drew on poststructuralism to interfere, interrogate, and thus loosen the "category maintenance" (p. 321) inherent within colonial and Western views of children as autonomous, rational, and self-determining individuals. Her call for "postdevelopmentalism" exposes the bias built into developmental approaches that view gendered childhoods as universal and scientifically constructed. Queer theorists, too, importantly argue that normal development is never a sole reflection of the individual child but a pathologizing discourse that mobilizes the hegemony of heterosexuality, patriarchy, and innocence to claim sexuality as developmentally inappropriate to the child (Dyer, 2017; Zaman & Anderson-Nathe, 2021). In her readings of queer child inventive fictions, Kathryn Bond Stockton (2009) explored the "elegant, unruly contours of growing that don't bespeak continuance" (p. 25), reconceiving relations in time and upending the "vertical, forward-motion metaphor of growing up" as a critique of views that delinks reproduction from social advancement.

In education, interrogating the perspectives and practices of teachers can help reveal how beliefs on childhood act as a guiding force for how the child comes to be known and recognized as a capable learner. In teacher education, developmental psychology often affirms the child as indeed biologically determined, linearly developing, and thus requiring a specific kind of adult intervention (Walkerdine, 2009). In the context of neoliberal schooling, fealty to stage-wise developmentalism may be even further hardened. The overdetermination of assessment and evaluation has amplified a regime of exacting observations, documentation, and data that not only reifies development but renders children who fall outside the norm—the idiosyncratic, deviant, errant, and slow—as subjects of educational risk and failure (Biesta, 2013; Sonu & Benson, 2016). As Valerie Polakow (1992) has lamented, this obsession over the precise measuring of childhood, grounded in the scientific traditions of developmentalism, has led to children "having been deprived of their own history-making power, their ability to act upon the world in significant and meaningful ways" (p. 8).

Therefore challenging the primacy of rigid developmental frameworks can be a productive space for both teachers and children, particularly in the current outcomes-driven context where learning is reduced to skills over knowledge and data over critical and caring engagement (Au, 2009). Against the charge to regulate school achievement through increased technologies of evaluation and intervention, efforts to better understand the material and metaphorical dimensions of teacher childhood memories can invite uneasy and unexpected detours from the limiting

legacies that establish normative categories about who is marginal to the making of modern society, who is "unfit" or "incapable for civilization" (Lowe, 2015, p. 7). The primacy of the self-actualizing individual is mobilized within the context of colonialism, modernity, and industrial capitalism (Andreotti, 2014) and through classifications of racialized and gendered hierarchies of labor. Within disciplinary institutions like school (Pihama & Lee-Morgan, 2019; Willinsky, 1998), such knowledge congeals as "techniques of detail" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 71) that carry important subjective consequences for the recognizability and regulation of self and others.

In what follows, I discuss the advent of developmentalism as a truth-demonstration within education, present literature on the use of visual methods in teacher education research and practice, then share examples from a set of drawings that show a range of representations of the temporality of childhood. This article extends the work of other researchers who have explored visual methods (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014; Luttrell, 2020) as a way to bring forth an aesthetic dimension to the complicated act of representing lived experience and intention. While none of these drawings is without its own complications, and indeed, the drawings reproduce their own cultural tropes and developmental logics within and about the role of teachers in the lives of students, it is hoped that this project will encourage teacher educators to invite from student teachers a critical look into their own subjective beliefs on childhood and unmoor theories of learning to progress from the primacy of a singular narrative of development.

The Art of Governing Childhood Development

Situated within relations of power that are contiguous with a long legacy of schools as disciplinary sites of socialization (Anderson, 1988; Watkins, 2001), theories of childhood development are "neither culturally neutral nor politically innocent" (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015, p. 2). Cast under the "ghostly" (Gordon, 2008, p. 7) shadows of imperialist rule, the "exhaustive ordering" of the world had been well under way, dramatizing difference and establishing a grandiose sense of self and inheritance in the West (Foucault, 1970, p. 74). Hierarchical forms of categorization and classification emerged within academia, government, and industry centuries ago and continue to leave traces in both the social architecture of contemporary society and the subjectively felt limitations and desires of everyday individuals, particularly assimilationist for children of the urban working class, Black and immigrant children, the neurodiverse, and Indigenous peoples.

Childhood, then, is seen as a site of cultural struggle, or a "spectacle" of formation (Katz, 2008, p. 5), upon which to understand how historically situated educational aims and practices produce cultural theses about how a child should live and be (Castañeda, 2002; Nandy, 1984). As a vessel for generational power and colonial territorialization, the child played a central role in the goals and aims

aspects of achievement and progress. Rather than fitting students into specific ranks and niches, this study demonstrates that even as teachers continue to struggle under formal, official, and dominant narratives of development, their own renderings of childhood, as visually and narratively expressed, do indeed rupture singular representations in ways that lead to possibilities for more critical and contextualized ways of thinking about childhood and growth.

Visual Research as Methodology

This study analyzes a class activity that uses the method of drawing to amplify how traces of the past become manifest, emotionally and affectively, when one imagines what is desired from the profession of teaching (Futch & Fine, 2014; Weber & Mitchell, 1996). For a good number of visual researchers, images carry meanings that verbal modes of representation are limited to express. Whereas interviews generally privilege oral language, visual representation is said to open onto symbolic meanings that include both descriptive and metaphorical forms of expression (Guillemin, 2004). For Ruth Leitch (2008), images give symbolic weight to "unrecognized" or "unsayable stories" (p. 37), orienting our "attention to bodiliness" (Csordas, 1999, p. 147) and challenging the very notion of a unified and predetermined self (Copeland & Agosto, 2012; Derry, 2005). Visual drawings recognize how thoughts are "sensorially attentive" (Bates, 2013, p. 1) and charged with sensitivities that pull from multiple registers. In Lisa La Jevic and Stephanie Springgay's (2008) method of a/r/tography, they find visual journal making to be an act of both representing self in the world and provoking explorations into new ideas, practices, and encounters within art and theory.

In teacher education, visual research takes several forms. As two scholars who have long used drawing-as-method, Mitchell and Weber (1999; see also Mitchell et al., 2005) examined how preservice teachers' drawings of teachers encode major cultural tropes and stereotypes of the work. Despite commitments to child-centered learning, inclusion, and equity, the teachers of their study drew normative images: predominantly White women teachers standing in front of chalkboards, sporting glasses, and most often concerned with arithmetic and the alphabet. Such images encode the circulation of particular knowledges that structure and limit how beginning teachers imagine, not only the work of teaching, but who can be a teacher in the first place. More recently, Victoria Restler (2018) developed the method of drawing body maps with 10 teacher activists in New York City, laying focus on the affective, elusive, and embodied elements of teaching that disrupt and exceed the cultural tropes surfaced by the participants of Mitchell and Weber's study.

Despite discussions about the power of visuality in educational research, only a handful of studies use drawings to explore preservice teachers' constructions of childhood and development. A few exceptions include the work of Carolyn Frank and colleagues (2003), who use memory mapping with preservice teachers in Los

Angeles to draw connections between childhood experiences and adult apprehensions with writing. In a separate analysis of the data used in this article, Debbie Sonu (2021) found that student teachers drew from their own experiences with teachers, life circumstances, and family and culture to link past histories with promises made to the students in their imagined future classrooms. The use of drawings, here, tapped into a constellation of frameworks that surfaced the reoccurring binary of goodness and badness, as well as innocence and diversity, in ways that opened up the possibility for more critical interrogation into the context of schooling and adult–child relations.

Precisely because visuality taps into the aesthetic realm, visual researchers, whether using drawings, photography, collage, or other mixed forms, also surface a central paradox: If visuality is a valuable medium of research, it is not because images open a straightforward illustration of truth. Importantly, in none of these cases do visual researchers cast the aesthetic realm as superior or oppositional to either language or the empirical realm. Yet the aesthetic call does point attention to the multiple, subjective, and at times contradictory meanings of any given representation. Because there is no consensus on how images should be read, analysis requires careful thought and negotiation into the context of an image, its relationship to the participant's narration of it, and intensities and affects that resist expected themes or codes.

While visual methods no doubt raise productive tensions between content, form, and interpretation, they can also unwittingly reinstall "a logic of proceduralism" (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 206). Touching on a larger turn within (post)qualitative studies in education, the growing interest in the visual has exposed the ways traditional frameworks construct a human subject who can be known through expert interpretation. The irony of "methodocentrism" is the privileging of method (Weaver & Snaza, 2016) or a "leap to application" (St. Pierre, 2016, p. 111) that may actually reinforce positivist epistemologies behind the use of materials considered artlike. In response, some scholars seek to undo the remains of extraction, procedure, and conclusion baked into qualitative frameworks, highlighting instead the unpredictable intensities, affects, and force fields that disrupt and exceed conventional meaning-making processes and practices (Springgay & Truman, 2018). At its worst, the seduction of a postmethod or posttheory can inadvertently reinforce commonsense explanations without uncovering the taken-for-granted assumptions the field holds about teaching, learning, and childhood.

All these considerations are inflected in the current study too. As much as the participants were afforded the freedom to compose, the use of drawing in a research context carries with it expectations and assumptions that are by no means neutral. For instance, participants may have been affected by the ways drawing is learned at school, where scribbling outside the lines is arguably discouraged. As in the interview process, participants who construct visuals may seek to appeal to what they project as the expectations for correctness. Not only that, but the atten-

tion to memory as a frame through which to imagine pathways may assume an individual subject not shared by all; that is, participants may have frameworks that do not position themselves as at the center of a personal history (Bagnoli, 2009), conceptualizing the self—and memory—as asynchronous, rooted in relation, and/or with varying degrees of disclosure and detail.

Research Design

This research activity was undertaken with one class of preservice student teachers during their final semester of a 2-year, clinically rich postgraduate childhood teacher education program in a large urban metropolis of the northeastern United States.[1] The cohort under study comprised 18 student teachers who ranged in age from 23 to 39 years. In a short survey, 15 identified themselves as cisgender women, 3 as cisgender men, and none as nonbinary or gender fluid. Almost all participants were in their early and mid-20s, with two in their late 30s. Two students were of Hispanic descent, 3 were Asian, 13 were White, and all were born in the United States. Some had minor experiences working with children prior to entering the program (e.g., camp counselor, tutoring, babysitting), but for all, this program was their first experience working in a public classroom setting. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and in the end, two students decided not to continue.

Data were gathered by a doctoral-level research assistant who obtained consent and facilitated a research activity that asked participants to create a visual drawing of their most formative childhood memories, including, if they wished, major schooling or educational experiences, and to write a short accompanying narrative that described the drawing and spoke to how it may or may not have connected to their teaching perspectives and practices. There were no additional parameters to the study, so participants had free rein to determine what shape or progression their visuals would take, including the use of symbolic imagery, explanatory text, or other clarifying details. There were no requirements as to the number of events or the overall length of the narrative.[2]

Analysis was not specific to each individual drawing but instead sought to understand the breaking points of a single narrative across the entirety of the class set. Given this bounded unit of study, analysis included laying out all the visual drawings and categorizing them into similar themes and forms, followed by multiple readings of each narrative, which were then organized into a table that highlighted specific descriptions of visual choice and exemplary descriptions of childhood memories. Here I used the drawings, alongside written descriptions, as a unique narrative process (Tidwell & Manke, 2009) that attended to what Chloe Brushwood Rose and Bronwyn Low (2014) called "craftedness": the aesthetic expression and curation of emotion, setting, and metaphors participants make as they render a story in visual form. Although the following examples of individual drawings are not intended to offer any generalizable conclusion on how teachers form lay

theories of childhood, they do illustrate how, within a class setting, there exists a diverse range of representations that in and of themselves can become rich tools for exploring the temporality of childhood in teaching perspectives and practices. At the end of the article, I present some possible ways that teacher educators can use a set of drawings to transition toward a more critical analysis of young children and teaching.

Disturbing Development in Visual Form

In what follows, I present the diversity of participants' drawings and written narratives (see the appendix for a table of all drawings) and highlight five distinct forms that puncture the developmental norm: (a) arrows that imply causal effect, (b) stick figures that comprise social scenes, (c) line graphs, (d) faces and states of emotion, and (e) drawings with a central location of self.

Arrows of Causal Effect

Arrows to imply causal effect were featured prominently in two drawings from the data set. For Oriana,[3] who went to "a small, very traditional Catholic, private school," her childhood pathway was drawn as a comparative split that parsed out "how negative events have shaped me into the teacher I am today, and the teacher I wish to become when I hold a classroom of my own" (see Figure 1). Rather than tracing her development as a temporal linear line, Oriana instead lists five formative

Figure 1
Oriana
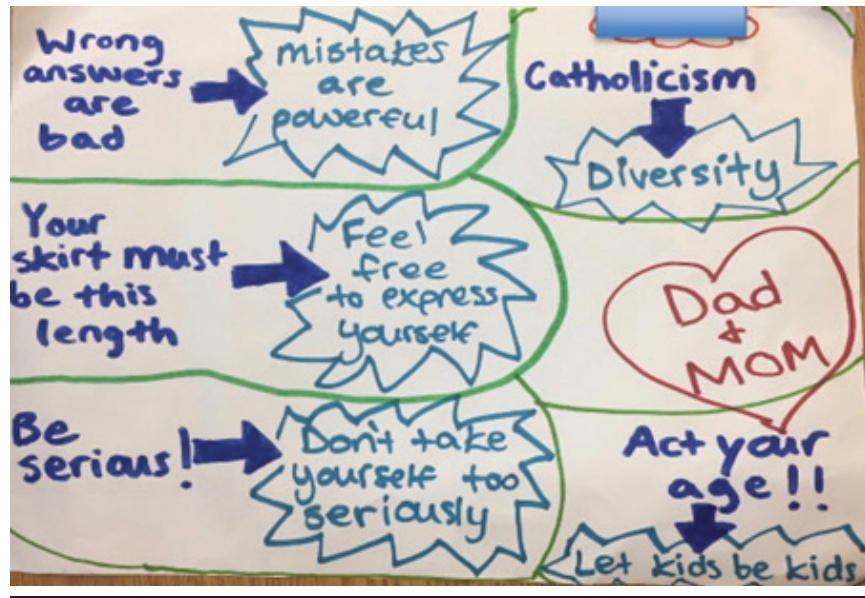
and emotionally laden demands she received from her own elementary school past and draws arrows that burst into newfound perspectives and values that she wishes to uphold as a teacher preparing to work with children. With more specificity, she writes about a time when her fourth-grade math teacher used public humiliation "in excess when mistakes were made." Being told she "would never make it to college," she remembers bursting into tears. Calling these her "shaming incidents," she recalls feeling "embarrassed and self-conscious" about her competency in math, which led to her becoming very "withdrawn" as a child.

Similar to other studies that trace how negative childhood experiences are carried into adulthood (Farley et al., 2020; Saban, 2003; Sonu et al., 2022), Oriana shares how she still has a lingering "sense of anxiety and dread" when it comes to math and vows through her teaching to create a "nurturing environment" where "we should not be afraid to make [mistakes]." As another "form of public shaming and gender stereotyping," the public rebuke of her school uniform led Oriana to find importance in "giving students the freedom to express themselves," while the repeated demand that she "stop giggling, to sit quietly in our seats, and to work independently" transformed the demand to "Be serious!" or "Act your age!" to a commitment to "embrace the idea that we are teaching young children and that they should be able to act like children." It was her mother and father, featured here inside a drawn heart, who "always supported her noticing and wondering as a child," inviting her to be the child whom she found to be inappropriate and therefore punished in the school setting. The parable of the arrow is a straight and direct line toward something, but the effort to move the arrow always requires a pulling back. Here the arrows Oriana drew carry their force from her childhood memories as she expresses the desire to model herself in opposition to the school practices she experienced in her past.

Social Scenes and Stick Figures

Three participants, in particular, made noticeable use of stick figures to illustrate childhood as a social scene that emerges from relations with others (see Figure 2). For Riley, who grew up in "a White, Jewish, well-off neighborhood," the memory of attending elementary school in a homogenous setting where "everyone looked the same, everyone spoke the same language, everyone had a house to go home to," shaped her desire to lift up diversity of race, religion, language, and gender and preserve the "uniqueness and specialness" of each student in her future classroom. At the top left, her drawing shows four equally sized stick figures, all of the same purple color. In her narrative, Riley expresses a kind of longing to have been raised in the company of different cultures as a child, writing repeatedly, "I wish I was exposed to much more when I was in elementary school," and again, in short, "I wish I was exposed to this type of diversity when I was a child." In the practicum component to her teacher education program, Riley is placed in a school

Figure 2
Riley

renowned for its ethnic and linguistic diversity, and it is through this experience that she finds great appreciation for the ways that children of various backgrounds come together as friends and classmates. "I'm so grateful that I get to see these interactions," she proclaims. "Everyone adds something different to the table." Her drawing shows another cluster of stick figures to the right, again all of the same black color. These she labeled "mom" and "dad," two people in her life who have been "super supportive" of her, an experience that leads to her commitment to go "above and beyond" in giving students a similar sense of encouragement.

The third scene that Riley highlights as formative to her educational pathway conjures a contentious incident she had with a college professor who, despite the holy holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continued to assign schoolwork. As seen in her drawing, Riley represents herself in pink, pleading with a larger stick figure; her professor is seen here as taller and of a different color. Felt as a slight against her religious heritage, Riley writes throughout her narrative the importance of lifting up the cultural aspects of her students, giving heightened frustration to the intolerance of her professor. "I felt as though my culture and religion weren't being properly respected," she exclaims, promising to always be "mindful" of the holidays and customs of her future students.

Line Graphs and Timelines

In representing their childhoods, three students elected to use forms that mirror line graphs or timelines, splitting the upper and lower halves into positive and negative life circumstances or schooling incidences that progress in time from left to right (see Figure 3). As a "journey of ups and downs, positives and negatives," Stella writes extensively in her narrative about her visual choices. Deliberate in her use of color and symbols, she explicitly places all her reasons for teaching "on top in blue," whereas "all of the words in red" represent for her "my confusion and what I do not want to do in my own teaching." As she explains in her narrative, she intentionally uses all green in her line graph to represent the lack of diversity in her own schooling experiences, which then "explodes at the end" to demonstrate her commitment to "incorporate the rich diversity of all of my students into my teaching practice." Admitting that she had not always considered teaching as a profession, she now realizes how much she enjoys it and draws "a red cloud of uncertainty" in the upper right corner to symbolize her past ambivalence. In her drawing, which she calls "kind of crazy" but with "a lot of meaning," Stella focuses on her teachers, both her "favorite" fourth-grade teacher and, in contrast, "an awful" chemistry teacher in high school, the latter of which stands as an example of "how not to treat

Figure 3
Stella
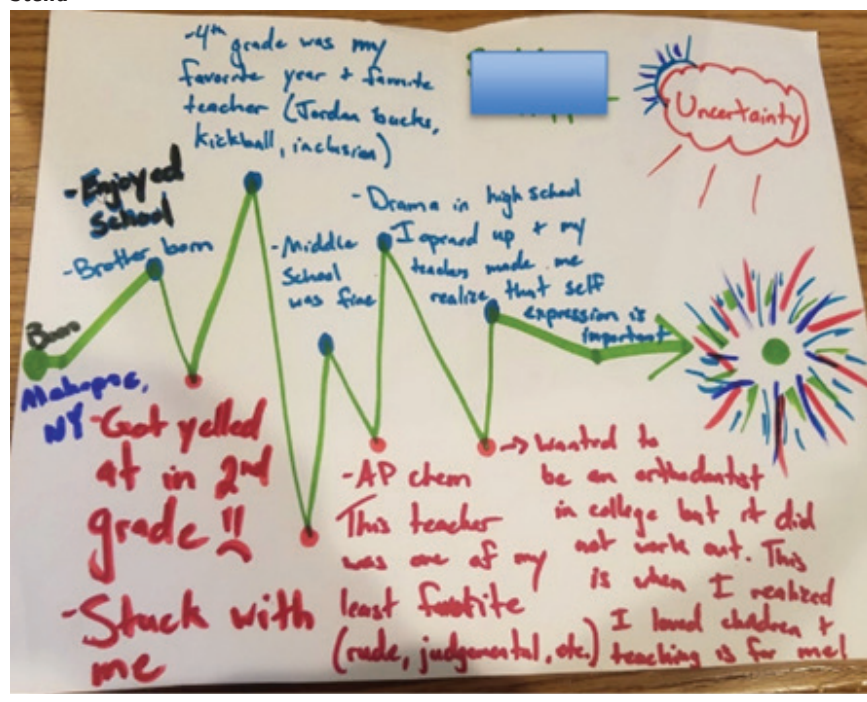
students." Linked to the split made in her drawing, Stella, alongside Oriana and Riley, shapes her future aspirations as a teacher on constructions of good and bad teachers from her own childhood. As Stella makes use of the line graph and divides her drawing to represent both positive and negative experiences, she assembles a collection of memories that shapes the contours of her experiences alongside the various teachers she has had.

Faces and States of Emotion

Describing her elementary school as "a frightening place," Chloe uniquely draws a set of scenes (see Figure 4) from her schooling experiences, depicting her own face in various states of emotion, including as confused, afraid, and a startled witness. One central figure of her map is an angry principal with furrowed brow and arms flailing wildly. Next to his face is a quote: "I'm big, you're small. I'm smart, you're dumb. I'm right, you're wrong. And there's nothing you can do about it" (emphasis original). Other scenes show Chloe with swirls in her eyes and stars floating about her head, illustrating the severe testing anxiety that left her "dizzy, nauseous and sometimes temporarily sightless," or with a grimacing look of shock or fear, having just witnessed the physical assault of her second-grade classmate by their teacher. At the top of the page, she is a small, solemn figure looking up at an adult speaking French, a language she had yet to understand. The words "WA WA WAA" in capital letters hover around her head.

Figure 4
Chloe

Across multiple incidents, Chloe cuts through traditional notions of innocence and bliss as hallmarks of childhood (Garlen, 2019) and marks her own with repeated reminders of the child's vulnerability in the presence of an unflappable, authoritarian, or incomprehensible adult. In her narrative, she elaborates on one particularly difficult relationship with a teacher, one that she claims continues to haunt her as an adult: "She made me feel like I was always wrong, or everything I did was never good enough." Like Oriana's arrows, tensions between participants and their teachers arise when attempts to express themselves or obey backfire. In this tension lies the vulnerability of the child, which Chloe names as "trying to please an adult with impossible standards." Her account speaks to both the vulnerability of the child and the perceived power of adults. Yet, the conflictive feelings set forth in Chloe's drawing take an agentic bend. Her confusion as a student in a French immersion school turns toward an empathetic stance with the multilingual students with whom she works in her current practicum placement. About this, she shares, "I find myself very interested in the ELLs [English language learners] I've encountered in my fieldwork and eager to understand what learning English is like for them and how to best support them." She goes on, "I found being a young child very stressful, and I felt that most things were completely out of my control." As a teacher, Chloe hopes to be "approachable, . . . kind and respectful," a commitment made in opposition to the memories she draws out in her own recollection of school.

The Concept Map

A concept map, or mind map, is typically used as a pedagogical tool that begins with the subject at the center then builds out connections related to a central theme or idea. In her drawing, Jade utilizes this form, first placing her name inside the center of a large circle and crafting numerous spokes that radiate outward like tentacles (see Figure 5). At the end of each line, she cites a wide range of influences that come to mind when thinking back on her life. Without a clear teleological end or any direct line toward adulthood, her drawing shows an assemblage of significant memories, including her identity as a second-generation Chinese American; her responsibility to younger siblings; and a variety of extracurricular school activities, such as track and field, a Lunar New Year show, and school band. "It's interesting to see all these events come in full circle and make up the person that I am today," she writes in her narrative. Her drawing brings together a collage of memories and relations that pushed her to "become successful in the future," corroborated by a narrative that highlights both her familial and culturally based commitments adopted from a legacy of immigration to the United States. "My grandma was an educator in China before she immigrated to America and both my parents never got the opportunity to pursue a higher education due to circumstances in their home country," she explains. Anchored to her parents' ambitions and her immersion in a school system that she calls "foreign" to them, Jade takes on the responsibility of

Figure 5
Jade
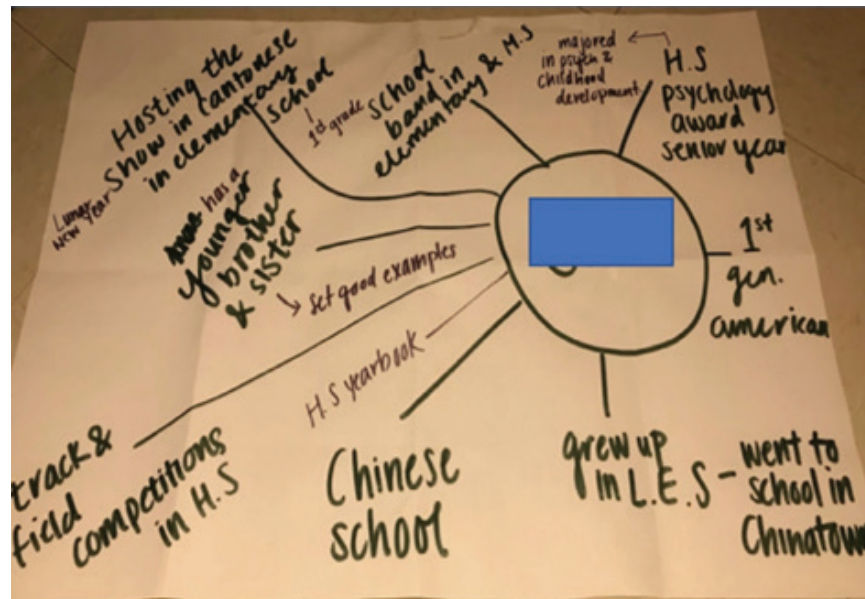
participating in a variety of in- and out-of-school "extracurriculars" that ensured a connection to both her Chinese culture and the offerings of her educational experience. Her memories of attending schools where she was "exposed to a variety of different cultures and clubs" leads her to consider her own classroom as a site where students "feel proud of who they are."

Pedagogical Implications

Although only glimpses into a far more complex and vast human landscape, these drawings call into question the oversimplification of developmental frameworks by bringing into the educational scene the role of circumstance, conflict, and vulnerability. Across each one, student teachers make generous use of arrows, splits, stick figures, facial expressions, connective lines, and mind maps to produce an array of inter- and intrapersonal relations. As in Chloe's drawing of faces, images can attend to significant aspects of childhood with striking emotional tenor, often exhibiting color, cloudbursts, and thickness to convey force and weight. Not only do these drawings paint a picture of change over time without reifying the dominant modernist concept of linear development; they offer a way to think about growth as affected by local contexts and subjectivities, as moving in unconventional directions, as refusing static and normative forms of categorization.

The metaphorical character of images encodes deep and often unrecognized

assumptions that structure the ways we conceptualize the world, how it operates, and our place within it. "Images exert their power," as Weber and Mitchell (1996) write, "largely through their fundamental role in metaphor" (p. 305). Yet the metaphorical quality of drawings does not return us to a fantasied idea of a universal or authentic set of certainties around experience. To disrupt the assumption that any one truth-demonstration can capture the varied idiosyncrasies of childhood, these drawings, analyzed as a set of negotiations, offer a glimpse into the diverse and varied views beginning educators construct when reflecting on their own pathways from childhood to teaching.

These drawings and narratives also show how beginning teachers use past recollections to counteract the emotional toll that school can place on a child's vulnerabilities, transforming their struggles with punishment or exclusion into vows for tolerance, expression, and support. Although beginning teachers often tend to empathize with the children they imagine teaching (Balli, 2014), taking the perspective of the adult teacher, instead of solely the child student, can open up important links between field experiences, past histories, and the theories and methods offered in university coursework. Of interest is what the study of emotional life can tell us about the disciplinary effects of schooling, achievement, and control, including teachers' role in mobilizing affect to secure the appearances of progress and efficiency in classroom teaching. The managerial responsibility that surrounds developmentalism may be particularly heightened within neoliberal contexts where teachers are pressured to ensure that all students uniformly follow rigid pacing calendars and meet high-stakes academic benchmarks.

Similar to stage-wise developmental models, typologies of difference are anchored to norms that often disregard a sense of wholeness and history, inscribing value judgments as an attribute of the individual, sometimes at the expense of critical analyses into structures, systems, and modes of thinking (Sonu et al., 2020). As seen, particularly for Oriana, teachers take up the binary between "good" and "bad" or "student" and "teacher" perhaps a little too easily (Chang-Kredl & Kinglsey, 2014). The desire to emulate "good" teachers and to compensate those who represent "bad" is commonly found in research that links childhoods to future teaching selves (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Yet, as Weber and Mitchell (1996) argue in their own work with teacher images, such binary constructions can work to either promote or dismiss perceived behaviors without close scrutiny of context.

Given this, teacher educators can highlight with prospective teachers how the specificities of context disrupt universalized ideals and, even further, how the mutually constitutive links between "good" and "bad" make such clear-cut positions impossible to obtain. As Deborah Britzman (1991a) reminds us, "every pedagogy is overburdened with relations of power, techniques of social control, and institutional mandates" (p. 72). Teacher emulation can lead to great disappointment when a teacher is faced with a classroom or school setting that differs from what the teacher remembers; beginning teachers learn quickly that what they wish from the

teaching profession is always complicated by the shifting contextual assemblages within which they work.

Therefore attending to the complex demands of schooling for both teachers and students can lead teachers from a singular focus on the interpersonal to a critical analysis of schooling. The narrated drawings from this one class reflect a wide range of contexts and communities that are always linked to broader sociopolitical and historical landscapes. A deep investigation into how systems of representation, steeped within colonial contexts that privilege the cultural elite, have taken an authoritative hold on our senses of self and others can lead to productive critiques on linearity and norm-based hierarchies. In contemporary society, Lorna Weir (2008) argues, such truth-demonstrations already always comprise radically heterogeneous knowledges that include science but also religion, politics, and common culture. Because disciplinary society functions precisely through various forms of social exclusion and marginalization—systems that separate, divide, and compartmentalize individuals under the banner of efficiency, supervision, and conquest—teacher educators can emphasize alternative theories that seek to capture complexity over consensus (see Tesar et al., 2016), raising ethical questions about the fundamental right to represent oneself as both a political concept and a form of voice and expression (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

Certainly, developmental psychology and the sciences are not the only entry points into understanding childhood. Yet the historical underside of these fields reveals centuries of settler control over how we view social difference, human value, and worth. Ashis Nandy (1984) reminds us that colonialism and childhood are inseparably harnessed in the interpretation of human life. His call is for new and indeterminate spaces for knowledge production that do not lead to aims of perfectibility. As the very ideological and epistemic pillars of development continue to be critiqued for serving "to support the status quo, reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes, and ignoring the real lives of children" (Cannella, 1997, p. 2), teacher education programs can do more to investigate the historical and colonial conditions that motivate our conceptualizations—raced, classed, gendered, and capitalist—and to usher in more expansive and diverse analyses of models of growth and change that include acknowledging the very real material impact such judgments have on children and teachers in school.

Although there is no illusion that this small study will topple the hard-standing dominance of stage-wise developmentalism in education, it does provide one way to deepen conversations on what we consider important to know about children and childhood; how to embrace the enigmatic, messy waywardness of life amid all the constraining frameworks for growth, progress, and development; how disrupting the stronghold of normalcy in childhood may usher in more inclusive and caring engagements for all; and if there is a possibility in teaching to defiantly act out against the deeply entrenched beliefs and values that have circulated deleteriously throughout our society since the beginning of colonial time.

Acknowledgment

Notes

[1] Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Participants Review Committee at Hunter College. During the time of the study, I was serving as program director of the childhood education program in which students were enrolled.

[2] Owing to the constraints of the study, I was not able to conduct interviews with the participants, nor was there an opportunity for shared analysis. I acknowledge this as a major limitation of the study and in hindsight would have proposed a research design that included greater collaboration and analysis with participants. Perhaps, then, this study serves as just one part of a potentially broader effort to explore drawing as a reflexive method in teacher education.

[3] All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

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Appendix
Table of All Drawings

Participant	Brief description	Overall form
Oriana*	A series of causes and effects; arrows from negative things toward newfound values and expressions	cause and effect
Ruby	One diagonal line; on top portion is a quote of "tough love" from her mother, and portrayed in the bottom half are her values of "independence," "problem solving," and "preparation for the real world"	one diagonal split
Stella*	Line graph with ups and downs: good things on top, as highs, and bad things on bottom, as lows	line graph
Rosilyn*	Timeline with difficult life circumstances written on top and, on the bottom, comforting emotions and support; title is name with an arrow toward the word "teacher"	timeline

Disturbing Development Through Drawing

Kristin	A staircase going upward, each step another grade level, with an arrow pointed to the right toward a description of that year, leading to an equals sign and a connection to classroom teaching	staircase
Cynthia	"Yellow brick road": a straight-line pathway (like in a board game)	straight pathway
Ava	Three connected circles "bonded" together by strong and weak spirals: a fourth-grade teacher who didn't uphold her agreement, her parents, her current mentor teacher	bonded circles
Liam	Divided into three sections: one for best friend; one for negative things heard for being gay; and another for values of "inclusion," "acceptance," and "sensitivity"	divided sections
Chloe*	Scenes of childhood, with faces in various emotional states; memories of adult authority and child vulnerability	scenes of faces
Mia	Seven puzzle pieces, each representing a time period in life, each piece filled with various stick figures of people	puzzle pieces
Riley*	Groups of stick figures: one group represents a culturally insensitive professor, the other is family, and the other group of four figures is not labeled at all	stick figures
Amy	Footprints drawn into a path that loses its way; various symbols of educational achievement and waywardness; at the end is a stick figure reaching toward a star	footprints
Camila	Cloudbursts in a path: inside clouds are important memories, and outside are written lessons learned, feelings, and reflections	cloudbursts
Noelle	Cloudbursts in a path: blue clouds are filled with good memories, and gray clouds with rain falling from them are filled with more difficult ones	cloudbursts
Jade*	Concept map; participant name at center, with spokes leading to important influences	concept map
Leonardo	A bridge over water with a small house on one side, and on the other side, a small, transparent house with two stick figures inside	a bridge

Note. An asterisk indicates that the original drawing is included in the article as a figure.