

## **Acknowledgments**

I am truly and deeply indebted to so many people that there is no way to acknowledge them all, or even any of them properly. I sincerely hope that everyone who knows that they have influenced me feels satisfaction that they have helped such a poor soul along and does not feel remorse that either I did not get it right or then ungratefully omitted them from explicit mention. I offer my sincerest apologies to anyone in the latter category. The nature of this work is firmly in the Blanche DuBois "relying on the kindness of strangers" camp, and without the efforts and kindness of all the people involved in this project, the previous projects, as well as those who have profoundly influenced me and helped me get to this point, this work would not and could not have been done and I certainly would not have been in the position to do it. I extend my deepest gratitude to all.

The first person I have to thank is my advisor, Seymour Papert. Properly describing Seymour's influence is like trying to define intelligence -- no matter what you come up with it only seems to capture half the story. Seymour has had the most formative influence on my adult life. I truly think, look at, and act in the world differently due to Seymour's influence. Among other things, Seymour is famous for saying "You can't think about thinking without thinking about thinking about something." I cannot think about thinking or learning without Seymour's influence. When I think about it well it is when I try to think about how Seymour would think about that something. Although we often shy away from the word, Seymour is the ultimate educator. He can find the goodness and intelligence in anyone and then help build upon that always in such a way that the growth

always belongs to that person. Our popular conception of a good teacher may evoke images of someone who is a good talker. Seymour may be one of the most scintillating speakers I have ever heard, but even more impressive is that he is perhaps the best listener I have ever met. By listening, and concentrating, on what someone is saying, and then engaging them through that person's viewpoint, one learns in ways that one cannot quite imagine.

While researching this thesis, I reviewed some old writings of Seymour's. I was amazed at the currency and relevance of so many of those ideas. Seymour created a new field and laid groundwork that not only still is valid but also still is misunderstood or poorly understood by so many. However, Seymour's contribution did not end there. He continues to work and to add to the theory and practice in the field.

How Seymour does this is most impressive. He does not sit back and pontificate. Rather, he is there creating new projects and working with all the children, whether it is kids in the juvenile jail, kids in poor rural areas, kids in his neighborhood, or kids anywhere. He not only is a proponent of "kid power," he also is an enabler and admirer of that power. I have been fortunate enough to be with Seymour with kids as well as with presidents, ministers, governors, corporate executives. He treats all of them with the utmost respect and it is to this that people respond.

Seymour has been so much more than just the best advisor that he is beyond categorization. He has been the best friend, mentor, teacher, companion, and confidant. I

am truly fortunate to have been able to enjoy and benefit from such a relationship with him and the best way to show this is for me to extend these qualities to others. I can only try. Thanks, Seymour!

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Through Edith I have come to know not just Piaget, although that would have been enough, but also many other areas. Her breadth and depth are amazing. Only her modesty and the blindness of others prevents her from being recognized for the genius she is. I look forward to years of collaborating with her.

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weird or far out. The creative environment, people associated, and resources available combine to make the place stimulating, exciting, convivial, and productive. The lab could not function without many people creating this environment and I am indebted to them. The people behind the scenes do a tremendous and often thankless job to make the place run and we all benefit from their hard work. In particular, among them I would like to thank Dennis Irving, Greg Tucker, the Necsys group, and especially Linda Peterson. Linda has an impossible job and manages to carry it off gracefully, kindly, and fairly. Without Linda I probably would not have graduated.

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I have learned and gained more from my children, Uthman, Malik, Kareema, and Aiury, than I could ever hope they could get from me. I am so proud of them it is ridiculous. So many people tell me how wonderful they are that it must be true and not just my subjective opinion. When people compliment them and ask how I managed it, I like to joke that if you set a bad enough example, then your kids act right saying "you don't want to grow up like Dad." I am afraid it might be more a truth than a joke. It is strange to say that one's children are an inspiration, but in my case it is true. I love them more than anything. Now that they (excepting Aiury for a while and Malik at least for now) have begun their own families I am learning from how well they are raising their children. Susan Hart Cavallo is a joy and just a spectacular person. Her family is warm and wonderful. My grandchildren, Amina, Justin, Rameses, David, and Julian, are brilliant. I look forward to learning more from them than from my kids.

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