"A Piece of Good News": Teaching as a Creative Process

MARGARET C. KIELY
Université de Montréal

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Abstract
Teaching, clinical supervision, thesis direction all involve a creative process. This process is the foundation which provides the student with the conceptual framework required for the development of a mature identity as a psychologist. The theories of Piaget, Erikson, Freud, Mailloux, Barron, among others, underlie the process I have developed over the years. A well-conceptualized structure enables the student to become actively responsible for making that learning a formative, stimulating experience. As the process unfolds, the student becomes aware of the potential for a creative approach in all aspects of the development of an identity, regardless of the academic or professional orientation which has been chosen. The role of the teacher and the student varies over time as the student exercises an ever greater degree of professional and scientific autonomy. If the process is truly creative, the completion of the doctorate is significantly enhanced. The philosophical principles and values of this approach for teaching and training, along with examples of the impact on students' personal and professional development, will form the substance of this presentation.

It is a great honour and rare privilege to be here today. Since learning about the award, I have spent time reflecting on the meaning of it for me, and have asked the question: What is it I do as a teacher and a supervisor and how do I do it? It was time, finally, to put down on paper what I believe are the essential principles which provide the foundation of my career as a professor of psychology.

Prologue
I was privileged in my own academic formation to have been exposed to true mentors, gifted professors, researchers, and clinicians who shared their passion for knowledge, their commitment to psychology in all its facets, and for their openness to a wide range of theoretical positions without rigid defensiveness. Current literature on effective teaching cites the importance of having had a charismatic teacher as a predominant influence: I was privileged to have had more than one. I am indebted and believe it is important to render homage to them at the beginning of this presentation.

The first and probably the most significant influence was that of Père Noël Mailloux, founder of the Psychology Department at the University of Montréal, and teacher for many years. He provided the philosophical basis of psychology, believed that it is not the immensity of a professor's information which is important, but, rather, promptness in using it to raise new questions. Mailloux wrote often of the dire consequences of isolating research from teaching, always emphasizing their interdependence. He introduced us to psychoanalytic theory and dared to state that Sigmund Freud repaired the cartesian dichotomy by introducing the unconscious into human functioning. He was indeed a charismatic teacher of incredible intellectual creativity. I also want to pay tribute to Monique Laurendeau, Adrien Pinard, and Thérèse Gouin-Décarie, researchers and friends of Jean Piaget, who, through courses, seminars and research, made the basic premises of the theory comprehensible, i.e., organization is inseparable from adaptation — cognitive development is a continuous process of internal renovation and progress.

David Bélanger provided the historical context within which psychology developed, and made us aware of the necessity for sound, scientific research. Gabriel Clerk and André Lussier, exemplary clinicians, teachers and psychoanalysts, challenged us and made us sensitive to the underlying values and ethical issues of clinical work. Being trained in both the experimental and clinical areas by gifted professors such as these was a unique privilege.

Finally, the contributions of Erik H. Erikson and Frank F. Barron provided me with the theoretical bases for research on identity and creativity. Erikson developed a model for conceptualizing the individual's psychosocial development, the evolution of a sense of identity and the ultimate importance of wisdom as the crown of the long epigenetic development and evolution of the individual in society. Frank F. Barron was a pioneer for his constant search for the meaning of human creativity as process. In the text he co-edited with Taylor, entitled: *Scientific Creativity: Its Recognition and Development,* published in 1963, Barron brought together the leading researchers

and writers in the field and this text proved to be a landmark book for studies on both the process and product.

These, therefore, are the individuals and the theories which have and continue to influence me, personally and professionally. In a Piagetian perspective, the ongoing analysis and synthesis of the theoretical choices I have made, the ever evolving search for a new equilibrium, the continual process of organization of accepted ideas, and adaptation to the constant developments in the field of psychology, requires the assimilation of that new information and my accommodation to it. This process is reflected in my beliefs and attitudes about teaching and training which I hold today. I might add here that the assimilation and accommodation to the intricacies of the computer is for me still very much in the stage of disequilibrium, of rampant cognitive dissonance. My eventual adaptation and the development of a cognitive structure specifically related to this new technology is still very much in doubt.

It is not my intention here to discuss these theories in detail, nor to make specific references to them, and certainly not to defend them! They are theories, sets of hypotheses in constant evolution, in process of renewal and reformulation. What they have in common is the central premise of process. According to Webster, process is "any phenomenon which shows a continuous change in time." It is this concept which has provided the underlying structure for integrating compatible elements of these theories into the gestalt which defines who I am as a teacher, and what I believe about the learning process. This conceptualization was achieved gradually over the years and, now, hopefully, clear enough in my mind to describe it for you today.

Teaching

I did not begin to teach with a specific method, a resumé of the mechanics of teaching, an outline of "how to do it." When I was invited to join the department, I knew with certainty that I wanted to communicate my strong belief in the richness and value of psychology as the study of the science and art of human functioning. Certain principles, however, were very clear in my mind.

I believed, first of all, that I was a member of one of — if not the most — important disciplines in the world, and that teaching psychology was a privilege, a wonderful, exciting challenge, and an awesome responsibility, requiring as the artist Robert Irwin said: "responsive openness and earnest seriousness." I have always had a love and passion for an ever deeper understanding of how we become who we are, why we function as we do, and the values and moral bases which underlie our attitudes about life. My desire was to pass on to the young not only the science of psychology, but also the art of creatively understanding the process, and to find joy and a sense of accomplishment in the challenge. I wanted them to be proud of what they were learning. I also knew that I must have compassion, and a sense of caring. Socrates believed that the search for wisdom is care of the soul, and it is the search for wisdom that gives life meaning.

Secondly, I believed that students have the right to know of the intellectual challenges which are ever present in this field, to be made aware of and appreciate the continual theoretical and methodological battles which have marked it from the beginning. To be excited by this very alive, disparate discipline so replete with paradox and ambiguity, was for me the essence of the message I wanted to convey to the young, strongly believing in their ability to cope with the unknown and not to resort to a defensive, rigid theoretical position out of fear and the need for an immature sense of security. They must learn to adapt the main streams of thought to the practical realities of life, to be flexible and inventive. Somehow, they must be inspired to maintain their values in seeking a more caring and just society because they have significant responsibilities to it. And I believed that teaching requires looking below the content of what we teach, linking it to the historical and ethical dimensions which influence what we do and how we live in society.

Thirdly, I realized from the very beginning that my perception of what was important was not only the content, but the students' perception and understanding of what was happening when that content was presented. From my very first course, I have asked for student evaluations — not only of what they had learned, that was a given, but more importantly, how they had learned, how they would describe the lived process of acquiring this new knowledge, i.e., what had they experienced? It was much more than simply cognitive.

Teaching and Training

I have divided this presentation into two parts: The first deals with the process of learning, the second with integration of creativity into that process.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

Teaching is my half of the learning equation, and over time I have come to recognize clearly that it is my responsibility to find ways to help students develop the desire, the curiosity, the passion, the hunger for learning, because learning is their half of the equation. Somehow, I must communicate the joy, enthusiasm and pride that I experience as a psychologist. I also believe that students do want to learn (obviously, in varying degrees of desire), but more importantly, that they want to understand what they are learning. To help them towards this understanding requires the rigour necessary

to challenge them to question, not to answer their question, but to keep them on the edge of it, to encourage them to go deeper. The process must contain opportunities to be stimulated, to "experiment" with ideas. It also means teaching them how to reflect on an issue, how to take a position and be able to defend it. Only by discourse, in one form or another, is this give and take of ideas possible. It is also the means by which a teacher can help students to be at home with complexity and apparent disorder, or as Barron (1995) describes it, "chaos." It is only with consistent emphasis on the need for openness to their experience, the cultivation of curiosity, and the ability to look at problems from as many view points as possible, that they can develop flexibility of thought and an ever greater independence and inner directedness. Learning then becomes a creative process which goes far beyond course input and exam output. This is only possible, however, if I do not fail to respect the person of the student, and believe unfailingly in his or her capacity to learn and be responsible for it, a message which is conveyed more by attitude than by word.

This is not an easy task; it is often a very difficult one, marked with the need for my own constant self- evaluation and revision of approach when necessary. Without this commitment, I do not believe that I can provide the environment for true learning to occur. It is to realize with Aristotle that teaching is the highest form of understanding.

It has become concretely, as well as theoretically evident, that for me, this process is only achieved by the interaction of structure and dynamics in the psychoanalytic sense. The professor provides a clearly defined structure which allows for the cognitive, affective and social components to be present. This is attained by determining the content, clarifying the division of responsibility, providing the objective and subjective evaluations required during and at the end of the course or seminar, and establishing a few basic ground rules. I might add here that one of those ground rules is the respect for time, to be on time. Although I have never seen anything written specifically about it, my experience suggests that an invaluable message is conveyed to students about the importance of what we are doing if we respect one another's time.

The dynamics are placed squarely in the hands of the students. It is, to use the current "in"word, to empower them to assume the responsibility for the learning that takes place and the concrete ways that this can happen. If it is a group discussion, for example, I assume that everyone will arrive prepared, having formulated and written out questions which reflect their study of the material, and assume that they are ready for an exchange of viewpoints. Gradually, the interactive roles of the two sides of the learning equation become clear and students begin to realize that their responsibility is different but equal in value to mine.

This process is not easy for students to grasp, and the theoretical bases upon which the course is constructed require clarification by means of examples taken from what actually occurs in class. They begin to understand not only how the process works, but also the importance of their contribution to making it work. In the beginning, they are not necessarily happy or convinced about this shared responsibility, but with time, they begin to understand that learning this way, though very demanding, is intellectually challenging and even enjoyable, which comes as a surprise for many of them.

Another way I explain process to them is in Piagetian terms, where intellectual activity is always perceived as an active, organized process of assimilating the new to the old and of accommodating the old to the new. Piaget believed that cognition is a matter of real actions performed by the subject; intelligence-as-action leads to internalized structures of cognitive organizations. But this requires a gradual assimilation of ideas, and the ability to live the process in order that accommodation and hence a new equilibrium can occur. When there is new knowledge to be accommodated, the process begins again. Each adaptation paves the way for the succeeding one. When students begin to recognize that learning is actually knowledge-in-evolution, not the mere accumulation of theories and facts, they become much more open to different points of view and the lessening of their defensiveness is noteworthy.

This kind of learning, however, is not merely cognitive but affective as well. When students are confronted with the idea that their well-learned theories can and should be open to question, that they are not written in stone, that theories cannot be classified as true or false, they can find this to be very disturbing indeed. The teaching of theory, as if it were"truth" has done little to make psychology attractive to many students who see it as a rigidly defended fortress surrounded by an unbreachable moat of intolerance. When they learn that nothing in science is infallible or immutable, or when challenged to define it, and realize that the "experimental method" does not define "science," considerable confusion can result. It is the challenge to previously unquestioned assumptions which results in a period of cognitive and affective disequilibrium. But it is also the time when meaningful learning can occur.

The final theoretical components refer to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which I apply directly to the training of future professionals. But certain constructs, such as that of crisis, in the sense of a turning point, a time of change, is helpful in understanding the ambivalence students can feel when confronted

with a new way of thinking. There is the desire of hanging on to their old perceptions, yet wanting to know new ways. The decision to go further, rather than retreat, occurs when they become aware of their growing ability to formulate and maintain a personal point of view, without demeaning that of others and without self-defensiveness. In terms of personality, it is the acquisition of new ego strength.

Concretely, one way that has enabled many students to understand what is happening is the suggestion made during the very first class or first meeting with me as their advisor that they keep a journal which can serve as a reference point, academically, personally, socially. Developing an awareness of what they are experiencing in all its parameters — the positive and the difficult, the ebb and flow of changes in thinking — makes process meaningful. Simply to look back and realize they have developed good ideas, coped with all sorts of academic and personal difficulties, provides them with an understanding of their strengths, and makes them aware of what they have already accomplished. As teachers we are so often concerned with what students do not know, that we forget how much knowledge they have already acquired.

Essentially, my objective is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding not only of the content, but more importantly, the process of learning, the value of what they are learning and living today, right now. Students need to value psychology's historical roots as well as strive for future goals and be prepared for the future. Those are givens. I feel, however, that our academic world has lost sight of the value of being aware of and placing value on today's living and learning. There may not be a tomorrow for some students.

Creativity. The second section of this presentation is on creativity. As noted above, the principles from this area of human functioning are inherent to the way I teach my courses, but they are more explicitly stated when I am involved with the supervision and training of master's and doctoral students. This approach is an outgrowth of my own development as a researcher and clinician. I wish to explain this briefly by way of introduction to the subject.

Creativity has been and remains a fundamental area of research and theorizing in my own professional life. The experimentation which I carried out for my master's degree was to study the possible relationships of Piagetian theory with creative thinking in latency age children. My doctoral research dealt with the interaction of Erikson's theory of identity formation and creativity as process. It was only natural when I began teaching and supervising graduate students 25 years ago, that these theories would influence my attitudes and ways of conceptualizing the learning process. My first attempt to articulate the role of creativity in doctoral supervision was a presentation in 1982 at the annual congress of the American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., entitled: "Creative Sensitivity in Doctoral Research: the Supervisor's Contribution." The essence of that paper was that the dissertation process, from topic choice to doctoral degree, could and should be conceptualized as a creative one.

During the following 10 years, I interviewed Ph.D. candidates from different sections who had either completed the degree or had left the program, the "ABD's" — *All But Dissertation.* I eventually devised a working hypothesis to the effect that: The interplay of personality functioning and a creative perspective would: (1) enhance the degree of learning, by placing emphasis on the process rather than on the product (the dissertation), (2) enable students to persevere to the end of the program, thereby reducing the number of ABD's , and (3) significantly influence the development of a more creative professional identity. As a result of the interviews and ongoing evaluations by students with whom I worked, I became convinced that the integration of those theories which had process as a basic premise, could be operationalized as a creative method of supervision (Barron, 1963,1969; Ghiselin, 1963; Parnes & Meadows, 1963; Rank, 1932; Stein, 1963). I presented the results of this qualitative study at the Centennial Congress of the APA in Washington D.C., in 1992. The paper was entitled: "Creativity as an Antidote to the 'ABD' Syndrome."

The following section concerns the development of these ideas since that time, as well as a brief overview of the characteristics and process of creativity which provide the structure for my work.

Characteristics of creativity. The fundamental characteristics of creativity, whether defined as process or product, have remained relatively constant over time and this has fostered the continuity of a general understanding of the basic principles, while allowing for the constant reformulation and refinement of its numerous definitions. For example, the search for an ever greater understanding of and efforts at definition can be found in such diverse text as the seminal work of Otto Rank in 1932, entitled *Art and the Artist: Creative Urge and Personality Development,* or in Frank Barron's impressive overview of his work, *No Rootless Flower: An Ecology of Creativity,* published in 1995.

Regardless of how one defines the concept, there is common acceptance as to the basic characteristics of the nature of creativity. For example, Anderson (1965) suggests the following:

a. Creativity involves both product and process.
b. Creativity is a characteristic of life itself.

c. It is an expression of individuality and originality.
d. It is an interaction with society.
e. Although involving past experiences and affecting future experiences, creativity exists most dynamically in the present.
f. Creativity emerges from the depths of the unconscious mind.

In addition to these widely accepted characteristics, the following attributes are considered to be necessary for creative activity, and I list them because they represent the qualities of thinking I find essential for supervision. They are: autonomy, independence, and resistance to excessive social controls, in this case, undue academic control. The individual is open to experience, self directing, spontaneous, expressive, enjoys playing with ideas, unfrightened by the unknown, the mysterious, the puzzling. The person is more self-accepting, less afraid about what others would say, has the ability to experience self as creative, as the originator of one's acts, has an internal locus of evaluation, the ability to defer closure and judgement, and to accept conflict and tension. Finally, as the humanists in the field state, there is the intuitive aspect which involves the interplay between the conscious and the unconscious mind.

The process of creativity. Classical theory divides process into four phases. I prefer the word "phases" to "stages" because the term allows for a more dynamic understanding of the ebb and flow of the creative process.

1. Preparation, when a problem is investigated in every possible way: building a base of information, skills, and resources, and articulating alternatives.
2. Incubation, when the problem is stored below the level of the conscious mind: a period of overt inactivity during which it is presumed that the mind is sorting, integrating, and clarifying at an unconscious level.
3. Illumination, when the solution comes as if by intuition — the famous 'ah-ha' feeling: refers to the emergence of an image, idea, or perspective that helps to focus the problem and that suggests a direction for further work.
4. Verification, when the new idea is evaluated by the creator: developing and implementing the implications of the insight.

These phases are based on the principle that being creative means that we cannot command our minds to "be productive." We must learn to cooperate with the processes and forces that have their own timing. As Bargar and Duncan (1982) have stated, we must allow the "unconscious, intuitive processes to run their natural course. In this sense, the ego is led; it does not lead in the creative act (p. 11)."

Following naturally from this list of characteristics and phases, is the perspective of the influence on the individual student. Barron (1995) has stated this eloquently:

> Creativity is the general condition for the development of the person and the person's increasing differentiation, complexity, originality, and uniqueness... Creativity is the ability to respond adaptively to the need for the new ways of being. It is thus the ability to bring something new into existence. The adaptation, whether it be intrapsychic and related mainly to feelings or insights or the establishment of meaning and purpose in the formulation of goals, or extrapsychic in the form of new structures, processes, and inventions, is always in the service of increased power to grow and to survive (p. 31).

Supervising doctoral research and the training of future psychologists is thus more, much more than an exchange of information or tutorials on how to write a dissertation.

Before presenting this approach, however, a caveat is in order and it has been well stated recently by Shannon (1995), in the *Australian Universities Review.* It reflects my own hesitation about appearing to be too categorical as to how supervision could be realized. In writing of the danger in trying to formalize the role of the supervisor and the relationship with the doctoral student, Shannon feels we might destroy that intangible quality which makes for good supervision. He wrote:

> Like 'intelligence' we think we know it when we see it even if we cannot define it. It is intangible because, even for the same supervisor, it varies, not only from topic to topic, but even more importantly with each student one guides. It is this interpersonal relationship, which can be so fragile, with its imbalance of institutional power and intellectual authority in its embryonic stages, which defies 'how to do it' kits (p. 12).

With the recent proliferation of numerous systems of "the how to do it's" in the literature, I believe this caveat is essential to keep in mind.

A conceptualization of creativity in supervision. The cornerstone of this approach is that creativity consists of processes that occur within the individual, the doctoral candidate, and that creativity is the result of processes of "social transactions" (Stein, 1963), i.e., the individual student in all his uniqueness, with the advisor and with everyone involved in the program of research and training. The increasing attention being given to supervision, especially from the beginning of the '90s, reflects the growing awareness of the need to pay attention to that unique relationship which exists between student and advisor. It also accounts for the increasing efforts to

explain the difference, if one does indeed exist, between being a "mentor" or a "supervisor." This is not the place to enter into a discussion of this important development, nor the reasons why it has become important, other than to state that universities are finally aware of their need to take action to reduce the number of ABD's. Perhaps supervision will eventually be credited as an important aspect of a professor's career development.

APPLICATION OF THEORY

It is essential to think and interpret the phases of the candidate's research in the language of creativity. From topic choice to doctoral degree, the explicit language of the four phases articulates the framework. From the very first encounter with a candidate, it is essential to speak of the process in this language and clearly explain what we mean by it. It is a paradoxical process: as students grasp the gestalt of the relatively arduous period ahead, they must also be made aware of the possibilities for a positive, exciting adventure, a challenging one which they are capable of meeting. One student, in describing the subjective experience of his relationship with his research in terms of passion, integrity and integration, wrote:

> I hadn't much considered the place of "beauty", "joy", in my thesis research, but now I am beginning to think more frequently in those terms. Passion suggests delight, creativity, astonishment, playfulness ... FUN! Although even the best job may include unsavoury tasks and difficult moments, it is the satisfaction and pleasure that I experience that will sustain me through those moments and prevent me from burning out or fizzling out.

There must also be recognition that in the desire for objectivity, there is a tendency to view logical, analytic thought as the only way of thinking which is appropriate to science, and this restrictive attitude can be the elimination of creativity in that it ignores the perspectives, intuition, feeling states, values, and motivations that represent the psyche. One student stated this very succinctly:

> University formation only has value if it is seen as a process for the whole development of the individual. It is not the specific formation for a given scientific area, the course content; it is the lived experience of the process of formation which leads to the diploma.

The invention of a new problem, that is, the choice of the research question, is itself a creative act, indeed one of the highest forms of creativity. It is the ability to combine, recombine, or transform the cognitive elements of a problem in a novel and adaptive way. For such a creative transformation to succeed, the question must be perceived and defined correctly — there must be a narrowing down, and a simplification of a complex situation, until the crucial difficulty in the task is isolated. The most highly creative researchers devote much more time to this first phase of analyzing the problem and understanding the elements involved, than they do in resolving it. We know that a clearly stated problem contains the elements of the solution, but first of all, students must be allowed to "play" with ideas.

Borrowing from psychoanalytic theory, I repeatedly insist on the crucial role that "free association" plays in developing the students' research interests and the growing awareness of responsibility for that research. This implies helping them to maintain an open cognitive system, thus avoiding the rigid categorizations so swift to arrive in the face of cognitive dissonance. It is obvious that an efficient, economical and analytical perception is essential. Such a perception, however, can be the enemy of creative insight unless the student learns that the whole process requires the oscillation between openness and closure.

To put this another way, I have found that the compelling tendency towards establishing a clear, simple, cognitive structure too early in the process can restrict and play havoc with creativity. Pressure from the university milieu, the overwhelming emphasis on experimental methodology to the detriment of qualitative considerations, all militate against the development of a creative attitude. The futile arguments which surround the illogical, spurious issue of quantitative vs qualitative methodologies, and the seemingly endless discussions as to what is "pure" science and what is "applied," obviate the discussion of science as *knowledge obtained by study and practice.* But a more serious effect is that this pseudo-conflict can and does destroy the creative potential of many students capable of and willing to go beyond standardized norms, students who are intelligent enough to know that any given methodology does not define what science is. The spoken or unspoken message that there must be conceptual and methodological conformity currently in vogue in a given department, destroys a creative process even before it can begin.

The ongoing challenge for the student, therefore, is to develop an open system, suspending the boundaries among cognitions, and keeping them permeable. Internal and external pressures of the doctoral period militate against such a process, and from the following examples, it becomes obvious how a more creative approach could minimize or eliminate these influences. An example of internal blockage occurs when there is too much reliance on the authority of the advisor, or fear of failure or of making mistakes, or looking foolish. External pressures include the supervisor's research

preferences and prejudices which can constrain the scope, perspectives, methodology, and directions students might wish to take. The pressure of negative criticism, of the demand that the student's work reflects the supervisor's own perspective can spell the death knell for creativity. Perhaps the most incisive statement of this attitude was made by the artist, Robert Irwin. In an interview about his philosophy of teaching he stated:

> I would think that the most immoral thing one can do is to have ambitions for someone else's mind. That's the crux of the challenge and the responsibility of having the opportunity to deal with young people at such a crucial time in their formation. (Weschler, 1982, p. 121).

I feel that we are not often aware of the crushing influence we can have if we expect students to be imitators rather than creators.

The process varies throughout the doctoral period of research and training, and the support system essential for each phase must be adapted to each student. The writing of the dissertation is an especially critical time for supervision. The support systems which are present at all other phases of the educational process cease to exist for the majority of doctoral candidates, with the possible exception of those in the so-called "hard sciences." The latter generally continue to work in a laboratory setting and are more assured of continuity of direction. But they too are subject to the loneliness of writing the dissertation. For students in the humanities and social sciences, the end of the course requirements means a move out of a valourizing environment into one which is permeated with what Sternberg (1981) call's "dissertation anomie." The stimulation and motivation which comes from working closely with fellow candidates has simply disappeared, the cyclical nature of administrative and faculty changes creates tension, and the diminished availability — or unavailability — of supervision adds to this feeling of isolation. The demands of academia on professors to do research and to publish means that they tend to invest more time and interest in these pursuits than in dissertation supervision, a role which up to this time has received very little credit in a professor's struggle for career advancement.

Thus, it is at this critical juncture of writing the thesis that the decision is often made to be a "Ph.D." or an "ABD." This can be due to the fact that, all too often, supervisors make no effort whatsoever to contact students during this period. The attitude of "It is up to the student to contact me" is, I believe, a serious failure to understand what an ethical, responsible commitment signifies.

Once the doctoral process is terminated, ongoing research has shown that three groups can be described. The first group are students who had a variety of supervisors, have had a very fulfilling process and spoke of excellent guidance throughout their doctoral program. Many kept a journal wherein they recorded their personal, academic experiences, and the dissertation process itself. It was of great help during all phases leading to the degree, but especially during the writing of the thesis. Those whom I interviewed, who did keep a diary, stated they had become aware not only of the doctoral process, but also of the factors which had directly affected the development of their professional identity. As one student wrote: "You only understand the process by living it and being aware of what you are living."

A second group who had achieved the Ph.D. diploma remarked that the process had been a painful one, marked by frustration, inadequate, indifferent and/or controlling supervision, which had resulted in diminished motivation thus requiring incredible effort for them to go the distance. They often felt deprived of a sense of accomplishment, of personal achievement, especially where ownership of the work was in dispute as to the order of names on publications. These students had great difficulty in expressing what they had lived while striving to finish the course. It seems that a rich learning experience has been inevitably lost.

The third group, the "ABD" candidates, spoke of their feelings of disappointment, of regret, of personal and professional loss, and of injustice. The process had been a painful one, marked by frustration, unending obstacles, a gradual loss of interest, and the eventual withdrawal from the academic milieu. Even after many years, the feeling of "unfinished business" was still very present to them. There was anger and resentment that their directors did not seem to care.

Their disappearance from the program was only recognized by a letter from the Faculty of Graduate Studies stating that their dossiers were closed. This manner of dealing with students who do drop out of the doctoral program suggests that the institution itself may not be the nurturing, supportive environment that professors require to be more than "career scientists." Experience with institutional priorities makes it eminently clear that credit given towards the training and the supervision of graduate students is found more in principle than in reality. The freedom and incentive for creative supervision has yet to be credited as a valued aspect of a professor's career development, and the lack of manifest support undermines the motivation for doing so. In such an environment, students who do not finish have been deprived of that kind of enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity which would lead to the joy of discovery and an enduring and productive love of science.

It would seem that we have given very little attention to these interactive issues inherent in the student-professor-institutional matrix, and as a consequence, we have failed to apply the very basic principles of the science of psychology. A study of the presence and the actual application of psychological principles in the day-to-day tasks of professors and in the institution itself, would be a very interesting piece of research, if not a very important one for society to whom we are responsible.

For me, therefore, becoming a psychologist is a process of developing a sense of identity through the interaction of the individual with the formative environment of the doctoral program. Erik Erikson has provided a model eminently suited for a theoretical understanding of graduate formation, one which reflects a viable, enriching process of human-professional development. The application of a Piagetian approach provides the basis for helping students understand that intellectual activity is truly an active, organized process leading to ongoing adaptation, knowledge-in-evolution, which involves cognitive and affective disequilibrium-equilibrium and adaptation, and that there is shared responsibility for making this happen. I firmly believe that integrating the process of creativity into this overall perspective of the doctoral program can be an antidote to the "ABD" syndrome. A "creative philosophy" would ensure that a greater number of highly intelligent, creative graduate students would attain the Ph.D., and they would do so with a sense of fulfillment, of accomplishment and an ongoing desire to learn and contribute significantly to psychology as both science and art. It has been said that sensitivity is to the artist or the scientist what a delicate lens is to the camera. It is my belief that if we were to translate our academic attitude on the doctoral process into the sensitive supervision of the creative process, we, as well as the students we direct, could and would be richly rewarded. This implies that the academic system must allow for individual differences and diversity, for the time to supervise creatively, thus redirecting the emphasis from product to process. There must be an ethical commitment by all levels of academia towards making this a reality.

Finally, I wish to clarify the quotation in the title: "A Piece of Good News." The artist, Corita, illustrated this poem by Ugo Betti, the Italian poet and playwrite, as the central focus of a serigraph. It has always inspired me and summarizes all I have said today.

"A Piece of Good News"

that's what's needed, don't you see? that!
nothing else matters half so much.
To reassure one another. To answer each other.
Perhaps only you can listen to me and not laugh.
Everyone has, inside himself ... what shall I call it?
A piece of good news! Everyone is ... a very great, very important character!
Yes, that's what we have to tell them up there!
Every man must be persuaded — even if he's in rags — that he's immensely, immensely important!
Everyone must respect him; and make him respect himself too. They must listen to him attentively.
Don't stand on top of him, don't stand in his light.

But look at him
with deference. Give him
great, great hopes, he needs them...
especially if he's young. Spoil him!
Yes, make him grow proud!

To "spoil" students is to challenge them intellectually, to encourage scientific risk-taking and to question the known, to cope with the ambiguities and paradoxes of the creative process, to nurture a spirit of curiosity and love for science. To "spoil" the mentor implies a commitment by the institution which would ensure that creative supervision is recognized, encouraged and rewarded as contributing significantly to the formation of the young, who in turn become responsible to the society that makes it all possible. The mentor would also be energized with the creative energy which comes from the dynamic interaction of enthusiastic learner and dedicated teacher.

Reassurance, respect, deference, hope, pride — if reciprocally between student and the mentor, if lived in an environment created by the university where the creative process is strongly supported and if allowed to flourish — then we will indeed have "A Piece of Good News".

Correspondence may be addressed to Margaret C. Kiely, Psychologie, Université de Montréal, Case postale 6128, Succ. Centre-Ville, Montréal (Québec) H3C 3J7 E-mail: kielym@total.net.

Résumé

Un processus créatif est mis en branle lorsque l'on enseigne, que l'on dirige des thèses ainsi que lors de supervision clinique. Ce processus est le fondement qui offre à l'étudiant la structure conceptuelle requise pour le développement d'une personnalité mature en tant que psychologue. Les théories de Piaget, Erikson, Freud, Mailloux et Barron, parmi d'autres, sont à la base des procédés que j'ai développés au cours des ans. Une structure bien conçue permet à l'Étudiant de devenir activement responsable de son apprentissage et de rendre cet enseignement formateur tout en

faisant une expérience stimulante. Pendant que les procédés se mettent en place, l'étudiant devient plus conscient de son potentiel créateur face à tous les aspects permettant le développement d'une identité, sans égards aux orientations académiques ou processionnelles choisies. Les rôles du professeur et de l'étudiant varient au fur et à mesure qu'ils cheminent selon le degré d'autonomie scientifique et personnelle atteint. Si le processus est réellement créatif, la réalisation du doctorat en est alors accrue. Les principes philosophiques et les valeurs de cette approche d'enseignement et de formation sont représentés par quelques exemples démontrant leur impact sur le développement professionnel et personnel des étudiantes.

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