Navigating the River: Preservice Teachers Negotiate Constructive Guidance

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(ABSTRACT)

Preservice teachers engaging in practicum experiences often express anxiety and uncertainty related to providing discipline and classroom management. This uncertainty seems to increase when the classroom environment, in which they are student teaching, functions in ways that are unfamiliar to them. For most student teachers, the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School is an unfamiliar environment. The Lab School provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for young children based on a social constructivist, Reggio-inspired, inquiry-based philosophy. The Lab School values constructive guidance as a means of helping young children learn how to regulate their emotions, act in socially-acceptable ways, and become a caring classroom community. This study explores how preservice teachers make sense of and implement constructive guidance strategies within the Maroon Room at the Lab School. Specifically, this study explores the experiences and perceptions of eight undergraduate students who were junior child development majors focusing on early childhood education.

Results indicate that although these student teachers had prior coursework in constructive guidance, many felt ill-prepared and uncertain as they entered the Maroon Room. They had difficulty seeing order within the Maroon Room, a classroom of fourteen four- and five-year old children. Through careful observation of the children, their fellow student teachers, and the Head and Supervising Teacher, the student teachers adjusted to the classroom. Regular, on-going conversations about the classroom, the children, and their own dilemmas and uncertainties also assisted in the student teachers' negotiation of constructive guidance. Through developing an understanding of and relationships with the children, the student teachers were able to

constructively guide the children's development, individually and as a group. Some of the

student teachers remained uncertain about their ability to implement some of these strategies in

an elementary school classroom. However, most of the student teachers expressed an increased

value for and confidence in using the constructive guidance methods used at the Lab School. I

offer suggestions for easing future student teachers' transition from learning about constructive

guidance theoretically to becoming skilled at using constructive guidance.  I, further, offer

additional ideas of how teacher educators could support student teachers' negotiation of

constructive guidance.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Bob Walsh., and my grandfather, Dr. Clyde

Hewitt. Dad often talked about how exciting it would be to live in a university town where ideas

surrounded you. He would have enjoyed vicariously experiencing the dissertation process

through observing and listening to me. Grampa Clyde and I "talked with our eyes" after several

strokes made it difficult for him to form his thoughts into spoken words. Being a writer and a

historian, Grampa would have enjoyed my attempt to document a little piece of history from

which others could learn. Both of these men were, and are, important figures in my life.

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PROLOGUE: NAVIGATING THE RIVER

When coming to Virginia Tech, my husband and I were excited to get to spend time canoeing and fishing on the New River, the second oldest river in the world. I enjoy getting out on the water, hearing the birds sing, watching the wildlife, feeling the breeze on my face, and having time to reflect. An occasional trip on the water rejuvenates me. For Wil, fishing is an excuse to be outdoors. Canoeing provides him a way to get away from the hustle and bustle of the work-a-day world. Canoeing and fishing are his sanctuary.

Prior to coming to Virginia, our previous experiences in the canoe had mostly been on slow water with few rocks or other items in the water that did not require a lot of careful navigation. These experiences were most similar to those we encountered floating from Eggleston to Pembroke. While we could pay less attention to the water in front of us, we usually had to do more paddling because the river was wide and slow moving. However, paddling other sections of the New River required us to learn new navigational skills.

The sections we floated most frequently were from Pembroke to Ripplemead and from Ripplemead to Bluff City. After navigating the river for a while, we learned which side of the river to take and which areas to avoid. We learned where rocks were hidden and where downed trees were located. We knew where the current was fast or slow. We discovered nice places to pull off and rest, to swim, and to catch fish. But, even as we began to feel secure in what we knew about the river, we knew this knowledge was tentative.

Though we have floated down the New River many times, each trip is different. As the water levels change, the way we have to navigate the stream is different. In higher water, we can float over rocks or debris. In lower water, we must steer around these items. Also, the river can

shift or change. Floods bring in new debris that must be navigated around. Thus, it is not possible to simply memorize how to float a certain section of the river. Rather, we had to develop a set of skills that allowed us to effectively navigate the river. These skills can be transferred when we are floating new sections of the river that we have not visited before. There is always a level of uncertainty that comes with not knowing the general layout of that new section.

My first trip on the New River began at the put-in site in Pembroke. I looked upstream and saw flat water. I looked downstream and saw rolling rapids spanning about one-hundred feet! How would I ever manage to go down that route without tipping my canoe? Excitement at being able to get on the water gave way to anxiety and a little fear. As we got closer and closer to the rapid, it seemed even bigger and more powerful than it had seemed from shore. "Why had I ever agreed to go canoeing?" I thought. There was no way to go around this rapid, so we picked a path and went through it. The canoe bobbed up and down in the water. I held onto the sides of the boat. Wil, who was sitting in the back, occasionally steered one direction or another. Water splashed, soaking me. And then it was calm. The rapid ended. The riverbanks widened. I was, surprisingly, disappointed that it had not been a longer ride.

Wil and I have witnessed this same sense of excitement and anticipation on the faces and in the actions of those who have made float trips with us. We also see the same uncertainty and anxiety we experienced as we observe others looking downstream and seeing the rapids. Taking others on the river is something we enjoy but also find somewhat challenging. Without realizing it, we had gained a lot of knowledge about the river from floating it. Things that had become second nature to us were new to those who went on float trips with us.

We had developed a lot of contextual knowledge about the river. We had gained an understanding of the best paths to take (they varied for fishing, for a "calm" ride, or for a "wild"

ride). We also learned how to use our canoe effectively. The person in the back steers, while the person up front keeps an eye out for potential hazards. If the person up front is left to steer, it requires three times the effort than if the person in the back steered. Having canoed together frequently, Wil and I knew how to cooperate and communicate. We learned how to watch for and detect the rocks and other items in the river. Novice paddlers do not come to the river with this knowledge. Like we did, they must learn it. As their guide, we can provide some information to help them navigate the river. However, they must navigate the river in their own canoe. The path we want them to take and the path they take may not be the same. We may say, "Okay, follow us." When we look back, they are half-way across the river going down a much more difficult rapid. Modeling is not sufficient to teach the skills needed to navigate the New River. Once novice paddlers spend more time on the water and get more practice negotiating the river, they become more adept at anticipating and avoiding rocks or difficult sections.

We have learned the importance of paying attention to the current, to noticing what's up ahead, and to reading what the water is doing. Only by doing this, are we able to understand the river, anticipate potential difficulty, and steer the canoe in another direction. Even with these moments of anticipation that increase our adrenaline, the New River provides many enjoyable opportunities to be outside and explore nature. Some sections allow us to float along with just an occasional stroke of the paddle to keep us on course as Wil fishes and I listen to the birds.

Floating the New River is an exciting adventure – much like teaching children.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study is in response to the frustration, agony, and triumph a group of preservice teachers, with whom I worked, experienced as they negotiated constructive guidance and discipline. I had not intended to study this topic. My original research question was "What influences teaching in a university-based child development laboratory?" As a teacher-researcher, it was only natural for me to seek this answer by looking at my own classroom at the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School.

Like other university-based child development labs, the Lab School serves as a placement site for undergraduate students planning careers in early childhood education. In this way, the Lab School meets the teaching component of its three-part mission of teaching, research, and service (Osborn, 1991). At the time of this project, eight undergraduate early childhood education majors were assigned as "student teachers" to my Lab School classroom. Throughout data collection and early analysis, I remained focused on what was influencing teaching (my own, the student teachers', and other teachers') within my Lab School classroom.

As I analyzed the data, I noted the frequency and saliency of the student teachers' comments related to their attempts at putting the Lab School's policy of constructive guidance and discipline into practice. This was an important topic for these student teachers. This was a powerful influence on what happened in my classroom. As I reflected on whether this topic might be playing out in other classrooms, I recalled hearing similar comments on guidance, discipline, and classroom management from the student teachers I had worked with the year before and from student teachers in other classrooms at the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School. Thus, I knew this topic extended beyond the eight student teachers in this study.

This study strove to understand how these eight student teachers made sense of and implemented a social constructivist perspective of classroom management and discipline within an inquiry-based child development lab setting. Specifically, the research question was: How did these preservice teachers negotiate constructive guidance in an inquiry-based child development lab classroom?

As I see it, "negotiate" has two elements, a sense-making aspect and an application aspect. By "negotiate" I mean "grasp the nature, significance, or meaning of" and "deal with (matters or affairs that require ability for their successful handling)." I have developed the first part of this definition from the definition of the terms "comprehend" and "understand" (as defined by Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2005). I have taken the second part of this definition from the term "negotiate" (as defined by Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2005).

By "constructive guidance," I mean a constructivist approach to discipline and classroom management (Fields & Boesser, 2002). The constructivist approach to discipline and classroom management, hereafter called "constructive guidance" is characterized by: mutual respect between adult and child, a desire to help children understand why a behavior is desirable or undesirable, age-appropriate choices, support in solving their own problems, and addressing the cause of behavioral problems rather than the behavior itself. Constructive guidance recognizes that physical, emotional, intellectual and social development affects a child's behavior. As such, constructive guidance techniques focus on avoiding discipline problems rather than on dealing with discipline concerns once they are presented. Creating an environment in which discipline problems are minimized is a strategy often employed by constructivist teachers. Meeting the emotional and physical needs of children by how the classroom is set up, making learning meaningful to the children, and anticipating potential problems and avoiding them are

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"discipline" strategies employed by constructivist teachers. In addition, these teachers guide the development of desirable behaviors through example, communicate effectively with the children, help children understand and accept limits, analyze discipline problems to determine their root cause, and match the discipline strategy the teacher employs to the cause of the discipline problem (Fields & Boesser, 2002).

The third part of my research question situated the study in an inquiry-based child development lab. By inquiry-based, I mean that the curriculum encourages children to ask their own questions and seek answers to these questions, with assistance from teachers, peers, and material resources.

Thus, in long form, my research questions were: How did these preservice teachers grasp the nature, significance, or meaning of a constructivist approach to discipline and classroom management within an inquiry-based child development lab? In what ways did these preservice teachers deal with individual children and the entire class using a constructivist approach to discipline within an inquiry-based child development lab?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review the literature specific to preservice and beginning teachers'

beliefs, perceptions, and experiences with guidance, discipline, and classroom management. I

have elected to place a brief history of the study of discipline and classroom management in the

Appendix (see Appendix B). I close out this chapter by reviewing the required textbook for a

course on guidance and discipline that the student teachers in the present study took prior to their

placement at the Lab School.

Influence of Teachers' Implicit Beliefs

Preservice teachers have developed many, often implicit, beliefs about teaching and

guiding children based on the many years they have spent as students in classrooms (Clark,

1988; Hollingsworth, 1989; Lortie, 1975; McLean, 1999). These personal theories about

teaching and learning influence classroom approaches (Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992),

and the type of teaching and management tools teachers use in their classroom (Hollingsworth,

1989). While some of the student teachers' understandings may be underdeveloped or even

counter to current best practice in early childhood education, for the preservice teacher, this

knowledge base represents what they know about teaching and learning (McLean, 1999).

Lortie (1975) points out that new teachers tend to fall back on their earliest experiences

of teaching – their many years as students -- when they are faced with the ambiguity and

complexity of classroom life. In 1975, Lortie called for teacher education to include

opportunities for preservice teachers to thoroughly examine their preconceived notions so that

the beginning teacher would be "freed of unconscious influences of this kind" (p. 230). New

teachers are being asked to teach based on "conceptions of teaching, learning, and knowledge

that undergird new visions of reform-minded practice" (Feinmann-Nemser, 2001, p. 1017).

Without a thorough examination of preconceived notions, new teachers will have difficulty

letting go of their often unconscious beliefs.

## Making Connections Between Theory and Practice

Evidence suggests that students often have difficulty making connections between theory

and practice. Students may have trouble synthesizing course content in a way that informs their

student teaching (Goodlad, 1991). Students are less likely to be able to transfer their theoretical

understanding of child development principles into actual classroom work with young children

(Logue, Eheart, & Leavitt, 1986). "Classroom management, for instance, should be informed by

theories of child development, but student teachers are more likely to rely on spontaneous,

reactive responses to children's inappropriate behavior" (Clawson, 1999). A self-study at

Syracuse University, examining the connection between course content and lab school practice,

found that many students learned concepts such as developmentally appropriate practice and

child-centered curriculum in their coursework. However, at the Lab School, they were unable to

recognize these concepts or to translate these into practice (Clawson, 1999). Failure to make a

link between their coursework and practice contributes to incongruence between the students'

expectations and the philosophy of the lab school (Clawson, 1999). This occurs because the

student teachers tend to rely on their own personal theories and experiences, rather than previous

coursework (Hargreaves, 1984).

Thus, student teachers who have developed a traditional view of education through their

many years of schooling may tend to rely on instructing and directing rather than on supporting

and being responsive to the children (Knowles, et al., 1994; Logue et., 1986). Because student

teachers tend to teach as they were taught (Kennedy, 1991), frequent and meaningful application

of course material is essential in helping student teachers apply developmentally appropriate practice and social constructivist ways of teaching.

<center>Stresses Associated with Guidance, Discipline, and Group Management</center>

While teachers are responsible for student learning, classroom management is also a critical task of teachers (Doyle, 1986). In fact, being able to effectively manage the classroom is of such importance that it serves to screen beginning teachers in or out of teaching careers (Huberman, 1989). Beginning teachers must gain students' respect and acceptance while establishing themselves as authority figures (Waller, 1932). In almost every study of teacher induction, concerns related to classroom management are on the top of beginning teachers' lists (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1989; Huberman, 1989). More specifically, beginning teachers perceive classroom discipline to be their most serious and persistent problem (Veenman, 1984).

<center>*Reality Shock Upon Entering the Classroom*</center>

Veenman (1984) points out that student teachers often experience a reality shock when they transition from teacher training to student teaching. A group of researchers in Germany looked at this same concept (they referred to it as "Praxisschock"). Müller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta, and Dann (1978) wrote about the personal and situational causes that likely lead to this feeling of shock. Some personal causes may be unsuitable personality characteristics, improper attitudes or having wrongly chosen a teaching career. Situational causes that may lead to a sense of shock include: inadequate professional training, organizational issues in the school and the multiplicity of job-related tasks teachers must perform (as cited in Veenman, 1984). See Veenman, 1984 for a more extensive lists of potential causes.

In part, student teachers may experience a sense of reality shock during their field placement if the classroom teacher's style of teaching, managing the classroom, and handling

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misbehavior is counter to what they expected based on their own prior experiences. For instance, previous research has indicated that many student teachers find it more difficult to adjust to a field placement if the curriculum used is different than that which they are familiar (Erwin, 1998). Erwin (1998) pointed out that "preservice teachers in early childhood education programs face an additional challenge because current guidelines for best practice advocate for a child-centered approach which is often different than the styles and approaches most familiar to students" (p. 55). In addition, what is developmentally appropriate for most "older" young children (six- through eight-year olds) is not necessarily appropriate for the developmental level of most three- through five- year old (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). When preservice teachers have had prior experiences in early childhood classrooms that are NOT well founded upon developmentally appropriate practices, they report having more difficulty adjusting to classrooms that ARE developmentally appropriate (Erwin, 1998). Even more specifically, preservice teachers may experience a reality shock in moving from classrooms serving students in first and second grade to a preschool classroom.

*Anxiety and Uncertainty*

That preservice teachers experience anxiety and concern related to guidance, discipline, and management is well-documented in the research literature. Preservice and beginning teachers often report anxiety or concern regarding guidance and discipline (Brand, 1990; Bullough, Knowles, & Cowles, 1992; Caruso, 1977, 2000; Erwin, 1995, 1998; Garmon, 1993; Katz, 1977; Veenman, 1984). This phenomenon is so well-recognized that several individuals have developed stage theories of preservice and beginning teacher's development (e.g., Brand, 1990; Caruso, 1977, 2000; Katz, 1977; Fuller, 1969, 1972; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Piland & Anglin, 1993). These theories acknowledge the anxiety, uncertainty, confusion, and feelings of

inadequacy that preservice and beginning teachers express concerning guidance, discipline, and classroom management. Later, the reader will have a chance to review the "phases of student teaching" (Caruso, 1977), which explores the emotional reactions that student teachers tend to go through during their field placement.

*Challenges to Authority and Losing Control*

Many preservice teachers express a desire to be liked by their students (Brand, 1990; Caruso, 1977; Katz, 1977; Erwin, 1995). However, student teachers may experience instances in which children test their authority or, in other ways, challenge the student teachers' sense of being "in control" (Caruso, 1977). In fact, situations in which student teachers felt as if children were challenging their authority (by talking back or refusing to comply) or in which the student teacher felt as if she or he were losing control seemed to create more anxiety for student teachers than other guidance and discipline situations (Erwin, 1998). Perhaps, then, student teachers are most uncomfortable in situations in which they feel as if their developing sense of adult authority is being undermined (Erwin, 1998). In another study, Tulley and Chiu (1995) found that student teachers most frequently cited discipline problems related to disruption, defiance, and inattention when asked to write about their experiences effectively and ineffectively managing discipline problems. While defiance can certainly be viewed as a challenge to the student teacher's authority, disruption and inattention may lead to a sense of losing control.

Some student teachers hold an idealistic view of what it means to be a teacher of young children (Brophy, 1988; Williams, 1996). These preservice teachers may believe that their love of children and their warm and caring student-teacher relationships will overcome any need for them to act as an authority figure. This view may make it harder for the student teacher "to be an authority figure whom children respect rather than a pleasant adult whom children like" (Erwin,

1998, p. 56). Further, holding a nurturance misconception, preservice teachers may not provide enough structure through rules and procedures in order for children to know what the teacher expects of them (Johnson, 1994). Thus, they set themselves up to experience challenge to their authority and that sense that the classroom is out of control.

Some preservice teachers bring with them the belief that to be an effective teacher they must use intimidation and fear of punishment to get students to respect their authority (Brophy, 1988). Holding this belief, the preservice teacher might be less likely to be open to ideas that contradict their authoritarian ideals (Johnson, 1994). Those student teachers that enact authoritarian styles of discipline and management must learn to become less authoritarian and more of a facilitator (Erwin, 1995, 1998). Student teachers' beliefs may predict their preferences for certain strategies to deal with specific classroom guidance, discipline, and management problems (Emmer & Hickman, 1991).

Nevertheless, researchers have shown that it may be possible to change these preconceived notions. Johnson (1994) determined that preservice teachers' propositional knowledge about their conceptions of classroom control can be altered through their coursework. This study is limited in that it did not assess the student teachers' implementation of their stated conceptions. However, it does show that student teachers may come to value the messages they receive during their coursework about classroom guidance, discipline and management. Tulley and Chiu (1995) found that as student teachers described effectively and ineffectively handled discipline concerns, they reported that "humanistic" techniques were more effective in dealing with discipline problems while "authoritarian" techniques were least effective. This study suggests that student teachers learn from observing their students' reactions to the guidance and discipline techniques the student teacher uses. The study further suggests that when student

teachers used guidance and discipline techniques that recognize the child as a person, they have more success at maintaining a sense of control and at handling challenges to their authority.

## Developmental Explanations for Student Teachers' Struggles

Presently, there are two main explanations for why student teachers seem to struggle with guidance, discipline, and classroom management. One explanation has to do with the concept that student teachers go through certain predictable stages as they enter and live within the classroom as a "teacher." I have elected here to discuss Caruso's Phases of Student Teaching (1977, 2000) since I find it to be more detailed than some of the stage theories (e.g. Fuller, 1969). An alternative explanation is that of a person's cognitive developmental level. This explanation suggests that the struggles student teachers experience in classroom management, discipline, and guidance relate to their level of cognitive development.

### *Phases of Student Teaching*

According to Caruso (1977, 2000), student teachers go through six phases during their student teaching experiences. These phases impact their personal and professional self-identities. Student teachers experience anxiety as they anticipate what their student teaching experience will be like and as they enter the classroom for the first time. They may also feel a sense of euphoria that they are finally in a teaching role and have "survived" their first day as a "teacher." Based on the most common emotions experienced during each phase, this first phase is described as "anxiety/euphoria."

During phase two, "confusion/clarity," student teachers often experience uncertainty about classroom rules and routines and about taking on responsibility for teaching concepts and skills. They begin to notice the children's cognitive, physical, and emotional differences, learn the layout of the classroom and where materials are located, and assess the personality and style

of their cooperating teacher. "At this point, student's perceptions of the classroom and awareness of what is transpiring around them are very narrow", says Caruso (1977). Further,

> it is also very difficult for student teachers to come to terms with being authority figures. There is a terrific need to be friendly and loving, and a strong distaste for and avoidance of "disciplining" a child. Such a step might risk the relationship and contaminate the student's conception of the "ideal teacher". Yet, children consistently test student's authority, continually throwing them off balance, breeding frustration (Caruso, 1977).

During phase three, "competence/inadequacy" the student teachers begin to judge their own skills against others, including their cooperating teacher. While they may begin to feel more competent in certain aspects of their classroom teaching (generally related to teaching content), "continued problems with discipline and unresolved authority issues tend to chip away at students' sense of competence" (Caruso, 2000, p. 77).

Phase four notes a slight shift in student teachers thinking. In this phase, student teachers, still concerned about self, tend to also begin devoting more thought and attention to professional issues and to the children. During this phase, "criticism/new awareness," student teachers are likely to begin criticizing how their cooperating teacher does things and suggesting ways they will do it differently in their own classrooms. They are also more willing and more capable to look at their skills and abilities objectively, engaging in self-criticism. During this phase, the student teacher views the classroom with new eyes, seeing dimensions of the room that were hidden to them before this stage (e.g., the complexity of the children's social dynamics). Student teachers also learn to distance themselves from the intensity of their emotions, allowing them to better focus in the children.

Phase five, "more confidence/greater inadequacy," heralds a level of skill hitherto not achieved by the student teacher. They begin to take over more responsibility in the classroom, perhaps even teaching the whole class with or without the cooperating teacher present. They experience a sense of assuredness regarding classroom discipline and management as they competently handle challenging situations on their own. Student teachers may prefer teaching the class on their own and begin to perceive the cooperating teacher as getting in the student teachers' way. Other student teachers may not have progressed as much as their peers. They may still struggle with self-doubt, frustration, and disappointment. They may experience repeated difficulties in classroom management, discipline, and instruction. Some with these struggles begin to reconsider their career choice. Others become determined to try again.

The final phase that Caruso identifies is "loss/relief." During this phase, the student teacher completes their placement and returns to the world outside this specific classroom. Student teachers experience grief associated with the loss of the close relationships they have formed over the term of their placement. However, they are also relieved to have survived. Student teachers often reassess their career goals, developing a more realistic understanding of what it means to have a teaching career.

*Cognitive Developmental Framework*

Caruso suggests that the phases of student teaching are, in part, developmental, that is, student teachers progress in typical pattern through these phases. Some studies have linked the cognitive development level of teachers to the types of classroom discipline measures teachers use (Glassberg, 1979; Hunt & Joyce, 1981; Sprinthall & Theis-Sprinthall, 1983). These researchers state that teachers at higher cognitive developmental levels may be more flexible, more tolerant of stress, and more adaptive than teachers at lower cognitive developmental levels.

A higher cognitive developmental level allows teachers to be better able to assume multiples perspectives and apply a greater variety of teaching strategies and coping behavior. Glassberg (1979) suggests that a better understanding of developmental differences may shed light on the structure and content of beginning teachers' problems. For instance, beginning teachers at a lower cognitive developmental level were more likely to state that the school administration should assume responsibility for classroom discipline. At higher cognitive developmental levels, beginning teachers were more likely to state that when it came to discipline they should be flexible, tolerant, respect their students, and facilitate their students' personal growth. Thus, it seems plausible to view student teacher's conceptions of discipline through a cognitive developmental lens. With the hope of increasing the effectiveness with which beginning teachers managed classrooms, some educational programs were developed to encourage a higher level of cognitive development (Glassberg & Sprinthall, 1980; Oja, 1981). The extent to which the higher level cognitive development skills rely upon the in-classroom experiences student teachers get during their placements is still unclear. It may be that most student teachers move to a higher cognitive development level during student teaching. It may also be that those student teachers that in phase five of Caruso's model do not view themselves as capable of teaching and managing the classroom have yet to develop the necessary cognitive development level to handle these tasks, comfortably, on their own.

Re-conceptualizing Images of Classroom Management

"A considerable amount of teacher attention is focused on behavioral outcomes that are not immediately linked to student learning but rather to achieving order and cooperation" (Emmer & Hickman, 1991, p. 757). Thus, images of classroom management must be in line with images of teaching in order for teachers to be able to implement a consistent philosophy

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(Randolph & Evertson,1994). Several teacher educators have actively promoted

reconceptualizing images of classroom management based on new images of effective teaching

(Bullough, 1994; Lasley, 1994; Weinstein, Woolfolk, Dittmeier, & Shanker, 1994).

Primarily, American society maintains a factory metaphor of school (Bullough, 1994).

This image compares the role of the teacher to one of the factory supervisor, who must oversee

the students to ensure that they are producing the product they were told to create. Students listen

attentively and remain on tasks, receiving rewards for reaching production goals. Off task

students, like factory workers who fail to reach production goals, are sanctioned.

> As long as curriculum is conceived of as something that is delivered from teacher to
>
> students, management must be conceived of as a tool for student control, a way of getting
>
> students quiet, in their seats, and ready to receive information. If, however, we believe
>
> curriculum is actively constructed by all of the participants in a setting, then the purpose
>
> of management becomes to facilitate active inquiry and collaboration among students
>
> (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 58).

Work-oriented classrooms maintain the goal that students will produce work products

while learning-oriented classrooms maintain the goal that students will acquire or construct

knowledge and skills for their own benefit (Marshall, 1988, 1990). Whether the classroom is

viewed through a work-oriented lens or a learning-oriented lens affects the way in which

teachers describe the behaviors that are indicative of a well-managed classroom. For instance, a

work-oriented perspective would view a well-managed classroom as a "well-oiled machine" that

is "quiet, cooperative, smoothly functioning, [has] little ambiguity about tasks or expectations,

and [has] little conflict" (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 56). However, a learning-oriented

perspective tends to be viewed as a "beehive of activity" (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 56)

that is noisy, has more ambiguous tasks and expectations, has a high potential for conflict or disagreement and yet is smoothly functioning and cooperative. Thus, in a learner-centered setting "on-task behavior is likely to look quite different than it does in a work setting" (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 58).

In a learner-centered classroom, management may be better conceived of as "orchestration" (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 58). Specifically, the teacher is orchestrating the action within the room, allowing individual and groups of students engaged in a variety of inquiry-based learning to do so in relative harmony. To insure this can happen, teachers using learner-centered approaches need to assess the self-management skills and group management skills the students will need to know in order to accomplish classroom tasks. The teacher further needs to decide if the children already have these skills or will need to learn them (Randolph & Evertson, 1994).

Thus, classroom management and content are "unavoidably interwoven" (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 63). Teachers using inquiry-based approaches to learning are likely to have difficulty implementing a more traditional approach to management. Therefore, "the task of teacher education must be to assist preservice teachers in constructing images and definitions of management that are compatible with and inseperable from images and definitions of learning they will seek to encourage in their classrooms." (Randolph & Evertson, 1994, p. 63).

Review of Text Used At Virginia Tech To Teach Constructive Guidance

The student teachers in this study took a one-semester, sophomore level course entitled Principles of Working with Children and Families. The course text is *Constructive Guidance and Discipline* by Fields and Boesser (2002). These authors express that their text is in line with the theories of Adler, Rogers, and Piaget. Fields and Boesser state, "we look at guidance and

discipline as teaching activities; therefore the principles of early childhood education apply as much to guidance and discipline as to academics" (p. viii). The basic premises of the book are "working toward long-term discipline goals rather than only immediate concerns and matching the discipline approach to the cause of the problem behavior" (p. 3). They also explain typical child development during the preschool and primary grades, arguing that "effective discipline approaches must be based on knowledge of child development" (p. 3). Fields and Boesser (2002) advocate preventing discipline problems through arrangement of the physical and interpersonal environment and through the content and implementation of the school program. These authors also encourage adults to model appropriate behavior and the regulation of emotions, to teach communication and negotiation skills and to enforce limits while helping children learn why certain behaviors are more desirable than other behaviors. The authors further discuss why they do not advocate behavior modification or the use of punishment. Finally, the authors encourage parents, caregivers, and teachers to determine the root cause of the unwanted behavior.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides detailed methodology and the theoretical perspectives of this study. Since this study emerged from a larger research project examining influences on child development lab classroom teaching, this chapter will more fully explain the data collection related to that project and how the current study emerged from that project.

## Overview of the Study

This study is one aspect of a larger research project that aims to determine the influences on teaching in a social constructivist, inquiry-based child development lab classroom. This larger study defines "teaching" as any intentional or unintentional statements made or actions performed in the presence of the children by any individual who is identified to the children as a "teacher". Within university child development lab settings, the classrooms are generally staffed with a combination of paid employees and students interning in the lab as part of their coursework. At the Virginia Tech Lab School, as is the case elsewhere, the undergraduate students interning in each classroom are identified as "student teachers."

As I reviewed data from the larger research project, one of the more salient topics surrounded issues of classroom management and discipline, particularly for the student teachers. Many of the student teachers had rarely, if ever, encountered social-constructivist methods of classroom management and discipline prior to their internship at the Lab School. Thus, I have elected to focus this study on the following question: "How do pre-service teachers negotiate constructive guidance in an inquiry-based preschool classroom?"

## Theoretical Underpinnings

The larger research study from which this data was drawn applied an ecological, dynamic systems perspective to the classroom, viewing the classroom as a programmatic context. Appendix B provides a more thorough explanation of these theoretical underpinnings.

## Research Paradigms

The larger research project is a phenomenological teacher-research project taking the form of a case study. As a subset of the larger data set, this study was also informed by action research (and more specifically teacher research), phenomenological methods, and a case study approach. Appendix C describes each of these elements more thoroughly.

## The Research Site

This study was conducted at the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School, now the Child Development Center for Learning and Research. For the purposes of this study, I have elected to use the term "Lab School" to designate the research site. Within the Lab School, this study focused on the experiences of the student teachers in the Maroon Room, a half-day classroom for four and five-year old children. Arrival time was 8:30 a.m. Departure time was 12:00 noon. The classroom operated on the semester scheduled, meaning that, when the university was closed, so was the Lab School. I purposefully selected to study this child development lab classroom because I anticipated working as a director of a child development laboratory and wanted to focus on that setting. Second, since I was also the supervising teacher in the Maroon Room, I had already gained entry into the site.

### *The Lab School Philosophy*

The Lab School's philosophy is grounded in social constructivist theory, which holds that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interactions. This philosophy

dictates that the classroom is a social place in which children and teachers negotiate the curriculum together. The teachers' role is to plan meaningful investigations that engage the children. Doing this requires that the teachers' carefully observe and listen to the children's comments and conversations. The teachers can then set up opportunities for the children to explore their own interests and find answers to their own questions. Teachers learn with the children, allowing themselves to get drawn into the children's investigations. I have placed a copy of the Lab School's philosophy and program goals in the appendices (see Appendix D). These statements are publicly accessible on the Lab School's website.

*The Curriculum*

While there are varying definitions of curriculum, the administration of the VT Child Development Lab School believes that the curriculum is "the intentional and unintentional efforts to develop the social, intellectual, physical, emotional, creative and ethical capacities of each child and to build a safe, caring, and respectful community of learners" (A. Stremmel, personal communication, August 2002). In essence, everything that occurs in the classroom -- every material that is provided, every book read, every nose wiped is part of the curriculum. These comments resonate with those of Tenorio (1995) who says,

> curriculum must be conceived as a dynamic process that is the sum total of what is taught and learned throughout the school experience. It is more than books and lesson plans - it is relationships, interactions, feelings, and attitudes. The curriculum reflects our values as teachers, parents, and communities (p. 173.)

More specifically the Lab School curriculum is based on inquiry and inspired by the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy (e.g., Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), and by the children themselves. Teachers

carefully observe and listen to the children's comments in order to develop plans that provoke the children to test and revise their hypotheses about how the world works. By listening to the children and responding to their interests, questions, and hypotheses with additional provocations, the teachers provide a means for the children to further explore the topic of interest; this results in a variety of short or long-term investigations or projects. The curriculum remains emergent, in that while tentative plans may be made in advance, teachers may be required to modify those plans the night before they are to be implemented, taking into account the children's current questions, curiosities, and interests. In doing so, teachers remain responsive to and respectful of the children. I have included the Lab School's statement on curriculum as the last part of Appendix D..

At the outset of this case study, the Maroon Room children and teachers had already engaged in several long-term investigations focused on caring for animals and babies, experimenting with different mixtures, exploring ways to move water, and exploring what it means to be a friend. During the time of this study movement seemed to be of primary interest to the children, including gravity and magnetism, and force. Learning to get along with each other in a classroom, to take responsibility for oneself, to care for others, and to manage one's emotions was an underlying, ever-present aspect of the classroom curriculum.

During Spring Semester, the student teachers were responsible for planning set-ups based on the interests and theories of the children. These set-ups were also called provocations because they provoke the children to further explore a topic.

### *Those Involved in the Classroom*

The Maroon Room was an active place where everyone was a learner and everyone was a teacher. Three groups of individuals – children, teachers, and visitors -- interact within the

Maroon AM classroom forming and being formed by the curriculum.

*The Children*

Four- and five–year old children make up the class. Throughout the year, the children's social dynamics included concerns over friendship and who was or was not each child's friend. The children put forth much effort to make and maintain friendships. The "best friend" status was highly sought after. This situation led to both intentional and unintentional hurt feelings as children could perceive that they were being excluded whether or not this was the case. While this social dynamic eased during second semester, the children tended to naturally group together with their closest friends as they engaged with the classroom set-ups or sought other ways to interact.

I have debated what to say about the children. After all, the study focused on the student teachers. However, this classroom seemed to be a particularly useful environment through which to study how student teachers negotiated constructive guidance. By this, I mean, the children provided ample opportunities for the student teachers to develop constructive guidance skills. The children's individual needs and peer dynamics created regular, ongoing challenges, for themselves and for their teachers.

There were two obvious class leaders – Michelle and Mark. These two children had developed a love-hate relationship. Michelle's fear of creepy, crawly creatures was palpable and Mark played on this. Mark loved to scare Michelle with the plastic insects we had in the classroom. Michelle loved (and hated) to get scared. Her piercing screams were part real, part acting. By her actions, she seemed to be communicating to all the girls in the room that, "you should yell really loud and act indignant when Mark or the other boys put a spider or scorpion or any other creepy, crawly creature in your face."

Wanting to belong and being attracted to Mark's carefree nature, several other boys easily followed him on his many antics, doing whatever Mark told them to do. Often, Mark's suggestions (which sounded more like orders) had to do with "teasing" the girls, intentionally testing the teachers, or getting into something else that he sensed was out of bounds. Mark's social charisma made him the center of attention. For some, he was what they aspired to be. Unable to elicit the attention that he commanded, they settled for getting his attention, for being "allowed" to play with him.

For a time, Annie and Rachel vied for Mark's attention. He kissed them both. They were in love with him -- love triangle number one. Love triangle number two involved Rachel, Mark, and Evan, Rachel's friend from infancy. As Rachel and Evan's friendship became tenuous, Mark began to reject Rachel as well. Only occasionally did he agree that she could join him and some of the other "active boys" in whatever they were doing. She developed stomachaches, a symptom of a profound sense of loss and discomfort in the classroom. At the same time, Annie was trying to "buy" Mark's attention and love through bringing him candy and other treats, although these objects are not allowed at the Lab School. She talked of marrying Mark but Mark refused to pretend to be her husband. She played "brides" anyway and called her imaginary husband "Mark."

Annie attempted to harness power over her peers through giving them treats or through telling them what to do. She often tried to direct the action, particularly if this "action" involved pretend play. Annie's best friend was Miriam. They valued one another's company. Yet, Miriam and Annie had almost daily friendship difficulties. They were afraid of losing one another; yet, they wanted to have additional friends. But when one of them played with another child, the other would approach a teacher, in tears, saying, "she doesn't like me anymore." Further, Miriam

got tired of Annie bossing her around. She began standing up to Annie. Annie took this as a sign that Miriam was mad at her. And, sometimes, Miriam was.

Mark knew he had power. Both cherishing and hating this position, Mark sometimes needed time alone, away from the pressures that his charisma and actions had placed on him. He relished time in the art studio working on independent projects and talking one-on-one with Jenni or another teacher. When he left the room, others begged to be allowed to go with him.

At times, George, who seemed to define himself by Mark's acceptance of him, would break down emotionally when Mark left the room without him. These emotional breakdowns took on one of two forms. Sometimes, he would frown, look down, sob, and go to his cubby or the couch, pondering what it meant that Mark left him in the room. It seems that he would convince himself that he had been rejected, pure and simple. When Mark returned to the room, George lashed out, often hitting Mark. And, boy, could George hit! He had a force uncharacteristic of a four-year old, yet he didn't realize how hard he hit because his older brothers seemed unfazed by George's hardest hits. Mark, who left the room because he needed time alone, did not anticipate George's anger. When hit, Mark often hit back. The other form of George's reactions to Mark's leaving the room was an immediate and intense lashing out, hitting, kicking, and screaming as the door closed and Mark escaped to a realm of his own. George's breakdowns had to be monitored so that others in the room would not get hurt.

I wish I could say that the only time George experienced these emotional reactions was related to Mark. The truth is that any time George experienced something that made him lose confidence in himself, he might lash out. And, small things had a way of becoming big problems. For instance, one day, he was trying to get two magnetic train cars to connect but the cars kept rejecting each other. One car needed to be turned around so it would attract the other. Before

George could figure this out, he threw both cars on the floor, kicked the entire track apart and hit

his hands repeatedly against the wall. His agonizing cry clarified just how distraught he was.

While George's emotional outbursts were the most dangerous to others in the room, he was not

the only child to experience breakdowns.

Whenever Samantha felt as if she could not do something as well as she wanted to (like

cut with scissors), she, too, would break down. She would become angry at the teacher who had

encouraged her by saying, "You can do it. Try it." Frustrated, Samantha "lashed out"

relationally, yelling, "You made me do it! I don't like you anymore!" Samantha also became

easily frustrated with Rachel. Samantha and Rachel's relationship was characterized by

arguments, which often resolved in stalemates since neither was willing to compromise with the

other.

Emily, new to the classroom at the beginning of Spring Semester, was prone to sobbing

for extended periods of time when her parents left or later in the morning when she was at a loss

for what she wanted to do in the classroom. Emily would climb on the couch, press her face to

the (supposedly) one-way mirror, and peer out into the hallway, hoping to see her mother

watching her from the observation booth. If, indeed, her mother was present, she would begin

sobbing again, hoping her mother would come get her.

Having shared all of these examples, I wish I could say I had thoroughly captured all the

classroom concerns. I haven't. But I have captured some of the more salient issues. Other issues

existed below the surface. For example, the boys and girls tended to divide themselves by

gender, rejecting the opposite sex. In addition, a few children tended to engage in independent

work, lacking strong friendships with any of their peers. Even though I have not fully captured

all the dynamics going on in the classroom, I am certain that, by now, the reader is more than

convinced that this classroom was a prime territory in which the student teachers could learn to negotiate constructive guidance.

*The Teachers*

All the teachers in the classroom were university graduate or undergraduate students. During Spring semester, three individuals were paid to work in the Maroon AM classroom: a Supervising Teacher (me), a Head Teacher and a graduate student supporting teacher. Nine undergraduate students took on teaching roles within the classroom. Eight student teachers worked six hours per week in the room. Additionally, another university student taking practicum hours to gain experience working with young children also took on teaching roles in the Maroon AM classroom.

*The Supervising Teacher.* As supervising teacher, I worked four mornings a week, from 8:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Though the morning preschool program at the Lab School was open five days per week, the supervising teachers were funded through a twenty-hour weekly assistantship, making me unable to work the fifth morning each week. Assistantship requirements mandated that I be a full-time student and take at least 12 hours of coursework per semester. In addition to the Head Teacher role, I maintained supervisory responsibility for the student teachers. I got regular feedback from the Head Teacher regarding the student teachers that worked the same day she did. Though I was not technically working on this fifth day, I was often present Spring Semester for part of the day that the Head Teacher was in charge of the classroom so that I could collect data. On the other four days, data collection became part of what I did as a teacher in the classroom. I have included a more thorough autobiography as Appendix E.

*The Head Teacher.* The Head Teacher, Layla, was an hourly employee who worked the fifth morning each week. She was a senior Early Childhood Education Major who served as a student teacher in my classroom her junior year. This prior relationship allowed us to work together well in planning next steps in the curriculum, discussing classroom issues that concerned us, and determining the ways to best use our time during the weekly one-hour Teacher Talks (classroom staff meetings).

*The Student Teachers.* Eight college juniors majoring in child development and planning careers in early childhood education worked in the Maroon Room as part of an internship for a two-semester sequence of courses in observation, curriculum and assessment. Their classroom teaching experience totaled six hours per week, 162 hours across Fall and Spring Semester. These student teachers also attended a one-hour class and a one-hour "Teacher Talks" meeting with the Supervising and Head Teacher each week. Participation in the Maroon AM classroom made up 50% of the student teachers' grade in their required course; the other 50% came from course assignments. Working six hours per week translated roughly into two days per week, though no student teacher put in the full four-and-one-half hour work day like the Head and Supervising Teachers did. As their Supervising Teacher, I tried to schedule the student teachers in such a way that they could get the most interaction with the children while the Head Teacher and I still had help for the beginning-of-the-day set-up and end-of-the-day clean-up tasks. The student teachers' class and work schedules were also taken into consideration when scheduling their practicum hours; this led to odd schedules (for example, two hours one day and four the other). Most student teachers, however, were able to work two days a week for a three-hour block of time. Each of the student teachers expressed a desire to work with elementary age children.

*The Graduate Student Support Staffperson*. A graduate student worked ten hours per week in the classroom during Spring Semester in order to serve as a positive male role model in the classroom. During the later part of Fall Semester, he volunteered to work in the classroom as his schedule permitted in order to observe and interact with young children. His presence in the classroom provided many of the boys, and an occasional girl, with social and emotional support. He became a role model and playmate for the boys, though he was also careful to give attention to the girls. Because of the positive interactions, he was asked to work in the room during Spring Semester.

*The Human Services Practicum Student*. One other university student worked in the Maroon Room. She was a senior human services major completing a required field placement. She requested to work at the Lab School for this placement. Part of her twenty total hours per week related to administrative tasks. She then assisted in the classrooms for her remaining hours. She typically spent eight to ten hours per week in the Maroon AM classroom.

*The Visitors*

On occasion, other adults visited the Maroon AM classroom. Parents sometimes stayed in the classroom for an extended time at drop off or came back just to spend some time with the children or to do a special project (e.g., share a family video). Administrative staff of the Child Development Lab School entered the room and interacted with the children or teachers or simply observed activities going on in the room. Participants and staff from Adult Day Services came over for short visits to say "hello." Another graduate student, as part of the intergenerational programming between Lab School and Adult Day Services, interacted about an hour a week with the children of the Maroon AM while facilitating a planned intergenerational activity. Finally, teachers from other classrooms visited the room when children from their room wanted to see

their friends in the Maroon Room or wanted to participate in something going on in this room. In each of these instances, the children recognized that these people were visiting the class and were not their teachers.

## Study Participants

This study's participants were the eight pre-service teachers, commonly referred to as "student teachers," who were completing a practicum in the Maroon Room. These student teachers were described in more detail under the previous section entitled, "Those Involved In The Classroom."

## Research Question

This study strives to understand how these student teachers made sense of and implemented social constructivist methods of classroom management and discipline within an inquiry-based child development lab setting. Specifically, the research question was: How do pre-service teachers negotiate constructive guidance in an inquiry-based child development lab classroom?

## Data Collection Procedures

The data used in this study was collected as part of a larger project on influences on teaching in a social constructivist, inquiry-based child development lab classroom. See Appendix F for the IRB approval documentation. Approximately one-third of the entire data set focused on these pre-service teachers experiences related to guidance, discipline, and classroom management.

### *Data Sources*

Throughout the data collection process, participants essentially engaged in the act of reflection. Through the use of recordings in the field, end-of-year interviews, and artifacts,

participants provided three types of reflective data: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and anticipatory reflection (Van Manen, 1991). Reflection-in-action data refer to data that was recorded in the classroom as student teachers described what they were doing at that specific moment and why they were doing it. Reflection-on-action data refers to data in which the student teachers were thinking back on events that occurred earlier in the day, week, or year. Anticipatory reflection data refers to times when student teachers discussed what could be done in the future. I intentionally collected multiple sources of data in order to provide for data triangulation and therefore, greater credibility (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

*Recordings in the Field*

Throughout the semester, I collected several types of field-based recordings.

*Observational field notes*. I began by recording my own observations on what seemed to be influencing all of the classroom teachers, including myself. I also recorded my recollection of conversations with teachers that seemed to relate to the project. Typically, within the classroom, I was unable to jot notes throughout the day, thus, I used "head notes" to mentally note the observation or conversation (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and then as soon as possible after lab school each day, I recorded the incident. Initially, I hand-wrote or typed these field notes. As the semester progressed and my other school and work responsibilities increased, I began audiotaping my observations. These field notes serve to triangulate the student teachers' expereinces.

*Analytical field notes*. I recorded my interpretations of the data throughout data collection. Typically this took the form of reflective comments within the observational field notes. At other times, I would specifically write an analytical note. In one of these notes, I recorded my dissatisfaction with the observational field notes. All the notes I had recorded were

in my voice and were being filtered through my own eyes and ears, I wanted to record what the other classroom teachers were thinking and to do so in their voice.

   *"Teacher Talks" conversations* The week after Spring Break, on March 23, I began audio-taping our Teacher Talks. These conversations entailed reflection-on-action and anticipatory reflection. I had originally not planned to record these conversations. However, the student teachers were most likely to express their concerns over what was happening in the classroom, to discuss their own perspectives on the situations, and to work collaboratively to solve classroom problems during Teacher Talks than at any other time.

   *Reflections-in-action.* Also on March 23, I began approaching teachers with audiotape recorder in hand, asking them, "what are you doing right now? Why are you doing it?." This direct, in-classroom questioning captured the student teachers reflection while engaged in the action of interest.

   *End of session reflection-on-action.* I recorded conversations with student teachers during the last half-hour of classtime. These conversations consisted of answering the question, "what influenced your teaching today?" Student teachers reflected on their actions throughout the day. These conversations also allowed the student teachers to discuss challenges and anticipate possible ways of addressing these challenges.

*End of Year Interviews*

   Approximately two weeks prior to conducting these interviews, I provided each teacher with a draft copy of the interview guide (see Appendix G). I asked them to think about the questions in light of the things they saw as influencing them in the classroom. Then, I asked them whether these questions were sufficient to capture those influences and if not what additional questions were needed. After reviewing the questions, the teachers did not have any

suggestions for revision, so I used this guide as the final copy. This method is congruent with action research and phenomenology and provides a greater sense of trustworthiness (Boss, Dahl, & Kaplan, 1996). In addition, by sharing the interview questions ahead of time, teachers were cognizant of the information being sought in the interview. In a couple of cases, when teachers came for their interview, they brought their copy of the interview guide with them with notes written in the margins.

The interview guide focused on the teachers' perceived roles and responsibilities, contextual influences on their teaching, and their metaphor for the most significant aspects of teaching in this lab school classroom. Contextual influences specifically asked about included previous experiences, the children themselves, classroom behavioral concerns, parents, working with other teachers in the room, sharing a classroom with another set of students and teachers, performance evaluations, course requirements, previous coursework, teachers in other classrooms, administration, intergenerational programming, and being in a lab setting as opposed to another preschool setting.

During a two-week period after the last day of lab school, I conducted an audiotaped interview of approximately two-hours with each student teacher. Although I asked all the questions listed on the interview guide, I did so in a conversational way such that if a participant brought up a subject before the subject was outlined on the guide, I pursued that subject with the participant at that time. Further if a participant brought up unanticipated subjects related to the research questions, I pursued those subjects as well. Often times, I used probes to get a more in-depth understanding of the participants' thoughts and experiences. I typically constructed these probes through actively listening to the participant and making connections between the research project and what she was saying.

*Artifacts*

Over the course of the year, student teachers documented classroom activities and their own thoughts through written artifacts. As part of their course assignments, student teachers wrote weekly observations and reflections, completed written curriculum plans and evaluated their plan implementations. As a source of information, I used the student teachers' weekly observations and reflections as well as their plan evaluations to determine if our teacher talks conversations were impacting how the student teachers managed the classroom.

Reducing Potential Bias

One naturally-occurring aspect of potential bias in this research project was the desire to "save face" or "put your best foot forward." Given the candidness of some of the conversations the student teachers had with me, my impression is that they felt comfortable enough with me to avoid "saving face" or "putting their best foot forward." In one instance, I had an interaction with one of the student teachers that I was afraid may have affected her willingness to be candid with me. I addressed this incident directly during the interview and allowed her to talk about how this seemingly uncaring comment that I had made earlier had impacted her.

Another issue that had to be addressed was that I had influence over a portion of the student teachers' course grade. For six of the eight student teachers, this amounted to 25% of their total course grade (in the form of an evaluation of their classroom practices and disposition for teaching). For the other two student teachers (who were students in my course advisory group), I served in a dual role of primary course instructor and supervising teacher; thus I had much more influence over their course grade. In order to reduce the potential bias that this might create, I assured the student teachers that all course instructors would assign course grades together. In addition, I completed my evaluation of each student teacher's classroom

performance and disposition for teaching and discussed it with them prior to the last day of lab school. Further, all course-related grading was completed prior to the end-of-year interviews. When student teachers would hesitate to say what they thought about the course, I would remind them that course grades had been submitted and nothing they said could affect their grade. I would also reassure them of confidentiality.

## Recognizing My Own Biases

Throughout data collection, I utilized peer debriefing in order to maintain openness to the data. Specifically, I discussed potential findings with two other supervising teachers (in the other morning classrooms) and with the Maroon Room Head Teacher. Within the theoretical field notes, I also recorded my own reactions to the data. Documenting my personal responses to the data being collected insured that, as I engaged in this research, I was aware of my own thoughts and feelings. By being aware of my own thoughts and feelings, I could limit or avoid projecting those thoughts or feelings onto others. Being self-aware and reflexive throughout data collection and analysis helps insure the confirmability of the study (Anfara, et al., 2002; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). In addition, peer debriefing helps to insure the credibility of the study findings (Anfara, et al., 2002).

## Data Analysis Procedures

Teacher-research often entails some level of analysis throughout data collection. I used analytical field notes to record my initial analyses of what was influencing my own and my fellow classroom teachers' teaching efforts. In addition, as possible new themes emerged, I discussed them with other supervising teachers at the lab school who served as peer debriefers. They were able to draw on their own classroom teaching experiences and provide feedback to me about these potential themes. Two weeks after I began collecting the in-action data, I wrote a

note to three colleagues asking them whether they saw the influences I listed in their classrooms and whether other influences seemed to be evident in their classrooms that were not on the list.

Following this initial intuitive analysis of the data during data collection, I transcribed the data and imported it into N6, an updated version of NUD*IST (Qualitative Solutions and Research, Ltd., 2002). N6 is a qualitative analysis program that essentially allows the user to read, code, and sort data electronically, creating new coding categories or subcategories as the need arises. I elected to import and code data as I transcribed it. The initial analysis of the data during data collection provided some original coding categories. I created additional categories or subcategories as coding progressed, occasionally rearranging the categories as necessary to reflect my current understanding of the data. Having coded four interviews and three months worth of field recordings with the original question, "what influences classroom teaching?" in mind, I was overwhelmed with a massive project. This analysis revealed 49 themes and sub-themes, including, teacher-related influences (differences in teaching practices, teacher's beliefs and previous experiences, and teacher's needs or concerns), course-related influences (child portfolios, planning and lead teaching, and teacher talks), lab school organizational and policy-related influences, parental influences (observing and being observed by the parents and parents influencing their child), child-related influences (preference for certain teachers, peer social dynamics, and child's needs).

In questioning where to go from here, I recalled the saliency with which the student teachers spoke about guidance and discipline. Realizing that classroom management is an important aspect of teaching, I elected to focus the present study on how the pre-service teachers negotiated constructive guidance.

With this focus now in mind, I chose to begin again with the full original interviews and field recordings rather than to rely on the data I had already coded. This allowed me to insure that I did not inadvertently miss out on some aspect of the original data by relying on my previous coding categories. I also desired a more tangible connection to the data. Thus, I chose to review each document, copying and pasting comments related to guidance into new documents. Having done this, I printed these documents, separated the different themes by cutting the paper with scissors, and then sorted the themes. For the additional data that had yet to be transcribed, I listened to each tape, transcribing statements that related to the new research question. I elected to transcribe these statements verbatim because I prefer to work with the participants' actual words throughout the entire research process. In this way, I could insure that I was remaining as true as possible to what the participants were thinking and feeling at the time of the study. After transcription, I sorted these documents into the pre-existing coding categories or created new categories as needed.

I analyzed the interviews and recordings in the field together, providing for triangulation of data sources. I used artifacts as supplemental sources of data, which I referred to in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of particular themes that arose in the interviews and field recordings. Multiple sources of data increases the credibility and confirmability of the study (Anfara et al, 2002).

<div align="center">Confirming Each Student Teachers' Experiences</div>

In an effort to further insure that I adequately and appropriately represented each pre-service teacher's experience, I conducted member checks. The style of these checks varied by teacher. In three instances, I met with the student teachers talking through how I understood their experiences and letting them expand on aspects that were still unclear to me or to correct my

misinterpretations. For these meetings, I provided them with an overall analysis of the data and an analysis on their own experiences. In three other instances, the student teachers could only communicate via email. Thus, I sent them draft copies of the analysis with comments or statements about them highlighted. This allowed them to see how I had portrayed them while also reading about their fellow teachers' experiences. In these instances, they replied to me by email. I was also able to ask them direct questions over email about aspects of their experience that were unclear to me. For one other student teacher, I used a combined approach, sending her draft copies of the analysis and speaking with her by both email and face-to-face. Unfortunately, I was unable to contact the eighth student teacher; however, given that the other seven teachers expressed that I had portrayed their experiences well, I feel confident in the analysis. Member checks insure greater trustworthiness since participants check my descriptions and interpretations of their experience and work with me to correct any misinterpretations (Boss, et al, 1996).

CHAPTER FOUR: ENTERING THE CLASSROOM

This chapter is the first of three that report the perceived experiences of the student

teachers as they negotiated constructive guidance. This chapter deals with their prior coursework

and their initial reactions to the Maroon Room and to their responsibilities as teachers in this

classroom.

While all of this study's data were collected during the second semester, the student

teachers reflected on how their previous coursework and their Fall semester experiences in the

Maroon Room were pivotal to how they made sense of constructive guidance. Thus,

understanding the student teachers' perspectives on their prior coursework and on their first

semester at the Lab School becomes necessary to understanding how the student teachers

negotiated constructive guidance within the Maroon Room.

By the time the student teachers began their practicum experience in the Lab School's

Maroon Room, they had observed and/or assisted in at least two early childhood or elementary

classrooms for a minimum of 174 hours. One of these field placements occurred during their

freshman year at a rural elementary school. In this placement, student teachers either observed in

the classroom or worked one-on-one as a reading tutor. The second field placement took place

during their sophomore year. These placements often took place in community early childhood

care and development centers or in Kindergarten through second grade classrooms. The nature of

the placements was variable. Some of the student teachers reported that they observed for the full

time they were in the room. Others reported being immersed in the life of the classroom. Many

fell somewhere in between these two possibilities. Both the freshman and sophomore year

placements were for three hours per week. In addition to the field placements, the student

teachers' had a semester's worth of coursework studying constructive guidance. At the Lab School, the administration and classroom head teachers held the belief that these prior experiences, and particularly the course focused on constructive guidance, prepared the student teachers to enter the lab school classroom ready to provide guidance to the children. Thus, examining how the student teachers reflected on that course is a necessary first step in understanding their experiences at the Lab School.

<center>Prior Coursework on Guidance and Discipline</center>

During their sophomore year, the student teachers took a course called Principles of Working With Children and Families. *Constructive Guidance and Discipline* by Field and Boesser (2002) was the primary text. During the interviews, I asked the student teachers to reflect back on what they had learned in Principles. Marie and McKenzie reported that they did learn some guidance techniques and more about "how things are done nowadays." McKenzie stated,

> I wrote lots of papers that year on constructive guidance. Most importantly we discussed that when a child does wrong, there must not just be a consequence, but one that is directly related to their misbehavior, i.e. pay for a new window if you break it. We also talked a lot about how children need to have discussions with you about why what they did was wrong and what they can do the next time so that the same behavior will not occur.

Marie iterated a similar sentiment, "through my readings and assignments for that class, I learned about the techniques. And through the field study required for that course, I learned about how the techniques were implemented in real life situations." Marie's field placement was at a community-based center which held a similar philosophy to the Lab School.

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Laura spoke about how Principles helped prepare her to work at the Lab School classroom because she learned that, "whenever a child's behavior wasn't the way it was supposed to be, any consequence [she applied needed to be] related to what the problem was." Further she reported that without the Principles course,

I would have never known my place in the classroom. Like, if we had the Lab School experience my first year here, I would have never known how to react to certain situations, not with this environment. But the way that we wanted kids to understand how they felt if something happened, that's not the way I would have known how to approach it.

Kayla and Amanda discussed learning about the importance of intrinsic motivation and helping children learn to behave appropriately. However, they did not report learning how to help the children develop intrinsic motivation. Amanda further talked about how reading the text *Constructive Guidance and Discipline* (Fields & Boesser, 2002) helped her reflect on the rewards and punishments she had experienced in her own schooling. Amanda , like many of the others, felt that she gained a better understanding of the importance of helping children understand why certain behaviors were inappropriate. With the exceptions of Laura and McKenzie, none of the student teachers reported gaining confidence in actually talking with children about their misbehavior or applying other constructive guidance techniques.

Jenni's assessment of the course stands in contrast to the others. "I wasn't learning anything about how to teach the kids and control the classroom," she said. As a student, Jenni learned best through hands-on experience. She struggled to understand concepts when they were abstract rather than immediately relevant. Learning about guidance and discipline became relevant to Jenni when she began her practicum at the Lab School. In her prior placements, she

was an observer in the classroom, interacting infrequently with the children. She was not expected to provide child guidance in her other placements.

Emma also expressed that the Principles course did not prepare her to effectively apply constructive guidance techniques. When I questioned what she felt she was "allowed" to do after having had Principles, she reported, "I had no idea." For Emma, Principles was a course that taught her what not to do rather than what to do when addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom. Thus, she came into the Maroon Room feeling as if she had limited recourse when children's actions concerned her. She further discussed how different the techniques recommended in *Constructive Guidance and Discipline* (Field & Boesser, 2002) were from the stern discipline she experienced as a child, making it almost impossible for her to imagine how the techniques recommended by Field and Boesser could really work with children. Thus, Emma's initial sense of powerlessness within the Maroon Room seems to have stemmed from her sense that she was not prepared to provide constructive guidance.

Emma also expressed frustration that, in practice, natural consequences did not work as effectively as she anticipated they would. She commented,

> They talk about natural consequences in that book and letting things happen between the children. If one child's mean to another child the consequence is that that child won't be friends with the other child. But then I saw in our classroom that that wasn't really working because we had a child be mean to another child and still the other child would just follow the child around and demand that they be together. And actions would not be modified and they would just get pushed around so this was at odds with what I read and what I thought would happen in an ideal classroom. All the research backs that up in that book but in a real classroom it didn't work as much as I thought it would.

Amanda was also frustrated when guidance techniques did not work as effectively as she thought they would. She spoke about how challenging it was for her to work with a particular child, helping him understand "why something was wrong, not because I told him it was wrong." I could hear the frustration she felt and how she wondered if she ever got through to him, fully. Even though she had spoken with him multiple times about keeping his hands to himself, he continued to place his hands around others' necks or spontaneously tickle someone during group meetings. Amanda had not anticipated the time element that comes into play with the use of constructive guidance. Somehow, those techniques and ideas she found so fascinating as she read *Constructive Guidance and Discipline* were supposed to work miraculously – the first time. Like Amanda, Emma became frustrated when guidance techniques, such as reasoning with the children or using natural consequences, did not evidence immediate changes in the child's behavior.

<center>Initial Reactions</center>

The Lab School adopts a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. That is, we believe that learning is constructed through social interactions with people and materials. Therefore, it makes theoretical sense for our program to utilize projects and investigations as a means of constructing understanding about concepts such as water transfer or how magnets work. It further makes sense that we would choose guidance techniques that allow children the opportunity to construct understanding of social norms and expectations, other's feelings, one's own feelings, and self-regulation. For the student teachers, understanding constructivist practices related to providing guidance as well as to teaching was a necessary aspect of surviving within the classroom.

However, when these student teachers first encountered Lab School, it was, for most of them, "a culture shock." Lab School was counter to their very definition of "school." Their reactions to these first weeks of their Lab School practicum often involved strong, uncertain emotions characterized by disequilibrium. They were expected to practice the Lab School's social constructivist philosophy in their work with the children. However, for most of them this was the first time in which they recalled encountering a social constructivist classroom. It was certainly the first time many of them would be responsible for implementing constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. They struggled with questions surrounding exactly what was expected of them in this practicum experience.

The student teachers' initial perceptions permeated their beliefs about the Lab School well into second semester. Their initial reactions were strong, directly affecting what they did or did not do within the classroom. During second semester, the student teachers wanted and needed to talk about their perceptions. This may be because these initial perceptions resurfaced and challenged them in new ways during second semester, when each student teacher took turns being the lead classroom teacher. During this time, Layla (the head teacher) and I stepped back into supporting roles. This idea was supported by Kayla during her member check. She stated, "During first semester, I could observe. I didn't have to be the one in charge. You were. But second semester, I had to do it all, so these perceptions were even stronger for me second semester than first." During McKenzie's member check, she stated, "I definitely did not really feel like a teacher in the classroom until the second semester when we were given more responsibility." Being assistant teachers the first semester, the student teachers seemed to feel that they could let Layla or I handle challenging classroom situations. "It was quite a change to go from an assistant to head teacher, because our responsibilities and roles completely changed,"

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stated McKenzie. While the student teachers may have become comfortable assisting in providing guidance, their new role required them to look at each child and the classroom more deeply, through the eyes of a lead classroom teacher. Second semester, the student teachers became responsible not only for implementing guidance strategies but for determining what guidance strategies to use in what situations, and how to appropriately meet the needs of each individual as well as the whole class.

Many of the student teachers reported feeling more like a teacher after having taken on the lead teacher role. Further, they felt responsible for overall classroom management when they served as the lead teacher than when they served as an assistant teacher. The resurgence of their initial perceptions seemed to occur because the student teachers were now trying to figure out how to be lead teachers rather than assistant teachers. Perhaps, the student teachers again became uncertain about their roles in the classroom because the responsibilities of the lead teacher were different from those of the assistant teacher. This change in role may have resulted in disequilibrium and a resurgence of their initial perceptions.

*Knowing or Not Knowing What to Expect*

"I didn't know anything at all about Lab School. I came in completely blind to the whole thing," Jenni shared. Emma reported, "the whole first semester I was still kind of like, 'oh my gosh what am I doing?'… for a long time I didn't know what my roles were really and what I was supposed to be doing here. It didn't feel like they were clarified or set in stone for me." Laura shared a similar experience to Jenni and Emma.

> I think in the beginning, I observed more than I actually participated and I think that was
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> from previous experiences in field placements we'd been in, I'd just been an observer,

taking notes and more writing down things and observing rather than just engaging and

writing down things later,

Laura said. Amanda's experience was similar. Not knowing what to expect, she became easily

frustrated with the whole Lab School experience. Each of these student teachers had previous

placements in which their primary role was one of observer. They rarely interacted with the

children and were not given teaching or managing responsibilities. In addition, prior to this year,

these student teachers had limited life experience working with preschool-age children. During

member checks, Emma stated that not knowing how she was expected to act in the classroom

contributed to her sense of shock when she entered the room. The transition from "observer" to

"teacher" occurred without adequate information on what her teaching roles would be.

Having similar prior experiences seemed to ease the transition. Marie's experience,

however, was different. Her first encounter with an inquiry-based curriculum and with using

constructive guidance techniques came during her sophomore field experience at a Reggio-

inspired community-based child development center. During her sophomore and junior year,

Marie served as a substitute teacher for this center, giving her even more experience with these

techniques. She attributed this prior experience to preparing her for the Lab School "because

when I came in here, I was like, "Oh, okay. That's easy. I do that at work." Kayla had many

years of babysitting experience and had prior field placements in preschool settings. These prior

experiences coupled by Kayla's assertion that "I went into it with an open mind," likely resulted

in her reflection that she did not get stressed out by the way the Lab School worked.

*"Lab School Has No Structure."*

The Lab School structure allows children to individually select what they would like to

engage in from several planned provocations and from standard areas in the classroom (such as

blocks, home-living, or literacy). In addition, children can request other materials not readily available in the classroom. Self-selecting what they wish to explore allows children to work with materials that are most meaningful to them, pursue their own questions and concerns, and make choices. Young children are capable of determining if they are hungry; thus, the children are not required to sit at the table during snack time. Children are encouraged but not required to attend group meetings. Because we value learning to self-regulate, we trust the children to know themselves well enough to know whether they are comfortable attending the group meeting. When children are developmentally ready to join the group, they will usually choose to do so, if the group meeting is relevant to them. Physically forcing a child who is not comfortable attending the large group meeting to do so communicates disrespect to the child. It also can result in distracting the other children from the group meeting to focus on that child. Children who do not attend the meeting are expected to work quietly elsewhere in the room. Sometimes, however, those not attending the group meeting distracted others in the meeting. This typically occurred when those not attending the meeting were also not productively engaged in an alternate quiet activity. One of the assistant teachers could be asked to insure that any children choosing not to attend the group meeting were engaged in a quiet activity that would not distract their peers. While the classroom did follow a daily routine and the children were generally engaged in the curriculum, this freedom within boundaries was difficult for the student teachers to accept.

Actually, for a time, the student teachers may not have seen the boundaries that necessarily existed for safety and out of respect for self, others, and materials. For instance, McKenzie commented that "the freeness in the classroom" and "letting them do whatever they want" was definitely different than anything she had experienced elsewhere. Why did she and

others struggle to see the boundaries? Why did they struggle to make sense of this idea of freedom within boundaries?

During multiple conversations with the student teachers I asked them to help me understand their perspectives more clearly. The image that these student teachers painted was of an "orderly classroom" in which all of the children were together at some point in time each day, engaged in the act of learning. This seems to suggest that they believe there is a link between a highly structured environment and a greater sense of control.

Where did these student teachers get their notions about how the school day should be structured? Jenni and Chelsea expected that, at the Lab School, the children would sit together practicing skills like cutting, letter recognition, and writing. Spending years "sitting in a desk all day and working," Chelsea explained, "got me used to the more structured and teacher-led curriculum." Thus, Jenni's and Chelsea's own experiences as students predisposed them to a definition of structure that involved students working independently at assigned desks. Jenni and Chelsea further reported that they liked their school experience. Thus, they may have been confused as to why Lab School was so different from their own schooling. For McKenzie, structure meant that each child participated in group meetings and each child ate snack. McKenzie, Kayla, and Jenni each had prior experiences in other preschools that were "very you do this now and we all sit down and do this art project." That Lab School did not insist that every child attend the group meeting, sit at the snack table, or participate in a project meant that it was "very unstructured."

Laura also expressed that, since the children could choose not to join the class for group meetings, she did not view the Lab School as having structure or routine. In explaining why this bothered her, she stated, "in kindergarten, they're not going to have that choice about whether to

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sit down for group time or not." In fact, a number of the student teachers expressed the desire to prepare the children for the structure they anticipated the children would encounter in kindergarten – required participation at group times and raising hands and waiting to be called on before speaking. Potentially, these student teachers' definition of what it meant to be "in school" involved following such rules. As the supervising teacher, I was not insisting on every child's presence at group meetings and on children raising their hand and being called on to speak. Thus, any other boundaries I did insist on were not sufficient for providing the sense of structure that these student teachers expected to see.

<p align="center">*"How Do I Maintain Control?"*</p>

The eight student teachers in this study were concerned about maintaining control of the children. This issue was particularly salient for McKenzie. As she reflected back on the year, she stated, "Sometimes I felt like I had no control, that no matter what I did they were going to be wild and crazy and I couldn't do anything about it." Jenni agreed,

> Control was always an issue for me. Without having consequences for their actions, I felt that the students were not learning that certain behaviors were wrong. Being talked to about a situation and talking about feelings does not seem to sink in with a child as much as if they are punished in some way or another for their actions. Due to this, I felt that the children ran wild throughout the classroom.

In these statements, both Jenni and McKenzie linked control to discipline.

The directness of their question, "How do we keep them under control?" often baffled me as their supervising teacher. I didn't know how to answer their question because, for me, managing the classroom was not about "keeping control." I struggled with their choice of words. Did they want to lord over the children? Through several conversations with more experienced

teacher educators, I realized that these student teachers' desire to "maintain control" was based

on a sense of responsibility and a belief that, to be an effective teacher, one must be *"in control."*

The member check process allowed the student teachers and I to continue this

conversation. Together, we have revised their notion of "maintaining control" to mean

"maintaining order." For instance, in talking with Kayla, she confirmed that her concern was

really less about control and more about insuring that the children were safe and the classroom

was orderly. Having talked with Kayla, I followed up with McKenzie for her reaction. She

responded,

> I feel like you are making the term "control" out to be bad. I agree with Kayla that it isn't
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> about control, like suffocating them and having control over their every action, but it is
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> about making sure they are safe and the classroom is orderly. Essentially it is about
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> classroom management. In Lab School we had kids coming in and out of our classroom
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> all the time, even from other classrooms. A teacher "in control" knows where every child
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> is in her classroom at all times, and has every child on task and engaged in an activity,
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> whatever they may have chosen to participate in. The teacher is not just in one place in
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> the classroom (unless they are at a group setting), but is anywhere she is needed to
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> support the children, whether it be to answer questions or engage a child in an activity. It
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> is important to "maintain control" or to have strong classroom management so that the
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> classroom can run smoothly and all children are able to participate fully in their activities.

Thus, for McKenzie, control was about having an orderly classroom where the children were on

task and disruption was minimized. McKenzie's sense of being "in control" stemmed from her

perception of whether the children were engaged in a learning task. Thus, when she was unclear

as to the value of an activity or the children were not engaging in a planned activity, she might

question whether the teachers were in control or whether the children were simply allowed to do whatever they wanted to do, regardless of the plans.

Further, McKenzie's sense of control seems to have been diminished by certain structural elements at the Lab School. At the Lab School, there was not a set arrival time for all of the children. The children generally arrived between 8:30-9:45. Some children might have just arrived while others have already been in the classroom for an hour. Further, some of the children's cubbies were in the classroom, while other cubbies were in the interior hallway between the Maroon Room and the Orange Room. The children would leave the classroom to place items in their cubbies or take an item from their cubbies. Also, many of the children were in their second or third year at the Lab School. They knew that they could ask for and would generally be given items and materials stored above the cubbies or in the hallway cabinets. This "right" allowed them to expand their play by incorporating desired materials not already available in the room. It also allowed them to regulate their own learning by asking for a material they felt would be more beneficial to them than materials currently available in the classroom. Occasionally, rather than ask for these materials, they went looking for materials on their own (leaving the classroom without a teacher). Also, we had occasional visits from the Orange Room children (one of their teachers came with them). Sometimes, the Maroon Room children would request to visit in the Orange Room. These structural elements of the Lab School could have exacerbated McKenzie's concern over how to maintain an orderly, safe environment when there was so much movement in and out of the classroom throughout the morning.

Emma suggested that if she and her peers were given an opportunity to observe the classroom prior to being "thrust in," they may have been able to better see the way order was maintained in the room. Specifically, Emma commented,

I think the main issue wasn't the idea of lording over the students and having them obey, but rather an issue of unclear expectations again -- where our view of the classroom was different than Lab School's view of the classroom. I think it would have helped to be able to observe a Lab School classroom before being thrust in.

Emma seems to value observational learning and believes this would have helped her see the structure of the room, how it operated, and how order was maintained. Emma further suggested that at the beginning of this experience, she held a view of the teacher as an ever-present, necessary aspect of the learning process. "It also may have been a slight shock to us that the children were so independent and we didn't feel as needed for the entire learning process," she said.

*"Lab School Has No Discipline."*

For these student teachers, discipline is linked closely to the ideas of structure and control. As the student teachers spoke about their perceptions of the Lab School, they identified that they did not believe the Lab School had any discipline policy. "It was never really said what we could or couldn't do" explained Kayla. McKenzie agrees, "we kinda felt like everything was allowed."

Ironically, as I spoke with the student teachers more about what led them to develop this view of the Lab School, it became clear to me that, inadvertently, the other course instructors and I may have contributed to this confusion. In those first weeks of the first semester, we discussed emergent curriculum and the idea of constructing the curriculum based on the children's interests and needs. Unknown to us, the student teachers generalized our comments on curriculum planning to guidance and discipline as well. Kayla discussed this in saying,

When we were told about the Lab School and Reggio Emilia, it was pretty much

go with the children's interests. The way that fit when it was explained to me was

'let them do what they want to do.' And the way I translated that in my head was

'don't discipline them and let them do what they want to do.'

Having decided that this is what we meant by "follow the children's interests," Kayla felt

restricted: "I was really just kind of scared off at first because I really didn't think we could do

anything because we had to do what the children wanted."

For Marie, "discipline" was equated with "consistently-applied consequences." In her

experience at a community-based child development center, she reported that there were known

consequences for specific situations. This way, every teacher could apply the same consequence

for the same behavior, maintaining consistency for both the children and teachers. Since the Lab

School did not have set consequences delineated for situations that often arise in classrooms,

Marie noted that different teachers were responding in different ways to the same behaviors. This

inconsistency in how the teachers responded to the children made it appear to Marie that the Lab

School did not have an adequate discipline system.

*"What Do I Do When…"*

During her member check, Kayla stated, "At the beginning, I needed some guidelines or

rules." The Lab School had a student teacher handbook which was given to each student teacher

at the beginning of the year. This handbook provided some general guidelines related to

interacting with children, managing behavior, and supervising children. However, when I asked

student teachers about this handbook during member checks, they vaguely recalled the

handbook. Most, like McKenzie, stated, "I know I read through it, but don't remember any

specific details." Thus, as Kayla said, "obviously, it didn't leave a big impression." Emma

commented, "I don't think I ever received a handbook about constructive guidance. The packet we received was mostly policy and procedures in the event we had to be absent or the Lab School closed for snow." As I reviewed the handbook sections related to working with the children, none of these sections used the term "constructive guidance" to describe how the student teachers were to relate to the children with regard to problematic behaviors. At the time the handbook was distributed the logistical policies and procedures (like what to do if you have to be absent) might have been more relevant to the student teachers than the recommendations related to guiding and interacting with the children. In addition, the other course instructors and I may have failed to draw the student teachers' attention to the sections on working with the children.

Some of the students expected a simple answer, a one-size-fits-all solution to the myriad of discipline concerns they were going to face. For instance, Amanda recalls that in 3rd grade she and her fellow students had to write the code of conduct each time they got in trouble. Amanda experienced a similar technique in 5th grade, jokingly stating that the reason she still remembers many of the state capitols is because of the number of times she had to write these out when she got in trouble. She later reported that when she worked in the Lab School she expected to apply these single solutions meant to address a variety of discipline issues. When Amanda learned that the Lab School did not have a specific, simple discipline policy that she was to apply each time a child misbehaved, she decided that this meant that there was absolutely no policy. She reports giving up, feeling frustrated, and not wanting to come to Lab School. She felt restricted, as if she wasn't allowed to do anything. "I felt I couldn't really tell the child, 'you can't do this' or talk to them in that certain voice at first."

*"The Children Don't Respect Me."*

"That was a problem that I had when I first came here. I thought, 'there are so many different people here on different days and how are they ever going to respect me or know that I'm a teacher?,'" asked Laura. McKenzie also expressed concern that "they [the children] didn't really know who the teacher was a lot of the time. There were so many of us and different teachers on different days and I think that this set-up was very confusing for them." Thus, some of the student teachers attributed their limited time in the classroom as a reason that the children may not have seen them as an authority figure whom they should respect. What did it mean to be respected?

The student teachers often equated respect with the child listening to and doing what the teacher said. Jenni shared, "As a child, I knew not to say no to an adult. It was "No, thank you' or I would do as the adult asked me to. To have them say no as they did was a sign of disrespect towards me." Jenni and McKenzie discussed how the children would tell them "no, I'm not going to do that." Similarly, Chelsea and Emma shared experiences of children running away from them when they asked the child to come talk to them. Although, occasionally the children would also ignore me or tell me "no," many student teachers continued to perceive that the children respected my authority while not respecting their authority. In her end of year interview Amanda reflected, "it was very easy for [the children] not to listen to us because they didn't really feel like we had any authority over them." That sense that the children did not perceive the student teachers as authority figures is something that was shared by the other student teachers. In addition, the student teachers generally perceived that the more challenging students were the ones not showing respect. It is interesting to note that early in first semester, when this issue was most prevalent, the student teachers themselves were still unsure what guidance and discipline

techniques they could use and how much they could assert themselves. Many relied on talking to the children and only tentatively, if at all, engaged in limit-setting and using consequences.

It appears that the student teachers seemed to use "respect" and "authority" interchangeably. This suggests that, in general, acts of defiance (such as a child saying, "no, I'm not doing that") or disregard (pretending not to hear the student teacher) held powerful influence over the student teachers' emerging sense of competence.

<div align="center">Summarizing</div>

In summary, the student teachers' first semester reactions to being assistant teachers in the Maroon Room were similar to their second semester reactions to being the lead teacher in this classroom. As "teachers" they felt they needed to show that they were "in charge" of the classroom – that they could effectively manage the classroom. However, the structure of this developmentally appropriate, inquiry-based preschool classroom was unlike what most of them had encountered before. Not seeing what they expected to see, many decided that there was no structure to the classroom, that it appeared to be total chaos. As lead teachers, they found it challenging to orchestrate the overall classroom environment. Being responsible for monitoring so many different activities at once and responding to children's need for change, the lead teacher may have felt as if the classroom was too chaotic, too busy. Further, although I was using the constructive guidance techniques the student teachers had learned about during their sophomore year course on guidance and discipline, these techniques did not have the feel of "discipline" – certainly not the discipline they had been used to in school. Thus, the student teachers struggled to make sense of a much different definition of "discipline." While they seemed to value constructive guidance after having taken the course on it, some still were uncertain about how to effectively implement these strategies. Further, because helping a child

unlearn inappropriate behavior and replace it with appropriate behavior takes time, the student teachers were not getting immediate feedback that their guidance efforts were working. Moreover, in these new roles, the student teachers were trying to figure out exactly how to create an overall sense of order while using teaching and guidance techniques compatible with the social constructivist perspective. Having had limited, if any, prior experiences teaching in this manner, the student teachers experienced uncertainty about how they should act and what they should be doing in the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE: GUIDING THE CHILDREN

This chapter is the second of three chapters that deals with the student teachers' experiences negotiating constructive guidance. This chapter explores the student teachers' experiences guiding the Maroon Room children. As the student teachers began seeing beyond their initial reactions to the classroom, they noted little details that had been obscured before. They became more comfortable in the room, in what their roles were, and in how to use constructive guidance.

<p style="text-align:center">"It Was An Adjustment"</p>

Each of these student teachers spoke of having to adjust to the way that the Lab School functioned. Jenni reported that "it was just an adjustment to not having them [the children] sit, coming in and doing activities that they could come and go as they pleased." In addition to adjusting to the structure of the Lab School, Jenni also had to adjust to the new roles she would take on in this practicum. In her previous placements, Jenni "just sat there and observed the teacher." At the Lab School classroom, "if [the children] had problems, I had to handle them. It wasn't 'the teacher's responsibility' because I was one of the teachers," Jenni said. Laura's comments suggested a similar experience of needing to learn what her roles were in this classroom. She said,

> I think when I understood more of my role in here. I definitely didn't come in the first few weeks and think, 'oh, I'm a teacher. And I know they're going to respect me.' I didn't have that attitude at first. But after I knew what my role was and that it was my role to help manage the class, I felt more comfortable portraying myself that way.

Emma's experience captures this same idea. In her previous field experiences, she'd 'been in classes where I observed mostly." At the Lab School, she "came in here and all of a sudden, you're thrown into a classroom environment and it's you. You are a teacher in the classroom and you need to interact with the kids and help the kids and teach the kids." Emma reported experiencing a sense of being overwhelmed in the classroom until February or March. "First semester I was still kind of, 'oh my gosh! What am I doing?' But this semester, I was more motivated because I created the lesson plans. So I guess they were more meaningful to me. And I saw the way the classroom was running and I started to notice it more." Emma adjusted to the overall classroom functioning after she took on responsibility for planning and implementing curriculum. She suggests that planning and being the lead teacher also led to an improvement of her observational abilities. Finally, as lead teacher, she felt it was necessary to rely on herself, rather than on me or the head teacher, Layla.

Kayla reflected, "I don't think I ever really knew what we could or couldn't say. I just kind of figured it out." For McKenzie, "it took the entire year to get to a semi-comfortable state" within the classroom. While Laura was initially concerned that the children would not respect her or think of her as a teacher, in her end-of-year reflections, she stated, "But once they got to know me and developed a respect for me as a teacher, I think they looked to me for answers and they looked to me to guide them and be a mentor to them in a lot of things they did. And that made me feel like I was a teacher and I was a part of their development."

In summary, each of these student teachers' comments suggest that the adjustment process takes time and needs to be valued as part of the Lab School student teaching experience. Yet, their comments also suggest that they would have benefited from more direct instruction on what to do within the classroom, including how to guide the children effectively. What facilitated

the student teachers' adjustment to being a teacher in the Maroon Room? This is the question to which we now turn.

<div align="center">*Getting To Know the Children*</div>

Many of the student teachers reported the value of getting to know the individual children. "They became so predictable in what their interests were after you got to know the kids," commented Laura, adding that this really helped her when planning curriculum. "I got used to the kids and how they behaved and how they thought about everything in the classroom," says Emma. Among other ways, she used this knowledge to engage each child in cleaning up the classroom. For instance, if the children did not like cleaning up, she would turn clean up into a game or race. "It's just knowing the kids and knowing their specific needs in the classroom," she said. During Teacher Talks, McKenzie, Marie, and Emma each shared an experience in which a child got frustrated, and began crying. At the time, they were puzzled at how easily she became upset. Emma also felt lost for what she could do to support the girl. Jenni had similar experiences with this girl. During her end of year interview, Jenni shared that she learned that "you have to work differently with her than you do with the boys." Through getting to know the individual children, Jenni reported feeling more like a teacher.

Each student teacher had two "target children" whom they observed closely, documenting their development across the year in order to create developmental portfolios. Sometimes, the student teachers would babysit their target children. Jenni reported that her relationship with one of her target children outside of the room allowed her to work more effectively with the child in school: "I knew certain things about her that when she got upset I could talk to her about it, that with the other kids I wouldn't know." During Teacher Talks, Jenni would also let the other teachers know if something was going on with this child that could

impact her behavior or emotions at school. Chelsea valued hearing about Jenni's experiences with this child outside of school. She also valued being able to share knowledge she gained of her target child while babysitting him: "After I babysat, it was just a lot easier to understand how he was feeling in the classroom and how to calm him down." Emma also spent time with one of her target children outside of Lab School. "It made her parents more comfortable with me and it made her more comfortable with me because I would go to her house a lot. I got to know her family more, so she was more comfortable with me." Emma stated that it was easier for her to interact with this target child than the other one, whom she did not work with outside of Lab School. Reflecting further on this, Emma attributed the closer relationship to spending more time together each week. Amanda also babysat her target children. During member checks, Amanda shared that getting to know the children took time. At first, she focused on getting to know her target children. By the end of the first semester, she felt as if she also knew the other children. Knowing the children allowed her to judge which guidance techniques worked best with which children. Kayla also worked with her target children outside of Lab School. However, she felt as if she did not get to know the other children as well as she did her target children. Babysitting her target children further deepened the relationship she had with them. "They were more comfortable with me and I was more comfortable with them than I was [the other children]," she said. She further stated, "I spent too much time with those specific children and I didn't get to know the others as much." During her member check, Kayla reflected that she was worried about putting her target children's portfolios together, so she spent as much time as possible with her target children.

Sometimes student teachers had difficulty connecting with certain children. While Kayla stated that she wanted to interact with all the children, she developed "a fear of the unknown."

Observing two of the more active boys (Mark and Clark) from a distance and, being uncertain of how to work with them effectively, Kayla avoided getting to know them at all. Not knowing Clark and Mark made it harder for her to effectively provide guidance to them. During her member check, she revealed that she was less concerned about Clark than about his mother's reactions. In hindsight, she regretted the decision to not get to know Mark and Clark. Jenni did not feel as if she connected with another boy, whom she said simply wouldn't listen to her at all throughout the year. Since she did not feel connected to this child, she appreciated learning that other student teachers "had different kids that they didn't connect with as well, and [others] that they connected with better." Teacher Talks served as an avenue for the student teachers to learn about the children with whom they did not connect. During the Teacher Talks conversations on the active boys, Emma's voice was notably absent. During her end-of-year interview, Emma reflected that the boys challenged her the most because "I don't have a sibling and I've never been around boy children that much." As she describes herself as a child, she says, "most of my friends when I was younger were girls. I was a real girly girl." Thus, for Emma, "being around this group [of active boys] especially when they're just hitting stuff, kicking stuff, you know, I wasn't used to it." In addition, Emma found it difficult to connect with Mark, the leader of the active boys, because "he's so loud." Since his loudness tended to drain Emma of her energy, she may have avoided him (and thus, the other active boys) whenever possible. In addition, Emma expressed that she felt the relationships with these children would have been stronger "if we had been there each day [because] they could have seen us as permanent rather than temporary in the classroom."

*Not Taking it Personally*

Emma stated, "At first, everything that would happen in here I would take personally." Though, she can't pinpoint the moment that this changed, she continued, "and then it was just like, 'okay, it's another day. It's going to work. Everything will be okay.'" As she reflected further on how she learned to not take things personally, she stated,

Because I didn't take their actions as an insult to me. Instead I saw them as being children who are still learning social patterns and experimenting with limits. They didn't mean to personally attack me. Discipline was a problem with all the teachers in the classroom. It helped that I saw that everyone was struggling and learning as they went and that allowed me to do the same.

During a Teacher Talks conversation about one of the girl's tendencies to reject teacher support or attention, Marie told the other teachers "don't take it personally. She's okay with me now but for a long time, she seemed like she didn't like me. If she caught me looking at her she would say, 'could you please not look at me?'" During her member check, Marie added, "its just important not to take things personally because they are kids and they will say things that aren't always nice. If you let it get to you, it'll ruin your experience and your ability to teach."

*Becoming More Flexible*

The student teachers spoke about how important it was for them to learn to be more flexible. For Jenni, flexibility meant "letting go of some of the control in letting them go and do what they wanted to do. They don't have to do whatever we have set up." It also meant "go to the child instead of having the child come to me" when Jenni needed to provide guidance. "I feel like I had to be more laid-back than I normally would be, more talk to the kids about their feelings, figure out why they're doing it," Jennie reflected. Laura commented,

And being flexible in knowing that if things get out of control that, at four years old,

those kids just needed an outlet for that energy and taking them outside or doing another

activity and then bringing them back twenty minutes later often solved the problem.

While she did not go into detail, Amanda confirmed, "I definitely learned to be more flexible!"

Kayla's easy-going, low-key personality resulted in her already being flexible with the children.

Although in her interview, Emma did not speak about learning to be flexible, she wrote the

following statement about her experiences with this during her member check:

Flexibility is a necessity in the classroom and it's not something that comes easy until

you open your eyes and look at the bigger picture of what is actually happening. For me,

it required opening my eyes and seeing that I was observing child development first hand

and realizing that every moment leaves something to be learned, not just for the students,

but for me. So even if my plan for the day was discarded, something meaningful took

place and I learned what to do and what not to do next time.

During her interview, McKenzie reported that flexibility was key in determining how to redirect

a specific child's misbehavior into something productive and in figuring out how to talk with that

child about how his actions impact others. However, during her member check, McKenzie

stated, "I don't think I had to be more flexible at Lab School than in any other setting…..you

have to be that flexible in any school setting." Marie, however, felt as if the Maroon Room

children required greater flexibility than other groups of children with whom she'd worked.

Flexibility was especially important at the Lab School classroom because of the energetic

boys. No matter what activities you planned for the day, you had to be prepared for the

boys to be unresponsive to everything you set out. You had to allow for the day to stray

from any "plans" you had set out. I learned to have backup plans for each of my days

because there could be extra time to kill or the boys could need a different activity.

All of the student teachers' comments suggest that the classroom practice reinforced their

understanding that teaching involves flexibility.

<p style="text-align:center"><em>Discussing Guidance Options: One Aspect of Teacher Talks</em></p>

The student teachers reported being unclear about what they could and could not do in

terms of guidance and discipline. Most felt that initially all they could do was talk to the children

about their misbehavior. Emma shared,

> After we had all those talks about what the appropriate way was to deal with discipline
>
> problems, I felt like that helped a lot too because for a long time I didn't know what my
>
> roles were really and what I was supposed to be doing here. It didn't feel like they were
>
> clarified or set in stone for me. And so it took me awhile until we had that Teacher Talks
>
> where we talked about how we were all scared to talk to the kids really in a stern voice at
>
> all.

McKenzie also shared that "when we had Teacher Talks about it" she began to feel comfortable

"being a little bit more stern with them." Amanda reported that for the children to begin taking

the student teachers' authority seriously, "it took us making them see that they could get in

trouble with us just as easily as they could get in trouble with [you]." Chelsea reflected on the

year, saying, "I think just the attitude changed as the kids realized we were getting stricter too

about stuff."

Teacher Talks provided a time for the student teachers and I to discuss specific concerns

and agree on possible ways that could be used to handle different situations. During one Teacher

Talk, I discussed with the student teachers how we would use a reward-based behavior

management plan to help Mark learn to control his tendency to disregard safety and classroom boundaries. Through this Teacher Talk and implementing this plan, Kayla learned "You have to have boundaries and you have to have rules. So, it's okay to say that 'that's not acceptable' and 'we can't do that in our room.'" Thus, Kayla said,

> I felt like maybe I had more control if I was able to say, 'we need to do something else because this isn't okay. This isn't something we can do in our class.' Rather than just letting them do whatever they want, which is kinda how I felt at first.

With so many different teachers in this classroom, exploring how to handle problems was one aspect of Teacher Talks. McKenzie valued the opportunity to "all give our ideas. Instead of just one person deciding how to handle it, we all did." Amanda reported "if I was having problems with something, then another teacher could tell me how it could work." Jenni and Marie also appreciated learning how others handled various situations so that if they encountered similar situations they knew what might work. Kayla also found gaining ideas of how to work with the individual children to be an important aspect of Teacher Talks. For example, she learned from her peers that getting one of the active boys to look her in the eyes before she spoke with him helped him to calm down enough to talk about what had happened. Marie also reported that "when we talked about specific things with the children and how to handle things with them, that would be what influenced me the most." Laura shared a similar sense of the importance of Teacher Talks. She stated,

> We would talk about it. And getting insights and ideas from other people influences the way you feel about things because sometimes you just overlook outside of what you feel and then you hear somebody else say something and then you're like, 'Oh, well, we do need to do that in the class' and then that influences the way you feel.

Amanda and Marie both acknowledged that it was really important to try to maintain consistency in how the student teachers handled situations since each of them was only present two days a week. Discussing concerns during Teacher Talks allowed the student teachers to come to some consensus on how situations could be handled. During member checks, McKenzie reflected that once she and the other student teachers took over as lead teachers, she felt that I gave them more responsibility for deciding how to handle classroom situations. This sense of responsibility helped her to feel as if she had more control within the classroom. This sense of responsibility and need for consistency across teachers may have been two reasons the student teachers valued the time they spent in Teacher Talks.

Reviewing the Teacher Talks transcripts, I found that there was a lot of data supporting the student teachers' perceived benefits of Teacher Talks. On March 23rd, the Teacher Talks conversation began by Jenni asking, "I know we're not supposed to punish here, but is there any way we can do some kind of punishment like they're going to have to experience in kindergarten, instead of us talking to them and then they get to do whatever they want anyway?" Marie responded to the question with an example of how after reminding a child not to push other children, she had the child sit on the bench with her, saying to him, "You need to sit here and calm down a while because you weren't listening." Marie then comments to the group, "It's not really punishment. It was 'If you're going to do this, then there's going to be a consequence.'" Jenni persisted that she felt as if when a child hits another child, "He should have to sit for a while or something." To which Marie replied, "It's not even like 'You're in timeout.' It's like, 'You've lost control. You need to calm down.'"

On March 23rd, Teacher Talks focused on the active boys and their high energy levels. After a lengthy discussion on how to deal with the active boys, the student teachers decided on

multiple approaches: revisiting classroom rules with the children, discussing others ways to deal with anger besides hitting, engaging them in something they are interested in, separating them into two groups, taking them outside to run off energy, pointing out their options when they arrive in the morning, and giving them a sense of purpose and direction.

Marie contrasted this process of talking about the concerns and coming "up with things that we could do" with her experiences at the community-based center where she worked. "There was already some things set up, options and things like that," she described and then continued, "Here there wasn't that already set up, and we kind of had to work to create that." However, she says, "I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing because you've got to learn about what's going to work and how you go about creating something like that."

*Becoming Comfortable With Guidance Techniques*

The student teachers discussed guidance techniques during Teacher Talks and also tried to apply these techniques in the classroom. I have elected to list these various techniques in a table (see Table I) rather than discuss each individual technique at length. In the table, I listed the guidance techniques that the student teachers identified using or that, through the filed notes, I identified the student teachers using. I then listed the names of each student teacher identified as using that technique. Upon reviewing this list during member checks, Kayla responded, "I hope I used more of those, but I just can't remember an example." McKenzie reviewed this list and reported feeling as if it underestimated the number of teachers who used many of these techniques throughout the year. This is a fair critique, as I compiled this data based on the field recordings and end-of-year interviews. Certainly, a much better reporting could have been done if I had specifically observed for and recorded data on a similar table throughout the data collection process. Having not done this, I relied on self-report or my own records.

I purposely chose not to go into detail on how the student teachers implemented each of these guidance techniques. I did not feel as if this would help answer *how* the student teachers negotiated constructive guidance. This table does, however, show that the student teachers *did* provide constructive guidance to the children.

Table I: Constructive Guidance Techniques Used By The Student Teachers

| Technique | Student Teacher(s) Who Discussed or Used This Technique |
|---|---|
| Monitoring/Watching All The Children | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, Kayla, Laura, Marie, McKenzie |
| Anticipating Potential Problems and Circumventing Them | Chelsea, Emma, Kayla, Laura, Marie, McKenzie |
| Giving Positive Attention | Amanda, Kayla, Laura, Marie, McKenzie |
| Staying Physically Close to A Child or Situation that May Get Out of Hand | Amanda, Chelsea, Jenni, Kayla, Laura |
| Touching a Child on the Back or Shoulders to Calm or Direct Him/Her | Jenni |
| Giving Specific Directions | Marie, McKenzie |
| Using a Stern "Teacher" Voice | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, Kayla, Laura, McKenzie |
| Talking with the Child/Children | Chelsea, Jenni, Kayla, McKenzie |
| Reasoning with the Child | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, McKenzie |
| Providing One-on-One Support | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, Kayla, Laura, Marie, McKenzie |
| Saying "Look Me In The Eye." | Chelsea, Kayla |
| Using Natural or Logical Consequences | Jenni, Laura, Marie, McKenzie |
| Separating the Children | Amanda, Chelsea, McKenzie |
| Stopping Rough Play | Chelsea, McKenzie |
| Redirecting Children to Safe Alternatives | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, Jenni, McKenzie |
| Taking A Break to "Calm Down" | Amanda, Emma, McKenzie |
| Resolving/Mediating Conflict | Amanda, Chelsea, Emma, McKenzie |
| Ignoring Tantrums | Jenni |
| Holding Children While Talking to Them About The Concern | Chelsea, Marie |
| Physically Restraining Child for Child's or Other's Safety | Emma, Jenni, Kayla |
| Using a Behavior Management Plan | Amanda, Jenni, McKenzie |

*Figuring Out Why the Children Are Misbehaving*

One aspect of constructive guidance is figuring out why a child is behaving in particular ways. Once this is discerned, the root cause of the behavior can be addressed, alleviating the problem. In time, the student teachers became more competent at observing for, analyzing, and interpreting possible reasons for the children's behavior.

*Boredom*

"Boredom equals an energy drive and running around and voices getting higher," said Jenni, thus, when she was lead teaching, Jenni tried to come up with "ways to keep them interested so they don't get bored." For instance, one day the children and teachers in the classroom had completed clean-up and were waiting for the other children and myself to return from an intergenerational activity (IG) with their older adult neighbors from Adult Day Services. Usually, the children returned from IG in time to assist with clean-up. Jenni wanted to wait on the children prior to having snack, so she taught the other children how to do the YMCA song and hand motions. She also brought out Bingo and other materials since, on that day, the IG activity lasted considerably longer than usual.

The student teachers especially noted that the group of active boys were prone to boredom. Marie arrived each day at 9:00 am. During Teacher Talks one day she noted that as soon as she walked in, she could tell that the boys were bored and, thus, were doing whatever they wanted. When bored, the boys had a tendency to "tease the girls in some way which either results in them screaming to the boys to not do it anymore or them crying," said Jenni. Amanda said, "especially [with] the active boys, you can tell once they get bored with something and they need to go do something else, and I would try to help transition that a lot when I was here." Amanda, Jenni, Laura, and Marie each responded to the active boys' high energy level by taking

them outside to "run off some energy." At times, the student teachers allowed the children to do whatever they wanted on the playground. At other times, the student teachers, especially Laura, would organize freeze tag or other active games.

*Feeding Off Each Other*

The oldest boy in the class, Mark, was a strong leader and the other boys tended to look up to him. Therefore, if he declared, "I'm bored," several of the other boys would say the same thing, even if they seemed fine before this. This social phenomenon frustrated some of the student teachers. In talking about how to deal with this phenomenon, during Teacher Talks, the student teachers decided to do whatever they could to insure that Mark was not bored.

When Mark was not present (something that happened frequently during second semester), another boy was always ready to take on the leadership role. Kayla reflected,

> There were a few designated leaders in the class and what they did was what the
>
> others did. …whatever activity they decided on or they came up with was what
>
> everyone tended to go off of. It was really interesting to me because I never…I
>
> guess I knew that's what would happen but had never really seen it in action.

Jenni also noted the way that this group of children could "get each other going."

Chelsea and Jenni both expressed frustration with the way some parents tended to blame Mark for their child's misbehavior. Jenni explained,

> He's the ringleader but it's not just him. It's all of them together. We have those
>
> problems even when he's not here but the parents don't see that so they have this
>
> bad interpretation of Mark…They just don't have the whole story about Mark.

During a Teacher Talks conversation, it became clear that the student teachers were frustrated, and yet somewhat amused. One of the parents had a tendency to blame Mark for her son's

misbehavior. The student teachers discussed the fact that her son and Mark would be at different schools the following year. Laura stated, "she can't blame it on him anymore, that's for sure," McKenzie replied, "she'll find another one!" These comments met with loud laughter from the other student teachers. Knowing that some parents felt this way about Mark seemed to motivate the student teachers to advocate for this child.

*Basing the Curriculum On the Children's Interest Engages Them*

When she was the lead teacher, Amanda described herself as monitoring the classroom "to make sure the children were always engaged in something." When she began to notice that the children were losing engagement in an activity, she reported thinking, "What else can I pull out? What else could I do to make them be more engaged?" Kayla also reported that, "On the weeks I was lead teacher, I had to make sure that things were going well and they were interested and I didn't need to change anything." Chelsea had a similar experience. She watched the children to decide when she needed to "implement something if it seemed like the kids were getting a little crazy or restless." During group times, Amanda would focus on what she could do to "help them be more interactive." She had learned through observing other Maroon Room teachers that if group times were interactive, the children remained more engaged and they were more likely to stay at group meetings. When planning, Amanda "tried to create things that [she] knew they would be interested in." Kayla also used this method. Kayla reported that she valued being able to "manipulate [her] plans to fit what the children want because if they're not interested in it, they're not going to do it in the first place." She recalled her own childhood experiences when:

Teachers would say over and over to specific children, 'sit back down at your desk, do

this, do that.' But they weren't going to because they weren't interested in that. They do

not want to, so you aren't going to make them.

In her interview, Jenni also discussed that when she developed her teaching plans, it was

important to take the children's interests into account. Reflecting on the first time she planned

and served as the lead teacher, Jenni reported, "it was just the lesson plans and that's all I had in

mind. I didn't have anything else planned, other than go outside." But she says, "after that it got

a lot better. I started adjusting. I had more of a backup plan." During Teacher Talks and other

conversations among the student teachers, they discussed developing backup plans each day in

case the primary plans for the day did not sustain the children's interest.

Teacher Talks on March 23rd served as a forum for discussing and making plans for

addressing how to better meet the needs of the active boys within the curriculum. Laura began by

asking, "Is what we're planning not really challenging enough?" This question was prompted by

her reflection on the events of the morning. She explained that the boys were running around the

classroom but that when Marie arrived, Marie got out the Legos and took that group of children

into the hallway. Marie commented that, once engaged with the Legos, "they were still energetic

but they weren't uncontrollable. They weren't out of control. They were interested in what they

were doing." Marie suggested giving the children a choice of what they could do. She also noted

that it was important to encourage the children to put something not in use away before getting

out something new in its place. This way the classroom could remain orderly and the children

would be more likely to clean up one activity in order to get out another activity they wanted.

The student teachers brainstormed ways to effectively plan for these kinesthetic learners. Noting

their need for space, one options discussed was to use the Lab School hallways, use the studio, or

go on walks within the building. These areas provided more room to move or run. Another idea that was shared was to include more kinesthetic activities, like building, jumping, and running. Layla challenged the student teachers to think about how to modify freeze tag or relay races to incorporate math, literacy, or other academic content.

On March 30th at Teacher Talks, the student teachers and I developed a web of ideas related to movement, the topic of study at that time. We discussed ways to explore this topic kinesthetically. In reviewing the student teachers' plans and reflections for the final month of Lab School, I found that their plans were driven by this web of ideas and by the decisions made in Teacher Talks regarding how to meet these children's kinesthetic needs. Overall the children were engaged with the planned set-ups, resulting in a decrease in behavioral concerns.

The student teachers also began to recognize the learning opportunities within the children's "misbehavior." On March 31st, in response to George dropping a Mickey Mouse off the loft, Emma turned the activity into a gravity experiment, insuring that other children were a safe distance from the object landing area. She and George compared how fast the Mickey Mouse fell in relation to other objects. Emma's spontaneous response to a potential misbehavior allowed George to explore the force of gravity. Gravity experiments continued for several weeks. On April 13th, my field notes capture Laura and Jenni encouraging other children to explore the concept of gravity by dropping objects of varying size and weight from the loft. George and Emma's spontaneous exploration resulted in discovering a new way to explore the concept of movement.

The activeness of the boys was, at one time, something that might result in misbehavior. The student teachers, however, learned how to channel that energy and how to recognize the children's behaviors that signaled that it was time for a change. Laura commented, "it's not a bad

thing. They just like to run and they just need to be active." As an example of this, my April 6th field notes capture Marie and Laura responding to the children's need for variety and change. First, they created a hopscotch board on the floor and had the children use tape (a prized commodity in the classroom) to make letters to place in the spaces on the board. After the children made the board and played a few rounds of Hopscotch, they started losing interest. So, Laura suggested they play charades and quietly whispered to George to act like a dinosaur. Once Mark guessed that George was dinosaur, it was Mark's turn. They traded back and forth for several rounds, but ran out of ideas of what to act out. Laura then "decided to take them outside and play freeze tag." In addition to Mark and George, several other children took advantage of the chance to go outside and play a game. During freeze tag, Laura worked to build a sense of group cohesion and community, calling all of the children back to the game circle to decide on a new person to be "it" so that all the children could have a turn. "Since we tried to make it a lot more focused on their interests, it seems like a lot more students were involved," reflected Chelsea in her end of year interview.

McKenzie worried that because some of the children were so active, they were missing out on literacy. "I think a lot of it with the boys is that, a lot of times, we'll have painting activities and literacy activities and they don't want to have anything to do with those activities," she said. While McKenzie recognized that the sit-down art and literacy plans they had made didn't engage this set of children, she expressed concern, saying "what are they going to do when they get to kindergarten and they have to participate in art projects and that kind of stuff?" Meeting the children's kinesthetic needs while focusing on developing literacy skills was a challenge McKenzie met later in the semester. For most of the year, George had not shown an interest in the alphabet. During March, he began practicing writing the letters in his name. Since

many of the children were beginning to write and beginning to match letters with the sounds they made, the student teachers and I decided to see if the children would make a "letter quilt." George enjoyed playing a skateboarding video game at home. In this game, George's character would perform certain skateboarding tricks, earning a letter in the word "skate" for each well-performed trick. George liked to imitate these tricks in the classroom. After acknowledging George's performance of some skateboarding moves, McKenzie asked George if he knew the letters in the word "skate." He said it started with the squiggly letter, the S. She then suggested that he write the letter "S" on a piece of construction paper and draw a skateboard near it. George willingly did this. He got excited when McKenzie placed tape on the back of his "quilt block" and encouraged him to replace his S with the teacher-made S on the "letter quilt door." George continued making letter quilt squares and taping them to the door for another fifteen minutes or more. While he worked, McKenzie allowed him to stand, to place his own squares on the "letter quilt," and to act out skateboarding moves when he felt the need to do so. She also gave him consistent positive encouragement which served to keep him engaged. In this scenario, the role of guidance was integral to helping George develop increased literacy awareness and the fine motor skills used in handwriting. By respecting his need to move around and be active, McKenzie had found a way to teach George the skills she was afraid he was not learning.

*Emotionally Supporting One Another*

The student teachers benefited from the support of their peers. Jenni recalled conversations with Emma and Marie about "what we could do to keep the active boys involved [and] to get the girls more involved with the boys so there wasn't such a separation." In the classroom, when Jenni was stuck and needed to make a quick decision she would go to Marie for advice. When she wanted to bounce ideas back and forth, she would speak with Chelsea. One

day, when the active boys were running laps around the classroom and Laura was at a loss of what to do, she breathed a sigh of relief when she saw Marie enter the classroom. "I was never in my life so glad to see [Marie]," she reported. Marie stated, "I think it was easier for me to come into the room [and handle the situation] because you were already high strung because you were there. And when I came in, it was easier for me to say 'okay, let's do this'." As Marie further reflected during her member check on her relationships with the other student teachers, she shared,

> I felt that I could look to any of the other student teachers for advice or assistance and they would help. If I needed an idea of an activity to do or how to schedule something, the student teachers were always willing to help. That made me feel less like I was out there by myself. It also made things run smoother to have the input of others.

Amanda gained emotional support from her fellow student teachers in much the same was as Marie did. Amanda shared,

> It was really nice when I didn't know how to deal with the situation, that I could get other people's opinions about it. It made me feel that I wasn't alone with the problem and I wasn't the only one experiencing a problem, but everyone was experiencing it. It was really comforting to know that we weren't the only one having a problem or challenge with that particular situation in the classroom.

As Kayla reflected on the year, she shared that she had learned a lot from Emma because "some of the things she was thinking and feeling, I was thinking and feeling, too, but I never expressed them like she did…I learned a lot from her because she was open about what she thought. " One day, when Kayla reported feeling, "I'm too stern," McKenzie and Marie reassured her that how she handled the incident that made her feel stern was how they would

have handled it too. Emma appreciated that in the classroom, "If you get frustrated, you can always say, 'please relieve me for a little while,' and you can stand back or do something else for a little while." In fact, in my field notes, I recorded a situation in which Kayla had become frustrated and asked Emma to relieve her.

Those who struggled or even disagreed with some aspect of the Lab School's guidance philosophy or with how this philosophy was being implemented in the Maroon room also provided emotional support to each other. For instance, Jenni found support in her view that Lab School was too lenient on the children in the form of McKenzie. Jenni reflected, "it really helped that McKenzie thought the same as me. That I wasn't the only one."

*Observing How Others Handle Situations*

Observing how other classroom teachers handled situations helped the student teachers learn ways that they too could work with the children. Amanda "looked to [Laura] a lot" for her ability to "work with the children to keep them involved…and to have everybody's attention. Even if she's not lead teacher and she sees things are getting out-of-control, she'll get the group's attention." Amanda also observed how during group time Bill (a graduate student serving as a classroom teacher) "could engage all the children in the story. …The way he animated every story, it just shows, if you make it interesting for the kids, they'll sit there and they'll listen. And seeing him do that made me realize that." Chelsea particularly watched how other teachers worked with one child whose behavior she found challenging, "seeing how maybe he responds or how he responds to the other teachers and who he responds to more." These observations resulted in her conclusion that, "usually if he got some kind of attention, he would be better." Emma attributes observing the other student teachers with helping her develop a more realistic picture of classroom life. She stated,

Another thing that helped a lot was seeing things that panicked me did not necessarily

phase the other teachers and then looking back at myself and thinking 'Why did I panic at

that moment?' Maybe next time, if I just take a step back, I won't see it as the crisis that I

envisioned in my head.

*Observing the Head Teacher and Supervising Teacher*

How Layla and I did things in the classroom seemed to influence the student teachers'

actions. They reported observing us as a means of figuring out what they could or should be

doing in the classroom. More specifically, they observed how we interacted with the children to

help them make decisions about how they could interact with the children. During her end-of-

year interview, Amanda reflected,

Watching you helped me learn how to deal with children. The way you solved the

conflict, I would try to apply that myself, because it worked well with the children. A lot

of times I was at a loss for what to do, so it really helped watching you and the way you

interacted with the children to help me learn how to deal with different situations.

McKenzie also observed how I talked quietly with the children about their behaviors. She said,

"you were painting a different picture for them. I tried to model after that in the classroom."

From observing Layla, McKenzie says she learned "to really express my interest in  [the

children] more, to really share in their development, to get down on their level with them."

Emma stated that watching Layla "helped me clarify my roles toward the beginning when I

wasn't sure of my roles in the classroom." Chelsea used her observations of how I would handle

situations to guide her own actions in the classroom. She reflected, "trying to see what you did

and just trying to see how you acted towards them, too, takes a lot into how I was interacting

with the kids and where I could draw the line with some of them." Jenni shared,

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I remember watching how you behaved around the children – when they were

misbehaving and when they weren't. I also observed how quickly you could come up

with an activity to involve the children off the top of your head. It seemed so easy for

you. … Like how children mimic adults, I found myself mimic some of the things that

you did.

<center>*Getting Support from the Head Teacher and Supervising Teacher*</center>

The student teachers reported being able to talk with and get assistance from Layla and I.

Amanda stated, "I felt that if I was ever having a problem with a situation, I could come to you

and you would know what to do. If I was in a situation, I could just look at you like, 'please help

me right now." Jenni reflected, "when the boys were getting wild, 'Jenni what can they do now?'

you'd keep telling me, which is good because it made me think of something for them to do."

"Since you both have been here in the more leader role, it helped to hear your point of

view," explained Chelsea as she reflected on how both Layla and I had influenced her. She

continued,

Layla was very open to giving suggestions. If you need help, she would say, 'Can I help

you?' or 'Maybe you could do this.' I think just making you feel comfortable in the room.

Just helping the teachers and being a guide of what we could do with them.

In fact, my field notes from one of Chelsea's lead teaching days show that as Chelsea was trying

to determine how to engage those children who had finished with snack while the others were

eating, Layla suggested that Chelsea play a particular song that the children requested earlier in

the day.

In addition to the immediate assistance Layla and I offered in the classroom, we were

also able to provide assistance outside of the actual class time. One day, shortly after mid-

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semester, Jenni and I talked about the guidance techniques she could use. I felt as if I needed to reassure her that she could set limits, redirect, and apply logical consequences. We further spoke about strategies she could use with specific children. I asked her about that conversation in her end-or-year interview. "I'm glad we talked. I liked having your feedback that day and each day I was here," Jenni replied. "Just talking about it, I knew, it was okay to talk more stern to [the active boys]." During her end-of-year interview, Emma shared, "We could talk to you about our frustrations and everything. That was really good in our classroom."

<div align="center">Summarizing</div>

In summary, as the student teachers began adjusting to the Maroon Room, they were able to move beyond their initial reactions. They began to understand the importance of developing personal relationships with each child, using what they knew about the child to encourage the child's learning and guide them toward appropriate classroom behaviors. Further, the student teachers began to observe at a deeper level. They paid attention to the children's social dynamics and noted how these dynamics impacted their curriculum plans. They noticed how boredom increased misbehavior and how new learning activities could be introduced to reduce or eliminate boredom. The student teachers learned that if they planned the curriculum based on the children's interests and learning preferences, they could effectively engage the children, reducing incidents of misbehavior. Through conversation, observation, and trial-and-error, the student teachers also learned a variety of prevention and intervention techniques that seemed to work well with the Maroon Room children.

Further, the student teachers acknowledged the affective side of teaching and guiding young children. For instance, they learned not to take children's statements or actions personally. This was especially helpful in incidents where a child said or did something that could be

misconstrued as rejection or defiance. Gaining emotional support and tangible assistance from

colleagues and supervisors also assisted the student teachers in negotiating constructive

guidance.

# CHAPTER SIX: REFLECTING ON THE YEAR

This chapter is the last of three chapters capturing a group of student teachers' experiences negotiating constructive guidance in an inquiry-based preschool classroom. This chapter explores the student teachers' end-of-year reflections on the Lab School's Maroon Room and their experiences with guidance, discipline, and classroom management in this room.

## "Today Has Been Really Calm."

During the last few weeks of second semester, many of the student teachers and I began commenting that "today has been really calm." Our immediate response to this seemingly sudden calmness was to note which child or children were absent. We had noticed earlier in the semester that the classroom seemed to be calmer on the days that several of the active boys were not present. Yet this explanation could not account fully for the sense of calmness that permeated the classroom near the end of the year. Even on days in which most of the children were present, the classroom had a feeling of calmness. All of the children were attending group time. The children who were prone to emotional breakdowns were getting the positive support and attention they needed, lessening the frequency and intensity of these breakdowns. Further, the student teachers had established appropriate physical outlets for certain high energy children within the daily schedule and the curriculum. The attention these student teachers had given throughout second semester to meeting the children's varying needs and to shaping the children's group time behaviors resulted in the feeling that the classroom was "calm." Through acknowledging the children's needs and interests, shaping the curriculum to focus on the children's interests while meeting the children's individual learning preferences, and providing person-specific guidance, the student teachers had established a caring community of learners.

As the year drew to a close, I interviewed each student teacher. I asked each of them to share their current views on guidance and discipline at the Lab School. In this early childhood classroom, the student teachers tended to have one of two reactions toward the Lab School's use of constructive guidance. Some student teachers continued to be dissatisfied with aspects of the way the constructive guidance policy was implemented in the Maroon Room. Other student teachers spoke of appreciating constructive guidance techniques.

### But How Does This Apply To A Public School Classroom?

Several of the student teachers continual raised the question of how they could replicate these guidance techniques when they will be teaching in the public schools. Since most of what they recalled about the discipline strategies used in public schools tended to be more punitive, some of these teachers felt that in their own public school classroom they would need to use techniques similar to those they experienced as a child. Most student teachers believed that, for the most part, they could replicate the guidance techniques they had been using in the Maroon Room. However, some of the student teachers planned to modify or simply not adopt certain aspects of the structure of the Maroon room.

With the Lab School's teaching and guidance philosophy squarely grounded in the social constructivist perspective, some of the student teachers felt restricted from being able to implement techniques or structures they perceived as necessary in public school classrooms. For instance, McKenzie stated that she was never fully comfortable in the Maroon Room "because some of my beliefs are different than the Lab School and how I want my own classroom to look like (i.e. group time, etc.) [is different than how the Maroon Room was]."

*My Classroom Will Have More Structure*

During March and April, Teacher Talks still involved conversations about whether all children must attend group time each day. Laura, McKenzie, and Jenni were adamant that this should be a mandate. However, they compromised (what else could they do?) in allowing the children to attend group time or draw at the table. During member checks, McKenzie shared that "at the end of the year and still to this date, I honestly think that the Lab School overall is still very chaotic with very little structure." Yet, she further reported that she felt as if my leaving the classroom more frequently during second semester and my giving over responsibility for classroom management to the student teachers allowed her the freedom she needed in order to create more structure.

Interestingly, McKenzie and Laura reported that by the end of the year they did not feel they were restricted from using any guidance methods they would have wanted to use. However, regardless of not feeling restricted in terms of guidance techniques they could use, McKenzie and Kayla reported that it was difficult to lead group time when some of the children would choose not to attend. As lead teachers, they felt responsible to monitor what those children who were not attending group time were doing to insure that they were safe. McKenzie reported that having to split her attention in this way, "is not good management of the classroom, especially if there is only one teacher for the number of children." McKenzie's comment about one teacher suggested that she was trying to imagine replicating the Lab School's policy of not requiring children to attend group meetings. This prompted me to ask her what her plans were for handling group meetings in her future classroom. She replied, "I do plan on having all of my kids sit with me at group time. Of course there are always exceptions, like if a kid is having a bad day and needs some alone time, but generally I will expect them all to sit with me."  Marie echoed

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McKenzie's concerns, saying, "it is important that the kids have the structure needed to prepare them for kindergarten. If we let them have too much freedom, we're doing them an injustice because they're in for a rude awakening in school."

Chelsea was also concerned about being able to effectively monitor the children. Chelsea reported wanting "to set up more limitations for [the children]," possibly by having "more similar activities." She explained that limiting the number of choices the children had would have allowed her to better monitor all the children. Further, she stated that in having fewer activities, "I'd be teaching them more." Chelsea's definition of teaching seems to involve direct instruction or interaction rather than crafting an environment in which the children could learn through a combination of social interactions with peers, with herself as teacher, and with the materials she chooses to make available to her students. This ability to monitor the entire class, insure that the children are engaged in learning, and provide direct instruction or scaffolding to one of the groups is also a concern that Kayla shared. Kayla wondered how she could monitor small groups of children while she was engaged with one group, furthering their investigation. Thus, while Kayla wanted to use cooperative learning groups, inquiry-based methods, and projects in her classroom, she was still trying to figure out how as the only teacher in the room, she could insure that all the children were engaged safely. Notably absent from Chelsea and Kayla's comments was how they might set up the classroom environment in such a way as to encourage children to learn on their own by scaffolding one another and by using the materials the teacher makes available in the classroom.

*My Classroom Will Have Clearly Defined, Consistently Enforced Rules*

Emma and McKenzie both discussed wanting the rules to be clearly defined. McKenzie felt that some classroom rules remained vague (for example, show respect for yourself and

others) or were inconsistently enforced by the classroom teachers. Perhaps part of the inconsistency in enforcement related to the seeming vagueness of the rule. Emma felt as if, by the time I discussed classroom rules with the children, during the first semester, some of the children "already established, 'there aren't rules.'" Thus, she says she would set up the rules at the very beginning of the year. In hindsight, I agree with Emma's criticism that the children, other teachers, and I did not establish the classroom rules right away. Most of the children had previous Lab School experience and had a general understanding of the expectations. I sent a note home to parents at the end of the first week in which I shared that the main classroom rules were to "respect yourself, each other, and the environment," "be safe," and "have fun." I can only vaguely recall how I discussed these rules with the children. What I do remember is that I discussed them only once or twice at the beginning. Some of the first semester classroom challenges may have been eased if I had been more proactive in clarifying the behaviors that broke the rules (e.g. those behaviors that did not show respect for self, others, and the classroom materials, those that were unsafe, or those that limited their own or others' fun) at the outset. I did revisit the rules with the children later in Fall semester. This is when Emma recalled my introducing the rules to them. Perhaps, she recalled this time as the introduction because it was the first time she had heard concrete examples of what it meant to respect yourself, respect others, respect the environment, or be safe.

I Won't Be Allowed To Do This in Public School!

McKenzie, Laura, and Jenni appeared to struggle with the differences between what they perceived as appropriate practice in the public school setting and what they were expected to do at the Lab School classroom. For McKenzie, this primarily centered around her belief that in the public school, children would not have as much freedom as they were given at the Lab School.

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She, like other teachers, worried that this freedom was ill-preparing the children for the expectations of Kindergarten. During her member check, McKenzie said, "In my opinion, the Lab School allows too much freedom. In the Kindergarten classrooms that these children were going to be entering, and in society itself, there are boundaries, rules, and consequences for breaking those rules. I still think that it should not be a choice for a child not to come and sit during group time, especially when this was an everyday occurrence."

Most notably, Jenni felt as if the guidance methods she was expected to use at the Lab School were contrary to the discipline methods she would be expected to use in public schools. In her end of year interview, Jenni reported, "The biggest thing the whole semester was knowing I needed to follow the Lab School policies rather than the Blacksburg public school policies." In the Lab School, Jenni reported that she wanted to use consequences for continued misbehavior so the children know "they can't get away with stuff" but she felt she was not allowed to use this technique. Her preferred consequence would be a "time out for the kids to just sit down and see everybody else doing the activity so they can realize, 'Hey, if I keep myself under control, I can be over there with them to play and do their activity." While Jenni acknowledged that all her coursework said timeout was "bad," she articulated a clear plan in which there would be a specific area of the room reserved for children who were in time-out, that time-out would last for five minutes, and that she would have a "three strikes and you're in time-out" system in which children would receive verbal warnings prior to being placed in time-out. Jenni reported that the time-out method would be her primary consequence for any type of misbehavior, including intentional aggression, emotional breakdowns, and energetic outbursts like running around the classroom.

Listening to Jenni talk about her experiences with constructive guidance might provide some clues as to why she would prefer time-out. Throughout the year, Jenni reported difficulty getting the children to listen to her. While we had talked about using a stern voice during Teacher Talks, she was still uncomfortable using an "I mean business" tone, since she didn't feel as if there were any consequence behind what she said to "let the kids know I was serious." During member checks, she also admitted "I didn't feel like a teacher and wasn't comfortable in my surroundings." Falling back on the discipline methods she experienced in school or electing to provide limited guidance was much more comfortable than venturing fully into the seemingly unchartered territory of constructive guidance. While Jenni did use constructive guidance in the Maroon room, she did not feel that what she was doing at the Lab School could be transferred to her public school classroom. She simply did not believe that there were public school teachers who used most of these guidance strategies. It may well be that if these techniques became more common in the school system. Jenni would become more comfortable implementing them in her own classroom.

*Coming to Value Constructive Guidance*

While some student teachers still struggled with certain aspects of constructive guidance as it was implemented in the Maroon Room, other student teachers generally had positive things to say about it. Amanda, who was often frustrated with the Lab School at the beginning of the year, reported, "but into the second semester and end of the year, I really enjoyed coming to the Lab School." She further commented, "[this classroom] gave me a chance to interact more with the kids…and talk with them about what they're doing." This experience stands in stark contrast to her initial definition of the teacher as being a monitor who simply watches the children to make sure they are on task. It appears that Amanda adjusted well to the Lab School philosophy

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after becoming more comfortable with it. Emma, too, seems to have adjusted well. She reports that while she felt overwhelmed in the classroom during Fall semester and the beginning of Spring semester, "towards the end, I felt pretty confident." Despite Kayla's initial reactions and her uncertainty about how well she could transfer some of the ideas she learned, Kayla also adjusted well. In her end-of-year interview, she reported, "I like the way discipline was handled here. It just took time to figure out what it was." She further explained, "I've never been in a structure like this, so it was a good experience. I think that, for the most part, it was very pleasant, very positive."

During her end of the year interview, Marie did not share a sense of how she felt at the end of her year-long practicum experience. However, she elected to share the following statement as part of her member check. It is worth noting that this statement was given one-year after her Lab School experience. Marie will begin her official student teaching placements, as part of her Masters degree, this Fall.

A lot of the views about constructive guidance and discipline not being useful in public schools has to do with your experience with seeing it done. I think that some of the aspects of lab school and the constructive guidance techniques could definitely be used in classrooms. However, some of the things, such as taking children out of the classroom to alleviate problems and do other activities may not really be feasible in a school setting. I think that all of our field experiences are giving us insights into the different ways that things are done in classrooms nowadays. Once we realize that things can effectively be done differently than when we were in school, we can value constructive guidance and discipline. I kind of feel that lab school and other experiences actually help us to create

and mold our own personal style of teaching that allows us to use what we like and see

that works and to disregard what we disagree with and feel that doesn't work.

## Summarizing

As the student teachers reflected on their year at the Lab School, many seemed to be

critically analyzing how the Maroon Room functioned. They further considered the feasibility of

implementing these same discipline and management techniques in their own classrooms. Some

of the student teachers' perceptions of what teaching in public school will be like presented

barriers. They had difficulty imagining being able to use some of these techniques within their

own classrooms. Still, they often expressed how they would modify some of the constructive

guidance strategies for use in their own classrooms. Others felt as if, for the most part, the

guidance strategies used in the Maroon Room could be useful in other school setting, expressing

satisfaction with the Lab School's philosophy on constructive guidance.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

In this chapter, I discuss a number of possible ways to interpret this data, relating the student teachers' experiences and perceptions to research literature on student teaching. On occasion, I chose to use quotes from student teachers to illustrate points in this discussion. I also share my own personal reactions as both the supervising teacher for these students and as the researcher. In writing this part of the research, I am drawn back to my experience of navigating the New River that I wrote in the Prologue. The metaphor of "navigating the river" seems capture the essence of the shared journey the student teachers and I took in the Maroon Room.

Navigating the River: Negotiating Constructive Guidance

The student teachers' experiences in the Maroon Room remind me of navigating the river. Just as novice paddlers learn to perceive the ins and outs of the river after repeated trips, the student teachers became more able to perceive and negotiate the ins and outs of the classroom with time and practice.

The individual riding in the back of the canoe has the most control over the direction the canoe travels. One of their strokes is equal to three strokes of the person sitting in the front of the canoe. This dynamic, interaction can be also be discerned in the classroom. During the first semester, Layla and I rode in the back of the canoe, steering the canoe around rocks and debris and through the rapids. As the persons in the back, we had more control over the direction the canoe would travel. The student teachers assisted us in going that direction. However, during the second semester, we switched seats. The student teachers now had more control over which way the life of the classroom would travel down the river. They were the lead teachers. Layla and I were supporting them from the front of the boat.  However, it takes time to learn how to steer

and navigate the canoe. If the person in back tries to play a supporting role rather than to be in charge of determining which direction to go, and to steer the boat in that direction, the trip is much more difficult. The individual in the front has to work three times as hard to get the boat to go the way they wanted, than if the person in the back would have steered the boat that direction. And if the person in the front does not steer the canoe, it will go off-course. Much of the frustration that occurred in the classroom during the second semester may have been the result of going off-course as the student teachers learned to steer the canoe and navigate the water.

As assistant teachers, they had been the scouts, pointing out potential difficulties and helping to navigate minor areas of concern. Together, the person in the front and the one in the back of the canoe negotiated major classroom concerns. Yet, until someone has ridden in the back of the canoe a time or two and experiments with that role, this novice navigator has much difficulty negotiating the river. This seems to have been the student teachers' experience as they learned to negotiate constructive guidance. Many of them reported that it took one or two experiences of being the lead teacher before they felt effective in that role. With practice, the student teachers were able to effectively negotiate constructive guidance, providing a sense of order and structure to the classroom and guiding each child individually. Similarly, with time, paddlers become more capable of navigating the river.

This navigational process was initially challenging because many of the student teachers had not had prior experience in a classroom setting that is similar to that at the Lab School. Being used to a different type of current, the student teachers had to first adjust to this new classroom current. They had to learn navigational techniques that are useful in this new setting, as some of the techniques they had observed, used and/or relied on in the past would not serve them well in this environment. In the process of navigating the classroom river, the student

teachers learned several techniques that served them well as they negotiated constructive

guidance. Just as navigating the river is learned in practice,

> Working well with a group of youngsters is something learned in practice. And it is best
>
> learned not as a set of techniques to shape behavior without regard to persons or values,
>
> but while attempting to accomplish larger goals and purposes. This means focusing on
>
> three essentials: youngsters (Are they active? Are they pursuing questions and concerns
>
> of importance to them and us?); the environment (Is it appropriate? Does it offer
>
> sufficient challenge? Are there multiple opportunities to succeed?); and curriculum (Is it
>
> engaging? Does it connect the known to the unknown?). While this will not yield instant
>
> "results," it will allow for the emergence of more authentic and productive teachers and
>
> teaching relationships, and questions of group coherence and standards of behavior can
>
> then be worked out in context (Ayers, 1993, pp 11-12).

Through navigating the life of the classroom, the student teachers learned that guidance

was a process of negotiation between teachers and children. The student teachers learned to

focus on the children, the environment, and the curriculum. With each aspect, they asked

questions, listened to and observed the children. They began to make decisions that they thought

would best suit the needs of the individual child and whole class at that point in time. Then, that

took action. They also learned to listen to themselves and their fellow classroom teachers.

Communication and cooperation were vital as they worked to develop a cohesive classroom

environment, which provided consistency and engagement.

## It's A Phase They're Going Through

Numerous researchers have proposed that student teachers appear to go through a series

of phases in the process of adjusting to life in the classroom. Some of this research is based on

the traditional student teaching experience, while other studies have been based on practicum placements like the one at the Lab School. Because Caruso's phases of student teaching (1977, 2000) dealt most directly with the emotional reactions student teachers tend to have, this model effectively captured the experiences of the student teachers in the present study. The Maroon Room student teachers traversed through each of Caruso's six phases – anxiety/euphoria, confusion/clarity, competency/inadequacy, new awareness/renewed doubts, more confidence/greater inadequacy, loss/relief. As Caruso suggests, these student teachers returned to earlier phases when changes occurred in their roles and responsibilities. Specifically, once the student teachers took over the lead teacher role, issues I thought had been effectively addressed during Fall semester reappeared. Borich (1999) suggested that when teachers' responsibilities change, they are more likely to once again become focused on concerns for self, such as their ability to control the class. While Borich based his discussion on Fuller's (1969) concern theory, his idea also fits with Caruso's emotional phases of student teaching in that Caruso's earlier phases tend to deal with a focus on self more than a focus on the classroom and children. The first time the student teachers traversed through the phases, they were getting an overall sense of the classroom, their roles in the classroom, and how to work with individual children. During the second semester, the student teachers were expected to serve as lead teachers. This requirement likely created uncertainty and anxiety because of the greater responsibility that being the "lead" teacher implies. Thus, the student teachers once again re-experienced the phases they had already completed.

Within my field notes, I document the frustration and exacerbation I felt when student teachers who seemed to so capably handle classroom concerns during the later part of Fall Semester expressed uncertainty in how to deal with similar classroom concerns once they

became "the lead teacher." However, during their interviews and member checks, the student teachers clearly pointed out that these two roles were quite different, each requiring its own adjustment period. Reflecting on this, in light of my data analysis, I realize that I had failed to recognize the different skill set that was required for being "lead teacher" than for being an "assistant teacher."

Caruso (1977, 2000) states that student teachers experience anxiety as they anticipate their practicum experience. The student teachers in this study expressed anxiety initially over not really knowing what my expectations of them would be and how the coursework would intersect with what they did in the classroom. During Spring Semester, anxiety arose again as they anticipated taking on the role of lead teacher. While Caruso indicates that student teachers often experienced a sense of euphoria at the end of their first day in the classroom, I am not so certain that was the case for these student teachers. Based on their stories, the apparent chaos in the classroom left many confused and simply relieved to be able to put the day behind them. The same sense of relief at having made it through their first lead teaching day seemed to be common. Others, with greater experience around active preschool-aged children, were more satisfied with their first lead teaching experience; however, I sensed that they were still more relieved that euphoric.

The sense of disequilibrium brought on by becoming a teacher in the Maroon Room, and later by becoming "the lead teacher," resulted in these eight student teachers expressing their uncertainty and confusion about their roles and the classroom. Being uncertain about what to do and how to act, several of these student teachers acknowledged having observed and then imitated me. This behavior is indicative of seeking a sense of clarity about role expectations, phase two of Caruso's "Phases in Student Teaching" (1977). Caruso (2000) stated that student

teachers "form impressions and attitudes about teaching that they carry with them throughout the semester" (p. 76). Perhaps this is one reason some of the student teachers maintained a strong commitment to their initial perceptions regarding the lack of an appropriate amount of structure.

During phase three, competence/inadequacy, student teachers begin to feel a sense of competence as they successful interact with individuals and small groups. They may, however, continue to have a sense of inadequacy when it comes to dealing with classroom discipline, particularly discipline issues that challenge the student teachers' sense of authority. Based on my own recollection of events, I sensed that each of the student teachers entered this phase during Fall Semester. The data, however, is less definitive about this. During Spring Semester, there is evidence with the data that some student teachers found great comfort in working with small groups or individual students. The student teachers suggested that they felt a sense of competency when they could work with just a few students at a time. Unfortunately, some of the student teachers sought refuge with certain "calm" or "well-behaved" children. In so doing, they cheated themselves out of the chance to really become competent at handling the more challenging classroom behaviors that they are likely to also confront elsewhere. Nonetheless, by working mostly with the calm or well-behaved children, these student teachers bought themselves a sense of comfort within the Maroon Room.

During phase four "new awareness/renewed doubts," student teachers may openly criticize their cooperating teacher. Within their end of year comments, multiple student teachers openly criticized how the Maroon Room operated. They articulated a plan for doing a better job in their own classrooms, one day. Further, the student teachers demonstrated a deeper awareness of classroom life. During Teacher Talks, student teachers demonstrated the ability to step back

and analyze the classroom dynamics, the children's underlying motives, and their own role in how the classroom functioned.

During phase five, more confidence/greater inadequacy, some student teachers may take on complete classroom responsibility for extended periods of time. McKenzie spoke of cherishing the times when she was lead teacher and I wasn't around, a phenomenon Caruso acknowledges may occur. Within this study, all of the students expressed that they felt more like a teacher during the second semester because they were planning and lead teaching (primary tasks of teachers). Many of the student teachers reported that they had developed confidence in their abilities to appropriately guide individual children, as well as, the entire class; thus, they felt more like teachers. For Emma, this transition occurred mid-semester, after she had been lead teacher twice. For others, that increased confidence came sooner; while, for some, it came later. For Jenni, the transition to feeling like a teacher never fully occurred. She expressed that, yes, she was a teacher, if she had several other teachers in the room with her. Caruso talks about this phase being an exciting time for some student teachers while for others it presents great stress, renewing a sense of inadequacy. Within the classroom, this phase was illustrated by the student teachers' comfort level with providing individual and group guidance. Those individuals who capably and consistently provided constructive guidance had reached a confidence level that assured them it was possible to use these methods in other settings.

The final stage of Caruso's model is loss/relief. This theme was not so evident in the data used in this study on constructive guidance. However, during their end-of-year interviews, conducted after the Lab School had closed for the summer, the student teachers often reflected a sense of loss and of relief.

Blinded by Implicit Beliefs

When the student teachers first entered the Maroon AM classroom, they came with their own prior school experiences that had led them to develop beliefs about teaching and classroom life (Clark, 1988; Hollingsworth, 1989; Lortie, 1975; McLean, 1999). Further, when preservice teachers have had experiences in classrooms that are not well-founded on developmentally appropriate practices, they have more difficulty adjusting to classrooms that are developmentally appropriate (Erwin, 1998). Feinmann-Nemser (2001) refers to preservice teachers' beliefs as blinders because they can prohibit the preservice teachers from seeing aspects of the classroom that function in ways the student does not expect to see.

Some of the student teachers' implicit beliefs were that teachers must be "in control," that the children should respect the teacher just because she is the teacher (or just because she is an adult), that discipline must always involve a "consequence," and that young children could and should sit quietly and listen attentively. Because the student teachers viewed the classroom through these preconceived notions, they may have been blinded (or at least been clouded) to the variety of possible interpretations of what they saw in the Maroon Room. Implicit beliefs "function as barriers to change by limiting the ideas that teacher education students are able and willing to entertain" (Feinmann-Nemser, 2001, p. 1016). For instance, some of the student teachers had difficulty seeing the classroom structure because their notion of structure was tied into mandatory attendance at group meetings, seatwork, or limited interruptions from outside the classroom throughout the day. In the absence of these elements, the classroom appeared to have no structure.

At the Lab School, most of the student teachers did not feel as if they were allowed to use the more authoritarian discipline techniques they often experienced as children. Nor did they feel

comfortable being able to apply the constructive guidance ideas they were exposed to in prior coursework on constructive guidance and discipline. Thus, they had limited experience to draw from when faced with this uncertainty. At first, not knowing what to do, the student teachers felt powerless to do anything.

How is it that each student teacher was able to get beyond their strong initial reactions and see more deeply? Teacher Talks allowed the student teachers to talk about and express their emotional reactions to classroom life. They were also able to hear others' perspectives and feelings; this often helped them to not feel alone. In addition, the student teachers seem to have experienced an internal reflective process. In the chapter, I will share some ideas for addressing the issue of preconceived beliefs and for helping the student teachers reconsider their own implicit beliefs.

### Making the Connection

Student teachers' ability to connect the ideas they were exposed to in their coursework to actual classroom practice has been found to be problematic (Clawson, 1999; Goodlad, 1991; Logue, Eheart, & Leavitt, 1986). Most of the student teachers in this study also found this challenging. Laura was the only student teacher who made the connection between the constructive guidance methods discussed in Principles and the guidance methods used in the Maroon Room. She attributed the course with helping prepare her to apply those methods in the classroom. However, in her member check, Emma reported, "I didn't feel prepared after learning the theories. It would have been more helpful to have seen constructive guidance and discipline in practice before being expected to practice it in my own teaching." Emma's statement suggests that she had difficulty seeing constructive guidance in use during the field experience that goes along with Principles. It may be that the teacher she observed did not use constructive guidance

strategies. Another plausible explanation is that the teacher she observed did use constructive guidance but that, because Emma lacked prior experiences with constructive guidance, she needed additional scaffolding to be able to see in practice what she read about in *Constructive Guidance and Discipline*. Thus, she needed someone to point out to her the various guidance techniques the teacher she was observing used. This explanation is certainly plausible given that Emma talked about how different her parents' discipline style was to the strategies she read about in the text (Fields & Boesser, 2002).

In addition to the student teachers reporting that they did not gain a thorough understanding of constructive guidance from their Principles course, they also pointed out areas in which I and the other course instructors failed to help them learn constructive guidance strategies as well. As instructors, we had held the belief that the student teachers had learned about constructive guidance and discipline in the Principles course and that we did not need to repeat that information. On this basis, we provided limited in-class opportunities to revisit concepts we assumed they had learned in the previous year. This decision seems to have negatively impacted the student teachers' ability to connect theory to practice. "I never ever recall hearing the term constructive guidance at the Lab School or anything related to the Lab School," McKenzie stated during her member check.

As the student teachers and I discussed classroom concerns, we used the terms "discipline" and "management" much more frequently than "guidance." In discussing McKenzie's critique with my co-instructors, the others could not recall specific instances in which we had used the term "constructive guidance" in reference to the Lab School guidance policy. Thus, we failed to make a clear link between their coursework on constructive guidance and what we practiced in the classrooms. McKenzie's statement also suggests that the instructor

of the Principles course may not have fully informed the student teachers that they would be expected to implement constructive guidance techniques at the Lab School the following year.

It is possible that the student teachers thought of "constructive guidance" as primarily meaning "consequences." I suggest this because numerous student teachers spoke about consequences when they talked about their Principles course. Many reported that, through the Principles course, they had learned about how the consequence for misbehavior should relate to the transgression. At the same time, some of the student teachers seemed to have difficulty coming up with logical consequences for a child's action. For instance, a logical consequence of aggression is that the child displaying aggression should take a break to calm down and then discuss his actions with a teacher, problem-solving for how the child might express anger without aggression. While some student teachers accepted this as a consequence, others did not. For instance, Jenni called for a "punishment of some kind." She expressed that she did not feel as if "just talking to them" was working, so she wanted to use a "punishment." She seemed convinced that punishment would result in fewer disciplinary concerns. Jenni's beliefs are in line with previous research which states that some preservice teachers believe that, to be an effective teacher, they must use intimidation and fear of punishment to get students to respect their authority (Brophy, 1988). Because Jenni and other preservice teachers hold this belief, they may be less open to ideas that contradict their authoritarian beliefs (Johnson, 1994). Thus, Jenni's desire for a punishment made it harder for her to see the value of consistently applied logical consequences. At least initially, it appeared that Amanda and others expected a single consequence that they could apply for all behavioral concerns. I am uncertain about the extent to which most of the student teachers were able to reconstruct a definition of consequences that

linked the consequence to the behavior, and further had a goal of helping the child understand what he or she could do differently in the future.

The heavy emphasis on consequences in Principles may have also resulted in a definition of constructive guidance that did not fully take into account the broad range of techniques that the student teachers could use to guide children toward self-discipline. During her member check, McKenzie shared,

I already valued constructive guidance before I entered the Lab School. I think that because I didn't know that this was the policy you all were using, I didn't recognize it or know to look for it within the classroom. However, I don't know that I saw many consequences in the classroom. A lot of it was talking with the kids about their actions.

For McKenzie, it would appear that she gives "consequences" more weight than "talking with the kids about their actions" as she defines "constructive guidance." It further appears from her comments that she was less familiar with many of the techniques advocated by Fields and Boesser (2002) – techniques she and the other student teachers were using regularly in the classroom. If indeed the Principles course emphasized consequences in the way the student teachers reported, they may have had difficulty recognizing constructive guidance in action. Thus, even though the student teachers were constructively guiding the children (as evident in chapter five), they may not have known that they were in fact doing so.

Another issue that arose was that, at times, student teachers would get discouraged because the constructive guidance methods they were using did not produce immediate results. As Jenni stated during member checks,

The books always write as if everything will fall right into place if you do as the book

tells you to. Then you get around the kids and try it and it doesn't work and you begin to

stress and wonder if you should be a teacher.

Books and professors have a way of making things seem easier than they are in reality. These

student teachers needed a chance to reconcile what they had read to what they were experiencing

in the classroom. They needed to process such questions as, "why is he still doing that? I've

talked with him about it a thousand times!" or "Now that natural consequences didn't work, what

do I do?" Van Manen (1991) describes books on teaching as "agogical" in that they do not take

into account the context of teaching. To be effective, decisions related to constructive guidance

are necessarily child and classroom specific. Decisions that are most appropriate in one setting

may not be appropriate in another classroom situation. Trial and error, with reflection, is one

aspect of guiding children effectively; yet, this notion may not have been communicated to the

preservice teachers through their coursework.

## Challenge Of Maintaining Consistency Across Teachers

In a recent survey of child development laboratory school directors, McBride and

Baumgartner (2003) identified that in one child development lab classroom the multiplicity of

student teachers creates constant change for the children. Emma's comments reflect this idea.

She said, "I think we were in the Lab School classroom too few hours and that made it hard for

the kids to see us as their teachers." Thus, one aspect of creating more consistency would be to

increase the number of hours student teachers spend in the classroom. To do this, the overall

number of student teachers would need to be reduced. Fewer teachers for longer hours seems to

be a concept that Marie and McKenzie would support. They both pointed out that it was nearly

impossible to maintain consistency in how the various teachers handled similar situations. For

instance, Marie had been encouraging Evan to "come to group time" (something Evan was not keen on doing). Evan approached Chelsea and began talking to her. Marie thought that Chelsea would also direct Evan to group time, so she joined the children on the rug and began the group meeting. Apparently, Evan had requested the tape and, rather than direct him to group time, Chelsea got him the tape, which he then used to tape chairs together.

Deconstructing this scenario, several concerns stand out. First Marie and Chelsea appear to have had different goals. Marie wanted to encourage Evan to join the group meeting, Chelsea wanted to meet Evan's "need" for tape. Several explanations are possible. First, the teachers may not have had a shared understanding of expectations for the children's behavior. Second, some teachers may have been more confident in enacting constructive guidance techniques than others. This sense of confidence may have been based on more experience with young children or with implementing guidance techniques. In addition, some teachers may simply have had more practice implementing constructive guidance techniques than others. Finally, teachers are more likely to remain on the same page if they communicate with one another on the spot. However, in a busy classroom, this communication can sometimes get relegated to "later."

Thus, inadvertently one classroom teacher might allow a child or a group of children more lee-way than another teacher. Just as children might go to the other parent when the first one says, "no", so these children might go to the various teachers in the classroom that day, asking the same question, hoping one of them would say, "yes." Or, having gotten to know the classroom teachers, the children might purposely select the teacher they feel would be most likely to agree to their request. Teacher Talks conversations served as an avenue to try to maintain consistency in how certain situations were addressed. Still, with multiple teachers in the classroom, maintaining consistency required regular communication across teachers. Even then,

it was a challenge. The various teachers had natural tendencies to be more or less lenient and to have varying levels of perceptive ability as they observed and interpreted the children's needs, the children's behaviors, and any safety concerns needing addressed. As a group of teachers, we maintained regular email communication and spoke weekly about our goals and expectations for the children. We spent countless hours talking about how to best meet these children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs. I feel as if we did maintain clear communication about the children and insure similar expectations among all teachers throughout the year, thus, helping to reduce a feeling of inconsistency. Perhaps, additional discussions about how to select and implement guidance strategies were necessary. Perhaps, some of the student teachers could have benefited from much more direct assistance implementing constructive guidance strategies in the Maroon Room. I could suggest many reasons and still not address the core issue related to providing a sense of consistency across teachers for the children. No matter the extent of the efforts taken to maintain consistency, at its core, maintaining consistency across a variety of individuals at different developmental levels and with different personalities who together are in the position of responding to the children with a unified voice is problematic. This issue is often challenging enough for two parents. That it occurred in a setting with twelve teachers in one classroom is to be expected. The children adapted to their teachers just as their teachers adapted to them.

Course Requirements Influenced Comfort with Constructive Guidance

When students work in child development lab schools, their course requirements may influence how they are involved in the classroom (McBride and Baumgartner, 2003). In this study, the curriculum and assessment course requirements appear to have influenced the student teachers' comfort in implementing guidance, discipline, and classroom management. For

instance, the student teachers spoke about how being required to develop a portfolio for particular children had led them to focus their attention on those children more than others in the class. Some of the student teachers reported that they wished they had spent more time developing a relationship with certain children so that both the student teacher and the child were more comfortable with one another when it came to providing guidance. Another possible connection between course requirements and their influence on how the student teachers provided guidance, discipline, and classroom management is related to planning and implementing curriculum. During second semester, the student teachers submitted their plans and an evaluation of how they implemented those plans as part of their course requirements. During her first lead teaching week, Jenni spoke about not having back up plans if the children did not engage with her original plans. It is possible, that in focusing so heavily on the planning and implementation process, she and the other student teachers expected that the children would fully engage with their plans and that these plans would be sufficient to sustain interest throughout the morning. It is also possible that the student teachers were not anticipating the normal, everyday guidance and discipline issues common to our classroom. Therefore, when they confronted a loss of interest in their plans or the typical behavioral, social, or emotional challenges the children were experiencing, the student teachers were at a loss for how to deal with these issues. With this possibility in mind, it may be useful to have future student teachers develop backup plans and articulate how they plan to handle guidance and discipline challenges often experienced in the classroom. This could serve to insure that the student teachers are considering guidance, discipline, and classroom management issues during the planning process.

Supervising Teacher as Embodiment of "The Lab School Ways"

The student teachers hinted at something hidden below the surface. They never came right out and said it, unlike so many of the other themes. Rather, they quietly, almost imperceptively, suggested that I, as their supervising teacher, was, in essence, the embodiment of the Lab School philosophy, traditions and expectations. It was my interpretation of the Lab School philosophy, curriculum, and policies that mattered to them most. They understood that Layla, the head teacher, deferred to me and they even saw her as being like a more experienced peer. Many of the student teachers watched me for clues as to how they should act within the classroom. McKenzie mentioned being more comfortable when I was not in the classroom. Perhaps this related to that sense that, when I was in the room, she needed to check herself to insure that she was doing things the way she thought I would want them done at Lab School. During Teacher Talks conversations, I fielded occasional questions like, "Is it okay to do that at Lab School?" Listening to the audiotaped Teacher Talks, I heard a certain tentativeness in student teachers' voices if they anticipated they might be saying something that went against "the Lab School ways." This was the case when Jenni said, "I know we're not supposed to punish here but…." I also heard in my own voice, at times, an authoritative tone that suggested I was drawing a line that the student teachers should not cross. While I may not have said, "this is something we don't do at the Lab School", the tone of my voice did communicate that message. Thus, even as I "turned over control" of the classroom to the student teachers, I still retained veto power.

Conflicts Between Their Own Philosophy and the Lab School's Philosophy

In certain cases, student teachers experienced on-going conflicts between their own philosophical beliefs regarding guidance and discipline and those of the Lab School. Thus, these

student teachers were generally not able to implement strategies in the classroom that would be in line with their implicit beliefs. For instance, McKenzie's insistence that all children should be expected to attend group meetings was clearly a philosophical conflict. She adamantly expressed her beliefs. I feel that the best way to insure that her voice is heard is to let her speak for herself:

> You talk about children being able to self-regulate and that it is disrespectful for them to have to sit at group time, but I honestly completely disagree with that. Yes 4 and 5 year olds are *beginning* to be able to self-regulate, but they are still kids. That is why they are at school and have parents is because they have to be taught how to do so. Just because a kid doesn't want to eat dinner, doesn't mean you can let him not eat dinner. It's the same with large group, it is an important part of the classroom because it does help children to learn to self-regulate while sitting and listening to peers and actively participating and discussing in a group setting. As I said before, when those students were not at group time, I constantly had to watch them and what they were doing. They did not always just "play quietly" on their own outside of the group and were often disruptive.

McKenzie's words call upon the course instructors and the head teachers to fully articulate the benefits and detriments of the Lab School policy of optional group meeting attendance. As McKenzie sees it, children would learn to self-regulate, in part, through required participation at the group meetings. Also, the classroom teachers would feel a greater sense of comfort knowing that they did not need to monitor those not attending the meeting. McKenzie states that those not attending the meeting would disrupt the meeting rather than work quietly. Without a doubt, this did occur. However, based on my experiences with a required group time (in another early childhood setting), some children do resist attending the meetings. When children who resist attending the group meeting are forced (required) to do so, emotional or

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physical tensions between teacher and child can erupt. These interactions could be distracting and disruptive to the class meeting. This creates an unhealthy classroom environment.

Some teachers deal with this conflict between whether children should participate in class meetings by limiting the options available to the children who do not attend the meeting. For instance, the teacher might allow children to draw at a nearby table or read by themselves in a quiet area of the room. Nevertheless, it is clear that within the Maroon Room, McKenzie was never able to resolve her own beliefs with those of the Lab School. Perhaps, McKenzie would have resolved this conflict if she had an additional month or two at the end of the year to reap the rewards of the student teachers' efforts to better meet the children's needs during the group meeting. The student teachers modified the group meetings by including more interactive activities and provided further support to the few children that had trouble sitting at the group meeting without distracting other children. The student teachers observed and studied each other, looking for clues about how to better engage the children. These efforts did pay off in the last few weeks of the semester. The Lab School policy on group meeting attendance certainly gives children the power to say, "No, I'm not interested in what you are doing." Or "No, I couldn't sit still right now if I tried." However, once the student teachers figured out the reasons children were not attending these meetings, they were able to change the structure and content of the meetings to meet the children's needs and interests. Further, the student teachers were able to provide appropriate physical and emotional support to the few children who seemed to have the most difficulty during group meetings. In so doing, the children did join the meetings.

Jenni's belief in the use of a "three strikes and your in time out" policy is at odds with the Lab School policy. Jenni believed that if a child repeated the same behavior three times (after being warned the first and second time), the child needed to be separated from whatever was

causing the repeated behavior (the activity or individuals). At that point, the child would have to

sit in a designated time out chair for a five minute time period. Afterward, they can return to

classroom activity. The Lab School guidance policy allows for teachers to provide for an

opportunity for the child to "take a break and calm down" from whatever is bothering and/or

stimulating him or her in the hopes that, during this break, the child will begin to physically and

emotionally self-regulate. During this break, a teacher typically stays with the child. After

calming, the child and the teacher discuss the child's feelings and more appropriate ways to

express them. These breaks take place in various settings – for example, the classroom couch, the

observation booth outside the classroom, or on a walk around the building.

While there are some similarities in technique, the philosophical difference between

Jenni's modified time out and the Lab School's "take a break and calm down" policy is dramatic.

Jenni proposes the need for her policy on the basis of punishing a child for misbehavior so they

won't do the same misbehavior again. The Lab School policy applies a logical consequence for

the misbehavior – a break from the activity. Thus, the policy allows the child to calm down and

to self-regulate. This time away from the triggering event allows the child to think through, with

teacher guidance, how she or he could avoid the same problem in the future. Jenni's "three

strikes" modification to time out suggests that she has been somewhat influenced by constructive

guidance strategies. The question is to what extent is she focusing on guiding and helping the

child learn more appropriate ways of behaving.

Reconstructing "Control" To "Being a Responsible Teacher"

Like other student teachers beginning their field placements (e.g., Jones & Godfrey,

1993), the student teachers in this study were concerned with maintaining control. In the course

of this research, however, I have reconstructed my understanding of the student teachers'

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concerns related to maintaining control, establishing and consistently enforcing rules, and developing and maintaining structure. What I perceived, in the past, as complaints or criticism of the Lab School philosophy may well be more of a questioning of this philosophy. In their own ways, the student teachers were expressing "How do I insure that all of the children are safe and engaged in the learning process?" Structure and rules are meant to establish order and a certain amount of freedom within boundaries. As Kayla and McKenzie pointed out during member checks "order" is what they meant by "control." In McKenzie's perception, to be in control meant that she was effectively managing the classroom by providing structure, rules, and order. However, it appears that she and her fellow student teachers had difficulty in seeing the structure, rules, and order that were present in the Maroon Room. The student teachers were looking at the Maroon Room through their own experiences, trying to link the known (their own knowledge of teaching) to the unknown (what it means to teach in this classroom). However, "students may misinterpret new information because of previous knowledge they use to construct new understandings" (Bransford, et al, 2002, p. 68). Thus, when the students could not connect what they were seeing in the Maroon Room to their previous knowledge of the way classrooms functioned, they interpreted what they were seeing as a lack of structure, rules, and order.

These student teachers had limited, if any, experience with an inquiry-based, emergent curriculum that allowed the children to choose the activities they wanted to engage in, for how long they wanted to stay at an activity, or to request other materials (e.g. puzzles) that were not part of the classroom set-up. Being unfamiliar with project-based and play-based learning might have contributed to a feeling that there was no structure in the classroom. Since structure helps to create a sense of orderliness in the classroom, the seemingly apparent lack of structure may have resulted in these student teachers perceiving that the classroom lacked order and that, therefore,

they had limited control. Not having a clear-cut explanation of the guidance techniques and consequences that they could use in the classroom further played into their idea that there was no structure and that they had no control.

Having drawn this conclusion, the student teachers may have inadvertently, and without knowing it, abdicated their responsibility to insure order. In so doing, they may have also inadvertently created a less structured classroom environment. Future research could examine the ways in which student teacher placements in early childhood classrooms affect the pre-existing structure of the room. Does the perceived inconsistency in enforcing rules actually exist? If so, how does this alter the children's behavior?

<center>Projecting to Their Own Future Elementary School Classrooms</center>

As the student teachers worked at the Lab School classroom, they seemed to be pondering the extent to which they might incorporate elements of the Lab School into their own elementary classrooms. The "How Will This Apply To My Own Classroom?" lens seems to have served as a powerful screening tool for the student teachers. Emma reflected that when it came to observing guidance techniques,

> Part of it was not just watching, but also the fact that we couldn't see how this could effectively be used in a classroom that didn't have so many teachers in it. For example, how would these techniques be used, not only in Lab School, but after Lab School, when we were entering the public school system?

McKenzie remained committed to mandatory group time attendance and seemed to have difficulty understanding why the Lab School did not insist that all children attend the group meeting. Jenni, too, seemed to evaluate "what we do at Lab School" through a "but can I do this in public school?" lens. At times, it seemed as if the student teachers resisted aspects of

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constructive guidance that they did not perceive they would be able to use in their public school elementary classroom. When they did not perceive certain techniques or ideas to be useful for what they would do in public schools, some of the student teachers may have become less committed to learning to skillfully employ that technique.

## Are The Children's Behaviors Developmentally Appropriate?

I listened repeatedly to what appeared to be a preoccupation with the children being prepared for kindergarten or with statements like, "they won't be able to do that in public school so they shouldn't do it here." What did these statements mean? For one thing, they suggested that the student teachers felt as if all public school teachers would consider these children's behavior to be out of bounds or abnormal. I do not have such limited faith in today's teachers. These statements also suggested that some of the student teachers were trying to apply the behavioral expectations of Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth, or Fifth grade onto four and five year olds. Hymes (1968) states,

> We are playing with fire when we skip the years of three, four, and five to hurry children into being age six.... Every child has a right to his fifth year of life, his fourth year, his third year. He has a right to live each year with joy and self-fulfillment. No one should ever claim the power to make a child mortgage his today for the sake of tomorrow.

In *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*, Bredekamp and Copple (1997) acknowledge developmental differences between four-, and five-year old children and six-year olds. These differences should affect the expectations that teachers hold of young children. Thus, what is an appropriate behavior for a five year old may not be considered appropriate for a six or seven year old.

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There is a possibility that, because these student teachers anticipated teaching at the elementary level, they were unknowingly trying to hold these preschoolers' behavior to the same standards to which they planned to hold their elementary students' behavior. A comment by Laura suggests that over the course of the year, she gained a better understanding of what was developmentally appropriate for preschoolers. She stated, "Just knowing what's age appropriate. Even though at times I considered it out of control, it was appropriate because they [the active boys] just needed to get that energy out."

In reflecting on how I worked with the student teachers, as a supervising teacher and course instructor, I do not recall discussing what it meant to be a developmentally appropriate preschool classroom. Again, I may have thought this topic had been covered in the student teachers' other coursework. This is something worth attending to more in the future.

## Experiencing a Paradigm Shift

During Chelsea's member check, she pointed out that much of the student teachers' prior coursework involved discussions and scenarios focused at the elementary level rather than the preschool level. She stated that she had difficulty shifting from thinking about elementary school to thinking about preschool. She also shared than many of the examples of how constructive guidance could be implemented were examples that related to older children in elementary school; thus, she was unsure of how to use constructive guidance with preschool-aged children. Other student teachers continually pondered how their experiences at the Lab School would help them in an elementary school. Thus, the student teachers in this study experienced paradigm shifts as they tried to reconcile prior coursework and experiences with what was happening in the Maroon Room. Preschool settings and elementary school settings have "distinctly different histories, traditions, perspectives, expectations, practices, values, and school cultures" (Bloch,

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1987, 1991, as cited in Goldstein, 1997, p. 3). Thus, when student teachers entered a preschool setting, they were entering a setting that was not like an elementary school setting. That the student teachers had to adjust to this new setting was to be expected. That the student teachers seemed to struggle, for a time, with how to be an effective teacher in the preschool may be attributable, in part, to the difference between an elementary and a preschool setting. Humphrey (1989) shares her experience in moving from an elementary education paradigm to an early childhood education paradigm when she began teaching Kindergarten children. She shares her emotional reactions of having to let go of the structure, order, and cleanliness she had before. She also shares her joy of discovering a new love of learning that is evident in the children in her classroom. She expressed concern about the meaning of accountability, whether others would perceive the children as being "on task" when they appeared to be playing, or whether the children had too much freedom. While Humphrey eventually came to appreciate the new way she was teaching in Kindergarten and later became a preschool teacher, she had to reconsider her beliefs and practices in order to do so. Her story reminds me of the student teachers' stories.

Teaching Boys, Acknowledging Their Physicality

The active boys consistently challenged the student teachers. During the March 23rd Teacher Talks, how to handle the boy's physicality was addressed. The student teachers were concerned that children were physically hurting one another while playing (for example, one child tagged others with such force that he pushed them down). What constituted "rough" play? How could the student teachers determine the difference between rough and tumble play and aggression? While research supports that rough and tumble play is socially healthy behavior, some of the student teachers expressed concern that it might lead to children getting hurt by accident. Further, what begins as mutually enjoyable rough and tumble play may progress into a

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fight if the child who gets hurt perceives the other individual's accidental behavior as intentionally aggressive. Thus, some of the student teachers preferred to eliminate all play that had the potential to inflict accidental or intentional physical harm. Because our active boys enjoyed pretend fighting, tag, and other games involving physical touch, saying that these games were off-limits may not have gone over well. As the student teachers, Layla, and I continued to think through how best to address the concern over children getting hurt, one of the student teachers suggested asking the children what they thought was acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Over the next few days, the children and student teachers addressed this issue during their group meetings. It was clear that the children had an understanding of safe (rough and tumble) and unsafe (aggressive) play; sometimes, however, the line between the two blurred while playing. Thus, the student teachers continued to deal with potentially physically harmful situations on a case by case basis, helping the children establish rules for safe play, or, when necessary, having an overly excited child whose actions hurt others rest for a while before rejoining the game.

Behind the scenes, I was reviewing literature, looking into various explanations for our active boys' high energy level and trying to find research on meeting the needs of boys within classrooms. I found several resources, which I emailed the student teachers on March 19th. One of them (Health Development Agency, 2001) suggested that physicality was a common thread underlying several health-related issues that were much more common in boys than girls, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This source further stated that boys are more likely to be mentioned on accident records in nursery schools, as well as on records of class disruption and antisocial or challenging behavior. Potential reasons for boys' physicality are numerous. Yet, just as the student teachers in this study struggled to overcome a bias toward stillness, conformity,

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attentiveness, and quietness, so, too, do other teachers. These calm, orderly behaviors have become the "preferred norm in most classrooms today" (Kipnis, 2001). Through their experiences working with the active boys in this classroom, these student teachers gained a greater understanding of the needs of boys, particularly related to needing physical outlets for their energy and needing some level of acceptable physicality throughout the day.

<center>Where Did All The Girls Go?</center>

In retelling the Maroon Room classroom story, I noted a heavy emphasis on redesigning the curriculum to meet the needs of the active boys. Indeed these children did dominate the teachers' attention during Teacher Talks and as lead teachers. However, the girls and a few calm, quiet boys were not far from the student teachers' minds. One of the reasons the student teachers were concerned about effectively working with the active boys was to avoid situations in which these boys might upset the other children. That is, in meeting the needs of the active boys, the teachers inadvertently met the needs of the other children. One phenomenon we noted in the classroom was that the girls often seemed relieved when there were fewer individuals in the room, or the noise level was lower when teachers left with those children who wanted to go outside. At times, some of the girls would physically breathe sighs of relief and make statements like, "Good, they've gone outside." Similarly, they would say, "Oh, man. They're back." Thus, in order to meet the needs of the girls for a calm, orderly classroom environment, it was necessary for the student teachers to find physical outlets for the active boys.

The issues that required the student teachers to provide guidance to the girls tended to focus on individuals or small groups of girls. The student teachers seemed to be more comfortable handling the girls' social and emotional issues. There was certainly some relational aggression among the girls. For instance, Annie and Miriam had regular difficulties in their

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relationship. Annie seemed to want to call all the shots and Miriam decided she did not like simply doing what Annie told her to. Another common scenario Spring semester was the need to monitor what Emily was doing and support her at any point in the day in which she was not engaged in the classroom. Downtime for Emily led to her thinking about her mother and then wanting to go home. To avoid downtime, the student teachers seemed to keep an eye on what she was doing so that they could be ready to engage her in a new activity. Mostly, with the girls, the student teachers found that talking with them about whatever the issue often helped to resolve the issue. This was also the case for some of the calmer boys.

### Thoughts On Researching My Own Classroom

I have been challenged emotionally by researching my own classroom. In really listening to what these student teachers had to say, I have had to face myself in new ways. Generally, my focus on programmatic improvement helped me to maintain a "professional distance" as I looked at my classroom from the standpoint of becoming more knowledgeable about the types of influences present in a child development lab classroom. At times, I "divorced" myself from the setting, even using the third person to refer to myself. This was safe. I knew how to research the other.

Yet, neither I nor these student teachers were "the other." Knowing their faces, personalities, expressions, and ways of acting, I pictured each student teacher as I wrote about them. These were "my" student teachers. I had a hand in their development as professionals – day in and day out for a year. I knew these student teachers and I felt personally responsible for their experiences in the Maroon Room.

As such, there were times in this process that it was difficult to hear what the student teachers were saying. As they described the classroom, ultimately "my" classroom, as much as I

spoke of it as "our" room, I began to wonder if it was *me* that failed to see the utter and total

chaos that surrounded me. *Was it so bad? So out of control? Had I let things get out of hand?*

*Was I a bad teacher?*

In studying my own classroom, I opened myself to criticism. Painting a bull's eye on my

heart, I passed each student teacher darts and said, "take your best shot." I dared to ask their

thoughts and opinions. I dared to determine how they thought I could have been a stronger

teacher to them. They obligingly answered, often giving examples of positive ways I had

influenced them. Sometimes, though, my influences left something to be desired. Most usually,

this occurred through errors of omission -- failing to see the intensity of their struggles, failing to

have a frank conversation early enough, if at all, and failing to acknowledge and encourage their

growing competence.

My early and mid semester field notes evidence some frustration toward the student

teachers for not implementing constructive guidance regularly and consistently. Through this

study, I realize this frustration was ill-placed. There was a lot I did not understand. I should not

have been frustrated *at* them but frustrated *for* them. And that is what I became as I cried for the

student teachers. I railed at myself. How could I have let them go through such an arduous time

of uncertainty in "my" classroom? I became angry for them. How could I have heard, but not

really listened to, what they were telling me about their comfort level with guidance? By not

knowing they needed much more assistance than I was offering on what constructive guidance is

and how it could be implemented with this group of children, I inadvertently failed them. How

could my own blinders have resulted in my failure to listen and heed their cries in the moments

that mattered most – that time when we shared responsibility for guiding the social, emotional,

cognitive, and physical development of fourteen young children? Listening daily to the student

teachers stories as I transcribed the data, I lost faith in my abilities as a teacher educator. For all the ways I did help, there was so much more I could have done.

Knowing that the research literature contains many examples of student teachers feeling unprepared to provide guidance and discipline (Caruso, 1977, 2000) reduces my sense of total and utter responsibility. Recognizing that the emotional reactions of these student teachers are quite typical to that of other student teachers (Brand, 1990; Bullough, Knowles, & Cowles, 1992; Caruso, 1977, 2000; Erwin, 1995, 1998; Garmon, 1993; Katz, 1977; Veenman, 1984) helps me see that my role is not to make their experience in the classroom painless or even smooth-sailing. Rather my role is to ease the pain, to help the student teachers navigate the canoe around big rocks and guide it through the rapids, thus, learning how to provide individual and group guidance. To the best of my abilities, the year I collected this data, I did this. The data indicates that I pointed out rocks and rapids, helping the student teachers consider how best to navigate that section of the river. No, I wasn't perfect. Yes, I made mistakes. I have learned, however, to accept my imperfect self.

I have also personally recognized the complexity of the university child development laboratory head teacher's role. There are so many people's needs to be attended to at any point. It is impossible to meet everyone's needs perfectly. Being in a classroom setting in which, as the head teacher, I had two sets of students who needed attention, guidance, and support, created a challenging balancing act. For instance, these student teachers, as lead teachers, expressed the sense that the classroom felt like a wildfire in mid-Spring Semester. Yet, I was observing the room and the children closely, poised to encourage the lead teacher to respond to the children's behaviors, when needed. In my own ways, I worked to keep the room manageable and to insure the children's needs were being met. When I sensed the student teachers were comfortable in

their lead teaching role, I did leave the room for extended periods of time. However, if a child or group of children needed some very direct guidance, I would offer to work with those children, freeing the lead teacher up to manage other aspects of classroom life. The children and their parents count on the classroom head teacher to be a consistent, caring teacher. This delicate balancing act between the service and teaching components of the university mission has been acknowledged before within the Lab School (Mottley, 2002) and plays out daily in lab school classrooms across the nation (McBride and Lee, 1995).

As I reflect on these student teachers' stories and my own story, I realize that what we have experienced is not so unlike what most student teachers and cooperating teachers experience. It was tough and frustrating, no doubt. But the challenges they and I faced were "the stuff student teaching is made of." I am reminded of a statement that Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela Moore shared in 1998:

> The pathways to discovery are not easy to find. The trails are not marked, there are many dead ends, the journey is far longer than expected, and at the end, little may be there. What counts is what one learns along the way and passes on to future explorers of the uncharted terrain.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

"Inquiry conducted by teachers is a way to build knowledge both locally and more publicly – for the individual teacher, for communities of teachers, and for the larger field of university-based researchers and teacher educators, policymakers, and school administrators." (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 1993, .61-62). This study has provided information that may serve to strengthen future undergraduate students' experiences at the Lab School, should the Lab School administration, course instructors, and head teachers elect to implement the suggestions I have shared in this report. Other child development lab schools may gleen certain learnings from this report and reflect on ways they can use this in meeting the needs of their students related to making sense of and implementing constructive guidance.

In this chapter, I share my recommendations on ways that teacher educators (cooperating/head teachers, supervisors, and course instructors) can assist preservice teachers in negotiating constructive guidance. I further discuss future research opportunities. These findings apply most directly to inquiry-based, Reggio-inspired child development laboratory classrooms. While these findings may apply beyond child development lab schools to other preschool or elementary settings, I will leave the interpretations and considerations of these connections to the reader who may be teachers and teacher educators within these settings.

Orienting the Student Teachers More Thoroughly

In this study, the student teachers expressed anxiety as they spoke about not really knowing much about the Lab School prior to beginning their classroom placement. At the Lab School, we attempted to meet the informational needs of new student teachers by providing them with a student teacher handbook and holding a classroom-specific teacher orientation. In

addition, I sent the student teachers a letter that introduced myself and the expectations I held of them. However, I recommend a more thorough orientation session, perhaps multiple sessions, focusing on how the Lab School's philosophy is related to constructive guidance and possible ways to provide such guidance in the classrooms. Responding to student teachers' needs for more concrete guidelines, teacher educators may share scenarios and strategies that may be most useful in dealing with the issues that are depicted in these scenarios. This suggestion is in line with case-based teaching because "cases allow teachers to think and talk about problems, issues, and concerns outside the immediate work setting" (Rand, 2000, p. 3). The student teachers may benefit from discussing a variety of scenarios that they are likely to encounter in their own classroom placements. The student teachers could then reflect on ways they may be able to address these concerns, on how their actions may affect the child's development, and on the messages they are sending to children in using particular techniques.

<center>Clarify the Statement "Follow the Children's Interests"</center>

A number of the student teachers in this study spoke about becoming confused when they were told they were supposed to "follow the children's interests." Thus, teacher educators should clarify the difference between curriculum planning based on "following the children's interest" and providing constructive guidance that is developmentally appropriate. Some of the student teachers suggested that having a chance to observe the classroom from the observation booth for a while before entering the classroom as active participants would have helped them better understand the way the classroom functioned. Perhaps by observing how teacher(s) and children interact in the room, they would have been able to see the difference between planning based on the children's interests and providing guidance to the children.

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Providing Opportunities for Reflecting on Guidance, Discipline, and Management

While the student teachers in this study and I discussed their thoughts and feelings (usually during Teacher Talks), they did not have extensive opportunities to examine how their implicit beliefs and prior experiences are related to their views on guidance, discipline, and classroom management. Nor were they given opportunities, beyond this study, to consider how their views were changing throughout the year. I recommend that students in similar courses be asked to write explicitly about: a) their conceptions of the ideal preschool classroom, b) what their beliefs are concerning guidance, discipline, and classroom management, c) what they believe constitutes inappropriate behaviors and the ways they believe these behaviors should be handled, d) how they anticipate the classroom should function on a daily basis, and e) what the teacher's role should be in setting up and managing the classroom. Perhaps these reflective assignments would render even greater benefit if the student teachers completed them prior to entering the classroom for the first time, periodically during the semester(s), and then again at the end of their practicum. Repeating the assignment would provide both the instructor and the students with a means of evaluating the extent to which the student's views on guidance, discipline, and classroom management have changed since being exposed to constructive guidance in action.

Connecting Practice to Coursework

Theoretically, there is continuity between the second-year course on constructive guidance that the student teachers take and the third year practicum at the Lab School in which the student teachers have the opportunity to apply the constructive guidance techniques they learned in the course. In practice, it would appear that there were several roadblocks that made it

difficult for the student teachers to make this connection. I want to explore each roadblock and discuss how this issue could be better addressed.

*Guided Observation*

First, the student teachers needed the chance to connect what they were reading and discussing with actual classroom practice. More than just being in a classroom in which these techniques were used, students needed the techniques to be pointed out to them. Further, they needed to be analyzing how each technique was implemented. Further discussion would involve what other techniques the teacher could have used, as well as, why the teacher chose that particular technique, and the short-term and long-term outcomes of having chosen to use that specific technique. This type of guided observation and reflection could take place at a child development lab classroom observation booth. It may also be possible to conduct a similar experience through using classroom videotape footage. I would suggest taking enough footage for the viewers to get a sense of what is going on in the overall classroom and to be able to discuss what set the stage for the behaviors of concern and what happened after a strategy was employed. The advantage of videotape footage is that teacher educators could pause the videotape at certain points to allow the students to discuss their observations, reactions, and possible ways of working with the child or children involved.

*Revisiting Constructive Guidance Strategies In Multiple Courses*

A second roadblock these student teachers experienced in connecting theory to practice was the relatively small repertoire of possible guidance techniques with which they reported being familiar with when they entered the Lab School. The primary methods the student teachers mentioned when asked what they had learned in Principles were: consequences, talking with the child to help them come up with a better way to handle the situation next time, or reasoning with

the child. In addition to these guidance strategies, there are many more possibilities, as is evident by the additional eighteen strategies the student teachers used in the Maroon Room during Spring Semester. The student teachers did not seem to have a robust understanding of the concepts Fields and Boesser (2002) wrote about in their book that was used in the Principles class. This recognition leads me to emphasize the importance of not assuming that students have gained a complete understanding in other courses. Rather, teacher educators need to revisit concepts related to guidance and discipline while discussing other aspects of being a teacher. Further, because it is well known that student teachers experience uncertainty related to guidance and discipline these topics should be discussed, especially, in coursework that involves field placements. The student teachers in this study had experienced field placements in elementary school and much of the discussions during these placements focused on elementary school teachers and children. Thus, the student teachers reported that Teacher Talks was beneficial in that it gave them a chance to discuss and think about how to constructively guide preschool children, a topic that had been less emphasized in prior coursework.

*Clarifying the Constructive Guidance Policy Used At the Lab School*

Third, the student teachers in this study had difficulty making the connection between their prior coursework and the guidance and discipline methods used at the Lab School. The Lab School administration, the course instructors and I needed to be much more direct in demonstrating and saying, "We use constructive guidance and it means …" The student teacher handbook needs to be revised to prominently include the words "constructive guidance." Further, it may be beneficial to include a constructive guidance text as a required text for any student teaching practicum. Specific to the Lab School, requiring the same text the student teachers used in Principles would create a sense of continuity for the student teachers. I further recommend that

child development lab administration take video footage of their head teachers employing various guidance strategies. These video clips could be used during an orientation with student teachers early into their Lab School practicum. While helping the student teachers see constructive guidance in action, these video clips may also help the student teachers better understand their head teachers' expectations regarding guidance and discipline. Perhaps even more beneficial would be an opportunity for the head teacher who was videotaped to talk through her or his thought processes as the student teachers viewed the video. Finally, student teachers seem to need clear explanations as to why the Lab School personnel valued constructive guidance and why the Lab School took certain philosophical stances (for instance, group time attendance is not mandatory). Thus, I recommend that head teachers and administration discuss the reasoning behind these seemingly controversial stances with the student teachers. While the student teachers may maintain a difference of opinion, they will, hopefully, at least, be able to engage in thoughtful dialogue involving defending their own philosophical stances.

Exploring Ways to Effectively Model Constructive Guidance

Child development lab school head teachers play a crucial role in helping student teachers negotiate constructive guidance. Head Teachers are supposed to model "best practices" and to encourage student teachers to "learn and utilize current theory, research, and methods of child development and early childhood education" (Stremmel, Hill, & Fu, in press). Modeling is an obvious tool head teachers use when teaching university students. Yet, head teachers need to be aware that student teachers may or may not see what you are doing in the classroom. I assumed that by being in the same room, each of the student teachers would see me actively guiding the children and know that they, too, were expected to use these same techniques. However, the student teachers were also active participants in the classroom, not simply

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observers. Typically they were engaged with one or more children, observing the children, or even working with a small group of children in the hallway or the studio. Thus, there were many times that I modeled using a stern voice, applying consequences for misbehavior, redirecting a child away from the activity that was eliciting the misbehavior, and other guidance techniques. Still some of the student teachers developed the belief that they could not use these methods. Thus, it is necessary to reconsider the assumption that student teachers will observe and learn skills by modeling their head teachers, just because they are in the same classroom. Therefore, I encourage head teachers to explore ways that they can insure that student teachers are able to observe and learn from the head teacher.

<center>Reflecting-in-Action/Reflecting-on-Action</center>

One way head teachers may be able to assist student teachers in observing and learning from the head teacher is to engage in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. During data collection, I regularly asked student teachers what they were doing in the classroom and the reasons behind those actions. These short conversations required the student teachers to articulate their decision-making process. I further spoke with them at the end of the morning about their experiences throughout the day. Again, this helped the student teachers think about their actions and their decision-making. These conversations often involved some level of anticipating how to address individual needs or classroom concerns. As a teaching tool, these conversations seemed to be quite helpful at eliciting the student teachers' awareness of their own thoughts and actions. As a head teacher, I also valued these opportunities to get to know more about what each of the student teachers was thinking and experiencing. Teacher Talks provided a similar opportunity, yet in this group setting, some individuals were less inclined to speak. Also,

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with Teacher Talks happening once a week, it did not allow as much day-to-day processing as these other methods did. Ayers (1993) promotes a similar idea:

> Teaching is an eminently practical activity, best learned in the exercise of it and in the thoughtful reflection that must accompany that. This reflection should be structured into the teaching day, and should be conducted with peers, and with more experienced people who can act as coaches or guides, and can direct a probingly critical eye at every detail of school life. The complexity of real teaching can then be grasped, and the intellectual and ethical heart of teaching can be kept in its center (p. 12).

It may  also be helpful for the head teacher to share with the student teachers her or his thought processes (reflections and interpretations) shortly after the occurrence of a guidance episode. Head teachers bear primary responsibility for insuring that the student teachers are seeing the way the head teachers guide the children and manage the overall classroom. Perhaps, by discussing their decision-making process with the student teachers thoroughly (either during or soon after the event), head teachers can help student teachers understand and implement constructive guidance strategies effectively. However, having offered this advice, I feel it is necessary to also offer a possible reason that thoroughly articulating one's thinking could present challenges to head teachers.

More experienced teachers develop tacit knowledge and a level of automaticity that beginning teachers do not yet have. For instance, in the heat of the teaching moment, I have had difficulty verbalizing my thought process. I think faster than I speak. I also make leaps, that is, I see certain patterns of behavior that are indicative of a potential problem and immediately jump to the solution that I think will work best, based on my knowledge of the child or children involved. I leave out all the processing steps between those first signs and the solution because at

some other point in time, I'd already thought through it. However, to make this reflection process meaningful to a student teacher, I would need to verbalize each step, each thought, in detail. When trying to retrace my steps, I may make a leap I don't realize I have made. If a student teacher doesn't ask for clarification, I will assume I explained clearly, yet the student teacher will remain confused.

This phenomenon is discussed, at some length, in *How People Learn* (Bransford, et al., 1999). The text describes the challenges that experts have when communicating their thought processes to novices. Further, the text points out that experts are able to see patterns that novices do not see. Thus, helping student teachers recognize patterns in the classroom environment will help them to develop a greater sense of confidence and competence. Ultimately, through Teacher Talks and their increasing observational skills, the student teachers did begin to recognize and respond to the patterns evident in the classroom.

Maybe, another way to support this process is to assess a student's understanding and/or interpretation of what was observed by asking the student to describe what was observed and her/his interpretation. This process could give the head teacher an understanding of the student's perspective. Based on this knowledge the head teacher can better explain her/his thinking and decision making processes.

Educating Head Teachers About Working With Student Teachers

Working with student teachers effectively requires a different set of skills and knowledge than working with young children. Head teachers in child development lab programs must be able to work with both age groups effectively. In-service opportunities including review of how young adults learn and how this knowledge is related to working with student teachers may provide head teachers with useful information they can put into practice in their classrooms.

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Child development lab school administrators could use information from this study to develop training sessions for classroom head teachers on what to expect of the students who are placed in their classrooms and on supporting those students' learning. Head teachers would, likely, benefit from understanding the process the student teachers go through as they settle into the life of the classroom and learn to negotiate constructive guidance.

<center>Future Research Opportunities</center>

As a future teacher educator, I value the hands-on learning that takes place in the child development lab school setting. Therefore, I want to support head teachers' efforts to guide student teachers' development of the skills they will take with them into their future classrooms. This is likely an area of research that I will continue exploring. For instance, future research could explore how to provide child development lab school head teachers with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to be strong teacher educators. While some head teachers at child development lab schools are beginning teachers themselves, other head teachers have worked in child development lab schools for their entire careers. Perhaps, it would be beneficial to seek advice from these experienced child development lab head teachers on their views of how to support student teachers' development. Interviews and open-ended surveys with experienced head teachers could be a possible way to gather these data. Observations of experienced head teachers may be another way of researching this topic.

The student teachers in the present study intended to work in elementary schools rather than preschools. Their future plans influenced the student teachers' thoughts and perceptions while they were in the Maroon Room. Future research could explore how student teachers who intend to teach children birth through five years old perceive constructive guidance. Specifically, some of the student teachers were concerned that they could not use the guidance techniques

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used at the Lab School in their public school classroom. Do birth-kindergarten student teachers also perceive that they cannot use the constructive guidance techniques used at the Lab School? Would students intended to teach in a birth through kindergarten program initially perceive the Lab School in similar ways as the students in this study?

This study was conducted at a child development lab school. "Although child development laboratory programs play an important role in the early childhood education profession, the literature on such programs is sparse and dated" (McBride & Lee, 1995, p. 96). Thus, more research could be completed on child development lab programs. This research might explore the roles of child development labs in teacher preparation, the interface between the teaching and service components of child development labs, the benefits and challenges to serving as a site for teacher education, and the connections between the student teachers coursework and their experiences in the child development lab program.

Most of the research related to student teachers focuses on a full-time student teaching experience in elementary or secondary school. However, this study illustrates that student teachers in a child development lab experience a similar process. Thus, future research may explore the possibility that Caruso's phases of student teaching (or other stage theories related to student teaching) could apply to students completing part-time field-based placements in child development lab schools and, potentially, in other settings. Specific to placements in child development lab schools, research may also want to consider how having multiple student teachers in the classroom may influence how students and head teachers experience the different phases of student teaching.

In the present study, student teachers seemed to benefit from having the weekly Teacher Talks in which to share concerns, discuss, analyze situations, and come to some consensus on

how to best support the children. The student teachers shared that the ability to deal with real situations in Teacher Talks was important to them. In traditional student teaching experiences, one student teacher is assigned to each classroom. Thus, conceivably, the student teacher has less of a support system when dealing with challenging or concerning behavior. Additional research could explore the similarities and differences in the support structures of these two distinct settings.

The student teachers in this study expressed concern with providing consistency for the children. Future research could examine the ways in which student teacher placements in child development lab schools affect the pre-existing structure of the room. In this study, student teachers expressed the concern that all the teachers were not enforcing limits and handling situations similarly. Does this perceived inconsistency in enforcing rules and handling situations actually exist? If so, how does this affect the children's behavior? Further, how can head teachers and administrators limit the negative influences of student teacher involvement in the classroom while building on the positive aspects of their involvement?

Finally, research could also be conducted to help us understand whether sharing stories of other student teachers' emotional ups and downs in learning to teach will better prepare current students for what they will encounter and how they will feel in their classroom placements. Will knowing that these emotions are "normal" reassure them? Will the student teachers take these reassurances as a sign that their concerns and frustrations are being disregarded or undermined? Or, will they feel more relaxed and ready to tackle what they will encounter, taking it in stride?

## Final Thoughts

Learning is a time consuming process. It is active, like the high-energy boys of the Maroon Room. It requires reconstructing partially-understood concepts by reflecting in order to

gain a deeper understanding. Sometimes, old understandings need torn down completely in order to rebuild new ones. It requires thinking, analyzing, interpreting. It is messy. And this is also what makes learning so fascinating.

In the process of this study, I have learned much. I will continue to learn from this study for years to come, reconstructing the understanding I have today in light of new information and experiences. Thus, what I have shared with the reader in this study is tentative, based on my current conceptualizations and interpretations. These may and will change. Such is the nature of knowledge.

POSTSCRIPT

During my dissertation defense, the discussion focused mainly on the student teachers' statements that, for the most part, they felt unprepared by previous coursework to implement constructive guidance in the Lab School. Most of the student teachers expressed that they felt that they were inadequately prepared to apply the social constructivist perspective to a variety of discipline and management issues they encountered in the Maroon Room. This finding particularly surprised Mary Alice Barksdale. She had served as a faculty adviser to this cohort of student teachers. She seemed to feel that the students should had been more prepared by their coursework than they acknowledged. According to Mary Alice's estimation, the student teachers had observed or assisted in various early childhood classrooms for 94 hours before entering the lab school. In addition to the Principles class, the student teachers had 84 contact hours with her and the co-advisor, engaged in deconstructing and reconstructing their image of teaching, school, children, and teachers as well as extensive discussion of various guidance, discipline and management techniques. These discussions took place during weekly seminars and other classes they enrolled in during the freshman and sophomore years.

Mary Alice felt it was important to point out that the student teachers had multiple opportunities to explore ideas and concepts that would apply to their work in the Lab School classroom. Nevertheless, during the interviews few student teachers acknowledged that any of their coursework had prepared them for life in the Maroon Room. On different occasions, I asked the student teachers how their prior coursework had influenced or prepared them to work in the Maroon Room. Frequently they responded either that there was no influence or the influence was minimal.

It should be noted that while this finding is disconcerting, it is not unusual. Previous research has shown that students have difficulty transferring knowledge gained in coursework into actual classroom practice (Hargreaves, 1984; Logue, et al., 1986; Goodlad, 1991; Clawson, 1999).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

A Brief History of The Study of Discipline and Classroom Management

Research on discipline and classroom management began outside the realm of education. Clinical psychologist (particularly those interested in counseling, mental health, and behavior modification) were interested in discipline as a research topic. They focused on how to help individual children behave in an acceptable way within the classroom (e.g. Driekurs, 1957; Glasser, 1969; O'Leary & O'Leary, 1977; Symonds, 1935). Social psychologists and sociologists interested in the classroom as a workplace (e.g. Dreeben, 1973, Lortie, 1973, Scheviakov & Redl, 1944) examined the organization and management of classrooms.

Kounin (1970) conducted a series of studies aimed at understanding discipline and classroom management. His findings indicated that effective and less effective teachers did not differ in the techniques they used to address specific discipline concerns. Rather, the effective teachers used an array of strategies to prevent discipline concerns from arising. In summarizing his findings, he stated, "the business of running a classroom has to do with developing a nonsatiating learning program; programming for progress, challenge, and variety in learning activities; initiating and maintaining movement in classroom tasks with smoothness and momentum; coping with more than one event simultaneously; observing and emitting feedback for many different events; directing actions at appropriate targets; maintaining a focus upon a group" (p. 144-145) Thus, "the possession of group management skills allows the teacher to accomplish her teaching goals – the absence of managerial skills acts as a barrier" (p. 145). Mastering group management enables the teacher to focus on individual differences and help individual children (Kounin, 1970).

Spurred on in part by Kounin's work, researchers examining effective teaching began including his categories into their studies. Consistently, how teachers managed their classroom related to student achievement (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Good & Grouws, 1975). For a more extensive list of studies validating Kounin's findings, see Cotton (2001). Thus, other researchers became interested in how to effectively manage classroom groups, as opposed to individual children (see Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980). In addition, qualitative studies focusing on life in the classroom (e.g. Jackson, 1968, Smith & Geoffrey, 1968) revealed the complexity of social arrangements in the classroom, spurring more curiosity about classroom management (Doyle, 1986).

Charles (1985) defines classroom misbehavior as "behavior that the teacher judges to be inappropriate for a given place or time" (p. 4). Generally, he states, teachers expect students to be on-task, behave responsibly and maintain good human relations. He further states that discipline is necessary to facilitate learning, foster socialization, permit democracy, fill a psychological need, and promote a sense of joy in learning. He reviewed seven models of classroom discipline and then summarized the major themes evident across these models. The Kounin model promotes group management techniques such as withitness, and alerting. The Neo-Skinnerian model encourages teachers to shape desired behavior. The Ginott model encourages teachers to address the situation with sane messages. The Glasser model promotes the idea that good behavior comes from good choices. The Dreikurs model encourages teachers to identify and confront the child's mistaken goals. The Jones model suggests that teachers should use body language, incentive systems, and provide efficient help. Finally, the Canter model encourages teachers to assertively take charge. Charles (1985) synthesized eleven major themes across these models: 1) all students seek acceptance, belonging, and success, 2) behavior is a choice and all

students can behave acceptably, 3) discipline helps bring success which increases children's self-concept and motivates them, 4) the teacher sets the tone for classroom discipline, 5) teachers must be persistent and genuinely caring, 6) teachers, children, parents, and school administration collaborate for effective discipline, 7) consistency and follow through are important aspects of discipline, 8) effective disciplines involves a seriousness to teaching and learning, rules and high expectations, 9) students who choose to break rules must endure the related consequences of that choice, 10) correcting misbehavior involves redirecting the child to appropriate behavior, and 11) teachers should model appropriate behavior.

Doyle (1986) completed a thorough review of classroom organization and management research through the mid 1980's. In summarizing the major themes evident in this research, Doyle stated that classroom management focuses on establishing and maintaining a sense or order in the classroom. Since management is most apparent when discipline concerns have created a threat to order, most of the research has studied ways to address discipline concerns rather than ways to establish and maintain a sense of order. Therefore,

> Classroom management is fundamentally a process of solving the problem of order in classrooms rather than the problems of misbehavior or student engagement. …High engagement and low levels of inappropriate and disruptive behavior are by-products of an effective program of classroom organization and management (Doyle, 1986, p. 423).

Classrooms are complex, highly dynamic systems. Thus, order must be thought of not as a static condition or as an absence of action but rather as "a harmony of action with structure and purpose" (Doyle, 1986, p. 424), jointly enacted by teachers and students. "Order in classrooms is context-specific and held in place by balancing a large array of forces and processes. As a result, order is often fragile, a condition that can be easily disrupted by mistakes, intrusions, and

unpredictable events. Order is not something teachers achieve once and for all so they can get on with the business of instruction. Rather, it is a permanent pressure on classroom life, and a teacher continually faces the need to monitor and protect the programs of action in a classroom." (p. 424). "The key to a teacher's success in management appears to be his or her (a) understanding of the likely configuration of events in the classroom, and (b) skill in monitoring and guiding activities in light of this information. From this perspective, management effectiveness cannot be defined solely in terms of rules for behavior. Effectiveness must also include such cognitive dimensions as comprehension and interpretation, skills which are necessary for recognizing when to act and how to improvise classroom events to meet immediate circumstances" (p. 424).

Brophy (1988) suggests that with two decades worth of research (late 1960's to late 1980's) on effective classroom management and discipline strategies, student teachers could be taught at least some of the skills they will need in order to effectively manage their classrooms. In some instances, student teachers will need to learn how to think about and reflect on guidance, discipline, and management issues, particularly those situations that are less predictable. Thus, Brophy (1988) advocates that teacher educators should teach preservice teachers how to manage a classroom, along with teaching how to teach content. For more details on how he suggests that preservice teachers might learn these skills, see Brophy (1988).

In 2001, Cotton synthesized the research, to date, on classroom management, generating a list of strategies used by effective teachers to minimize or prevent many discipline concerns. Teachers who effectively manage their classroom a) hold and communicate high expectations for student learning and behavior while maintaining personal warmth and encouragement, b) both establish and clearly teaching classroom rules and procedures, reviewing these frequently at the

beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year, c) carefully explain the connection

between students' misbehavior and teacher-imposed sanctions or consequences, d) enforce

classroom rules promptly, consistently, and equitably, e) help students develop a sense of

belonging and self-discipline, f) maintain a brisk pace for instruction and make smooth

transitions between activities, and g) monitor classroom activities and provide feedback and

reinforcement. For more on this topic, review Cotton (2001).

Appendix B

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Larger Research Project

From Which This Data Was Drawn

The program implementation framework (Cummings & Abell, 2005) provided the initial

thinking behind this research. While the initial development of this framework served the

practical purpose of organizing large amounts of information into categories and was done with

no intention of providing a theoretical framework, over the course of the last five years, it has

become my personal theory of influences on educational programming. When I shared this

framework with members of my committee, they immediately recognized it as a dynamic system

of influences taking an ecological perspective and suggested that I look for ways to further

ground it within existing developmental theory. Thus, by grounding this research in dynamic

systems (Thelen & Smith, 1998) and ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner &

Monroe, 1998), I have more fully recognizing the heritage of the program implementation

framework.

*Program Implementation Framework*

The program implementation framework developed as part of my thesis research

(Cummings, 1999) and recently revised (Cummings & Abell, 2005) provided the basic

theoretical starting point for this project. In essence, this framework proposes that a variety of

issues or factors influence how a program design is implemented. These factors can be divided

into several main categories – program participants, program staff, organizational climate,

community, and the political, economic, and cultural environment. The Program Implementation

framework is similar to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, except that, rather than

looking at an individual in context, this framework looks at a program in context. Specifically,

for this study, I defined "program" as "everything that occurred within the Maroon Room classroom at the Lab School." Thus, when developing the interview guide (see Appendix C), I asked questions about the children and their parents, all of the teachers, other Lab School paid or student "staff," the organizational climate of the classroom and of the Lab School, the university and local community, and regional or world events that may have impacted the classroom.

*Dynamic Systems Theories*

Dynamic systems theories may be best thought of as a general framework for individual development. These theories do not focus on some specific aspect of development but rather attempt to show the process of development. Because of the focus on specifically how the developing system works, dynamic systems theory can inform a study of the classroom teaching process. Since each teacher in the classroom can be thought of as one part of the teaching system in the room, dynamic systems theory requires that I look not at some overall picture of "teaching" but at each individual teacher.

Dynamic systems theories state that development is continuous. Who we are today is a function of all the experiences we have had in the past. And today's experiences will affect who we become in the future. This suggests that my study needed to not only focus on each teacher as they currently were but should ask questions and seek information about their prior school-related teaching and learning experiences, their prior knowledge of what it means to teach, and their future goals. This way, the individual is situated within their own developmental trajectory, rather than me assuming a trajectory for them or disregarding that trajectory all together.

A dynamic systems approach uses the idea of coupling, that is "that all components of the developing system are continually linked and mutually interactive within the individual and between the individual and the environment" (Thelen & Smith, 1998, p. 625). Thus, a teacher's

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internal processes influence their classroom teaching. Also, each teacher influences and is influenced by the environment -- the other teachers in the room, the children, parents, administration, and classroom layout and materials. Thus, I collected in-action data as well as end-of-semester interview questions that focused on these various aspects of the classroom and larger lab school environment influence each teacher. At the same time, "the environment" includes other people, materials, and places that are not shared by all the teachers' in the classroom. I also sought the influences of these non-shared environments on each teacher.

The acceptance of variability is another aspect of dynamic systems theory that informs this research. Because development is dynamic, occurring over time and through various experiences interacting with internal and external systems of the individual, variability is to be expected. I can expect that no two teachers will experience teaching in the same classroom in exactly the same way, regardless of how similar their previous experiences and professional goals may be. A dynamic systems approach assumes that there is no one "right way" to be a competent teacher and that there is no one "right path" to becoming a competent teacher.

Finally, the concept of stability may be useful for this study. One's teaching ability stems in part from whether or not that person is reliable enough to enact a general set of teaching behaviors while remaining flexible enough to "think on one's feet" when unexpected challenges arise. A teacher who demonstrates this ability is considered to be stable while a teacher who does not is considered unstable. This idea of stability may demonstrate itself in the teacher's sense of comfort in providing guidance.

### Bioecological Model

Bronfenbrenner and Monroe (1998) thoroughly explain revisions to the ecological model Bronfenbrenner proposed in 1979. One aspect of these revisions is to shift the focus from

developmentally relevant environments to characteristics of the developing individuals within those environments. Bronfenbrenner (1989) critiqued his own theory, stating that the original ecological theory tended to obscure the developing individual in its emphasis on the environments that influence that individual. I need to pay attention to this critique as well since two major influences of teaching and learning are the teachers and the students.

Interpersonal characteristics that influence development include dispositions, resources, and the ability to invite or discourage reactions from the environment. Thus, I explored how these characteristics played out within the process of teaching and learning. In what ways were teachers influenced by their own interpersonal characteristics? In what ways was teaching influenced by the interpersonal characteristics of each individual teacher and child in the classroom setting? These questions recognize the influences of various microsystems. In exploring mesosystem influences, I sought to understand dyadic influences or how the various teachers and children influence one another. In looking at the exosystem, I sought to understand how a student's home life may influence a teacher's decisions regarding how and what they taught. I also explored how the school culture influenced what was taught in the classroom and how access to specific resources in the community influenced what was taught. I could explore macrosystem influences by looking at how the larger cultural mileau influences classroom teaching.

Appendix C

Research Paradigms

This study, and the larger research project on which it was based, was a phenomenological teacher- research case study. Since teacher research is a subset of action research, I elected to briefly review action research. In addition, I reviewed teacher-research, phenomenology, and case studies.

*Action Research*

The goal of action research is to seek practical solutions to issues and problems in the lives of the researchers or the community. Action research is often participatory, involving those researched as participants in the research process (Stringer, 1996). One reason for conducting action research is that "practitioners face recurrent crises that are outside the scope of their professional expertise" (Stringer, 1996, p. 2) but through researching the problem thoroughly, these practitioners can develop effective solutions to their concerns. Action research is personally appealing in its ability to identify and address real-world, programmatic challenges. Teacher research is one form of action research.

*Teacher Research*

Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice by posing questions and exploring problems they have in the classroom (Schön, 1983, 1987). Teacher research is, simply, a systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers. There are two categories of teacher research. One relates to conceptual research and is dominated by essays by teachers related to their experiences. The other category – of which this study is a part -- is empirical research. These studies employ methods of data collection (particularly using journals and oral inquiries to explore individual practice or classroom and school issues), analysis, and interpretation.

(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). The primary goal of teacher research is to help teachers redefine their teaching practices and renew their commitment to teaching (Stremmel, Fu, & Hill, 2002). Further, "teacher research is transformative, enabling the teachers to develop a better understanding of themselves, their classrooms, and their practice through the act of reflective inquiry" (Stremmel, 2002). This particular research project provided an opportunity for myself and the other "teachers" who participated in conversations and interviews with me to reflect on and to develop a better understanding of ourselves and of influences on our teaching.

*Phenomenology*

Phenomenology serves as another theoretical perspective informing this research. The purpose of phenomenology is to get at the essence of lived experience through seeking out what people experience and how they interpret those experiences. With a phenomenological study, it is important for researchers to experience as closely as possible the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002); since the phenomenon under study was influences on classroom teaching and I was the supervising teacher in the classroom in which the study took place, I was able to experience a myriad of influences on classroom teaching. For the more focused question on how pre-service teachers make sense of and use constructive guidance at the Lab School classroom, I have been able to recall some of my own struggles as a new VT Child Development Lab School teacher and can relate this to the student teachers' experiences. In addition, I have used member checks as a means of insuring my interpretations are reflective of the student teachers' true meaning. While phenomenology allows a researcher to examine the individual's experience of a specific phenomenon (in this case, constructive guidance), this approach also requires that the researcher determine the shared essence(s) of that experience (Patton, 2002). Thus, I have analyzed for common themes across teachers. Criteria for evaluating phenomenological research

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includes the extent to which the researcher is able to illuminate shared meanings/experiences of the phenomenon while still recognizing aspects of the phenomenon that are shared by only a subset of research participants or by one participant. Articulating reasons why one participant's experience may have led to a different interpretation of the phenomenon is desirable. Throughout the study report, I share examples when one or two individuals' experience of classroom guidance differ from the others.

## *Case Studies*

Case studies are "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). The larger research project is a case study about influences on teaching in the Maroon AM classroom; as such, the current study is also a case study. Considering the classroom to represent "a case" makes sense because this study's framework takes a classroom ecology perspective (Shulman, 1986) in that it presumes "teaching is a highly complex, context-specific, interactive activity in which differences across classrooms, schools, and communities are critically important" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1983, p. 6). Further, by studying the experiences of one group of student teachers in one preschool classroom, I was able to control certain aspects of the classroom context (i.e. the parents and the children remain the same for each teacher). Wolcott (1995) states that a "case study should not be seen as a method or strategy but as an end product of field oriented research" (p. 36).

Appendix D

Virginia Tech Child Development Laboratory School

Philosophy, Program Goals and Statement on the Curriculum

Philosophy

The philosophy of the Child Development Laboratory School is grounded in social constructivist theory. This theoretical view holds that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interactions. Classrooms are inherently social places wherein teachers and children negotiate the curriculum together.

Our aim is to offer a developmentally appropriate environment in which children are given opportunities to make choices, pursue their own questions and concerns, connect what is known to the unknown, and be successful as they explore and discover through play, informal learning activities, and projects. Guided participation in the activities of children is the primary role of the teacher, and play and the expression of ideas through interactions with adults, peers, and the environment are the primary business of children. Because we believe the parent-child relationship is the most important social context for learning and development, we strive to maintain close connections between home and school, and value the cultural and individual perspectives that families bring to the program.

Program Goals

We strive to:

- Provide an environment that teaches--one that is aesthetically beautiful and respectful of each inhabitant--one that allows for greater connections to be made among the protagonists--and one that will constantly engage and challenge both children and adults.

- Focus our attention and appreciation on the time we spend together--emphasizing our work and study--creating more opportunities to collaborate and celebrate our community of learners.

- Nourish a negotiated program--one that reflects the members of our community--one that allows for the contributions of each of our diverse memberships--and one that is respectfully documented, displayed and reflected upon.

- Create opportunities for continued research--expanding our community to include others with similar interests--developing projects that might inform--and continuously questioning, searching and learning together.

Curriculum

The curriculum at the Lab School is inspired by Developmentally Appropriate Practices, the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and most especially by the children! It is our goal to be attentive to the interests and theories of all children and to then craft a curriculum that is respectfully responsive. We are enthused and inspired by the many ways in which children represent their understanding of the world. These hundreds of languages (Edwards, Gandini, Forman, 1998) are nourished and nurtured in our school. You will see a wide variety of materials and experiences available for exploration. Children will have the opportunity to playfully explore through music, drama, light, shadow, reflection, paint, clay, wire, dance, climbing, hiding, seeking, literature, science experiments, building, and more and more. Sometimes a long-term exploration becomes an investigation of a concept or theory that is developed among a group of children. When the kernels of these projects occur, we are ready and available to nurture them and to assist the children in the development of their ideas. Often, the studio space will be used

to hold small group meetings regarding the representation of ideas. This space houses many

eclectic materials that the children often find useful as they bring their notions to reality.

Appendix E

Autobiography: Recognizing "The Teacher" Within

As a child, I knew I was a teacher. I was someone who could turn the light of understanding on for others, who could motivate others to gain new skills and apply new understandings. But I knew I did not want to be a *school*teacher. For me, school limited what I should learn and how I should go about learning. I wanted to teach and learn about life but not in some pre-determined order or based on someone else's view of life. But where else could I apply my natural ability to teach others if not in the most obvious place in which people learn – school? And so, I dismissed considering myself a teacher since "teacher" is a word reserved for one who teaches in a school.

It was ironic, then, that at college I worked as a "teacher" at a campus child development lab and at a campus child care facility. Here, I was given the title "teacher" but I still did not embrace it, because, after all, I was not getting my teaching certificate so I really wasn't a teacher. And I was glad I wasn't getting my teaching certificate because planning curriculum at both these facilities reminded me that the topics in the planned school curriculum are disconnected from the interests the children pursue in their play and after school hours.

While earning my Masters I took on several teaching roles. I helped the wives of international students learn to speak and understand more English. I put together a manual to help child educators talk with parents about how the activities they did with the child helped the child develop skills they would use throughout their life and gave parents ideas of ways to continue helping their child build each skill. I helped undergraduate and graduate students in their studies. And I applied for and was granted recognition as a Certified Family Life Educator

through the National Council on Family Relations. I was beginning to see myself as a teacher in some non-traditional sense of the word.

Then as an Extension Agent for 4-H/Youth Development, I modeled conflict resolution tactics, group decision-making, responsibility, and self-discipline for adult volunteers. I had to manage their disruptive behaviors in much the same way a teacher has to manage disruptive behaviors in the classroom. I was also conducting 4-H club meetings in twenty plus school classrooms each month. The purpose of these meetings were to help the 4th and 5th grade students develop life skills like leadership, public speaking, working as part of a team, resolving conflicts, thinking critically, and accepting differences. I would purposefully plan club lessons around developing these skills in fun, interactive ways. The students began referring to me as "the 4-H teacher". It didn't sound so strange to be called teacher. I definitely saw that I was teaching and making a difference for these students. I was still glad I had not decided to "become a teacher." Teaching in a school setting was definitely not something I would enjoy – too much pressure to insure that the children learned discrete facts, even more pressure now that the school systems were using standardized test scores to make decisions about whether or not teachers were truly educating their students. I might be a teacher in some sense of the word but I was, thankfully, not a schoolteacher.

I had not been able to work with young children much at all through 4-H, though I created a "cloverbud" category of 4-H membership in the county program for children under nine years of age. The home school club had quite a few cloverbud members and I was fascinated watching some of their club meetings. So, when I was offered a graduate teaching assistantship as a supervising teacher at the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School, I welcomed the opportunity (even as a remained hesitant about having to teach discrete facts).

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Prior to taking on the supervising teacher role, I went through a multi-day training session. We discussed the multiple roles of a head teacher in a child development lab, the management skills that would be helpful, the need to carefully observe and reflect on what was happening in the room, and working with parents, co-teachers, and student interns. Then, we discussed the aspect that both excited and confused me – emergent curriculum. I had no prior experience with emergent curriculum. I got the basic idea – observe and listen to the children and build the curriculum around those things they are showing an interest in during their play and conversations with each other. "But how does this work in practice? Don't I need to develop lesson plans around colors, shapes, the seasons, the alphabet? How will the children learn these things if I don't build it into the plan ahead of time?" I asked. I was assured that it would happen in the course of their play, if we as teachers were careful observers and facilitators of the children's explorations. I was given examples of sustained inquiries in which previous children and teachers had engaged, of how the children's actions and questions became the basis of both short- and long-term projects or investigations. It sounded intriguing, respectful, fascinating and, somehow, I not only had to make it work but had to model it for the student teachers who would work with me in my afternoon classroom.

And so I began tentatively, planning the first few days curriculum based on information I gleaned during home visits. Then, noting the children's interest in how water moves, we explored movement in general but soon came back to movement and manipulation of water. Little did I know that the class would embark on a year-long investigation of water through which we would teach not only how water can be moved but also basic concepts of water pressure and suction, how pumps work, how waterfalls can be made, gravity, color recognition and how colors blend to form other colors. The children articulated how water moves through the

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tubes and pump and created models of waterfalls and described in detail what they had created. They delighted in teachers writing down their words and capturing their work in photographs. This was not the teaching I had experienced growing up or in my undergraduate work. This is the type of learning that is meaningful to the learner. Facts are integrated into the investigation. The children learn that blue and red make purple after experimenting with mixing these colors into the water numerous times. No fact is discrete -- to be memorized but not "learned". Am I a teacher? Yes, in the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School, I became a teacher.

I was not forced to teach using the didactic strategy of teaching which holds that the teacher has important knowledge that the child must learn and that the best way for the child to learn is through listening, taking notes, and reading. I was free to teach what the children wanted to know using an emergent inquiry-based approach. I became, for the first time in a classroom setting, a true "teacher".

I value the reciprocity in mutual learning, in discussion, in discovering the answers. I teach through facilitating learning, sharing ideas, observing closely and offering a new piece of information or a new tool (i.e. a water pump or a straw) at just the right time. Knowing each person (child or adult) as an individual and maintaining an open, trusting relationship with each person are key aspects of my teaching. I have learned to recognize each person's skills and interests and to encourage them to help each other learn.

I am a constant learner. The children are my teachers, too. They remind me to enjoy learning, to pursue questions intensely, to do "experiments" regularly. They teach me the names of dinosaurs and the importance of reading and acting out books like *Rainbow Fish* (Pfister, 1992) and *Little Blue and Little Yellow* (Lionni, 1959). They teach me about the difficulties of teaching -- of meeting each child's personal and educational needs while maintaining a positive

classroom environment and not letting outside pressures reduce the joy of learning. Student teachers have also been my teachers. They remind me that what I have come to think of as "everyday, common knowledge" actually is a specialized set of concepts and skills – something that takes time to learn and skillfully employ. My desire now is to help others become strong social constructivist teachers whose teaching and guidance strategies evidence a view of the child as capable, competent, and inquisitive.

Appendix F

IRB Approval

**Virginia Tech**
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

**Institutional Review Board**

Dr. David M. Moore
IRB (Human Subjects)Chair
Assistant Vice Provost for Research Compliance
CVM Phase II- Duckpond Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24061-0442
Office: 540/231-4991; FAX: 540/231-6033
email: moored@vt.edu

DATE:          February 10, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO:          Victoria R. Fu  Human Development 0416
             Rebekah Cummings

FROM:        David Moore

SUBJECT:     **IRB Expedited Approval:** "Multiple Influences of Classroom Teaching"  IRB #
             04-039

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol.  The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective February 4, 2004.

cc: File
    Department Reviewer Joyce Arditti  HD 0416

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*An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution*

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**Institutional Review Board**

Dr. David M. Moore
IRB (Human Subjects)Chair
Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance
CVM Phase II- Duckpond Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24061-0442
Office: 540/231-4991; FAX: 540/231-6033
email: moored@vt.edu

DATE:       February 17, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO:        Victoria R. Fu  Human Development 0416
           Rebekah Cummings

FROM:      David Moore

SUBJECT:   **IRB Expedited Continuation**:   "Multiple Influences of Classroom Teaching"
           IRB # 05-108 ref 04-039

This memo is regarding the above referenced protocol which was previously granted expedited approval by the IRB on February 4, 2004. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110.  Pursuant to your request of last week, as Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval for extension of the study for a period of 12 months, effective as of February 4, 2005.

Approval of your research by the IRB provides the appropriate review as required by federal and state laws regarding human subject research.  It is your responsibility to report to the IRB any adverse reactions that can be attributed to this study.

To continue the project past the 12-month approval period, a continuing review application must be submitted (30) days prior to the anniversary of the original approval date and a summary of the project to date must be provided.  Our office will send you a reminder of this (60) days prior to the anniversary date.

Virginia Tech has an approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA00000572, exp. 7/20/07) on file with OHRP, and its IRB Registration Number is IRB00000667.

cc: File
    Department Reviewer Joyce Arditti HD 0416

Appendix G

Interview Guide: Influences on Teaching

Throughout the semester, we've been talking about influences on us. I'd like to get your personal thoughts and experiences regarding those things that you see as influencing what you do and how you go about doing it when you are in the classroom. Before we begin do you have any initial thoughts to share?

**Daily Experiences**

- How would you describe a typical day in the classroom? What kinds of decisions do you have to make throughout the day?
- What roles did you notice yourself taking in the classroom?
    - What are your preferred roles?
    - To what extent do you view yourself as a teacher? Why?
- Lots of things influence us as teachers. What things do you see as the most influential on a daily basis?
    - How so?

**Extraordinary Moments**

- In the classroom, teachers might experience extra-ordinary moments in which they say "this is what it is all about." Take a moment to think about an example or two and then share those with me.
    - How would you describe your role/roles in these moments?
    - What have you done to set the stage for this moment to occur?

**Possible Influences**

- What do you see as the things that have had the greatest influence on your teaching?
- What role has ………….. played in how you teach?
    - Childhood experiences

- o Coursework
- o Principles Of Working with Children and Parents
- o Other courses?
- o Co-teachers
- o Conversations with fellow students
- o the Head Teacher
- o the Supervising Teacher
- One thing that has come up in teacher talks is that the way we feel (physically and emotionally) can impact what we do in the classroom.
  - o On a typical day in the room, how do you feel?
  - o What about on a non-typical day? How are you feeling?
  - o What are the differences in these days? What makes it a typical or non-typical day?
  - o What if any differences do you notice in how you interact with the children?

**Classroom Behavioral Concerns**

- What types of classroom behavior has challenged and concerned you the most?

- What is your current take on what you are allowed to do as a teacher to facilitate learning and manage the classroom?
  - o What discipline measures are you allowed to use?
  - o What are you not allowed to do?

**Parents**

- In what ways, if any, have the parents in this room influenced your actions in the classroom?

**Working with Other Teachers in the Room**

- In what ways, if any, has Teacher Talks and other communications among the teachers in this classroom influenced you?
- In what ways has co-teaching been a positive experience? A negative experience?

**Beyond Our Classroom**

- What, if any, influences have you noted as a result of sharing a classroom with another group of teachers and children (AM or PM)?
- Are there ways in which people in other classrooms, administration, and Adult Day Services have influenced your actions in the classroom?
- To what extent have the evaluations of your supervising teacher (me) influenced you? How did it influence your behavior in the classroom?
- In what ways, if any, did course requirements influence you behavior in the classroom?

**Being a Lab**

- How do you think that working in a Child Development Lab School has influenced you?
    - Are any of your teacher responsibilities things you do specifically because this is a Lab School?
    - Do you see any influences on the classroom and on your teaching as a result of this being a lab school setting rather than another preschool setting?
    - How does having the observation booth or the see-through window influence your thinking/your teaching?
    - How does the lab school philosophy and set-up affect how you interact with the children and what you do in the room?

**Most Significant Aspects of Teaching Experience**

- Can you think of a metaphor that would capture the most significant aspects of your teaching experience this year?
- How do you anticipate that metaphor to change over time?

# REBEKAH AINE RUTH CUMMINGS

**Education:**

Ph. D., Human Development                                              August 2005
Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA
        Concentrations: Child Development, Early Childhood Education

M.S., Human Development and Family Studies                    December 1999
Auburn University, Auburn, AL
        Concentrations: Child Development, Family Economics

B.A., Child and Family Studies                                            May 1997
Berea College, Berea, KY
        Concentrations: Child Development, Family Studies

**Certificates:**

Certified Family Life Educator                                              May 1999
National Council on Family Relations

**Career-Related Experience:**

7/2005 –        Director, Lucy Brock Child Development Center, Appalachian State University,
Present          Boone, NC

8/2004-        Course Instructor, Curriculum and Assessment I (HD 3244 ) & II (HD 4214),
5/2005;          Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA
8/2003-            Co-taught undergraduate course in curriculum and assessment, served as primary course
5/2004            instructor for approximately ten students, provided ongoing feedback and evaluation.

1/2005-         Assistant to the Curriculum Director, Virginia Tech Child Development Center for Learning
5/2005             and Research, Blacksburg, VA
                      Provide on-going support and training to full-time classroom teachers

8/2002-        Supervising Teacher, Virginia Tech Child Development Laboratory School,
12/2004          Blacksburg, VA
                      Served as head teacher for preschool classroom; planned and implemented a
                      developmentally appropriate, emergent curriculum; supervised practicum students;
                      communicated regularly with parents via newsletters and face-to-face meetings;
                      documented children's learning.

5/2004-        Research Assistant, Virginia Tech Child Development Laboratory School,
7/2004          Blacksburg, VA
                      Conducted formative evaluation of the Child Development Lab School-Adult Day
                      Services intergenerational program; recommended changes to program operation based
                      on the evaluation; conducted training sessions for new program staff; observed and
                      documented running records of summer intergenerational opportunities.

**Career-Related Experience (continued):**

10/1999-   County Extension Agent for 4-H/Youth Development, University of Kentucky
7/2002        Cooperative Extension Service, Marshall County, Benton, KY
                  Recruited and trained volunteers to work with youth, coordinated and developed
                  programs to benefit youth, provided direction for overall county 4-H program, sought
                  monetary and in-kind support for the county 4-H program; supervised and evaluated
                  office staff.

6/1998-   Extension Assistant, Begin Education Early Program, Alabama Cooperative Extension
8/1999        System, Auburn University, Auburn, AL
                  Developed and coordinated program assessment, edited early childhood training guide
                  for program staff, facilitated program staff training.

7/1997-   Assistant Director, Graduate and Family Housing, Housing and Residence Life,
8/1998        Auburn University, Auburn, AL
                  Provided social and educational programs for youth and adult development, recognized
                  community needs and garnered monetary and in-kind support to meet these needs,
                  encouraged collaboration among residents from different countries to develop a sense of
                  community.

8/1996-   Supervisor, Teacher Assistants, Child Development Laboratory, Berea College,
5/1997        Berea, KY
                  Modeled effective teaching and interaction skills for staff and parents, developed and
                  implemented preschool curriculum units in social, emotional, and cognitive development.

2/1995-   Teacher, Child Development Laboratory, Berea College, Berea, KY
5/1996        Wrote parent newsletters about children's development and learning activities, facilitated
                  small group activities.

6/96-8/96;  Teacher, Campus Child Care, Berea College, Berea, KY
6/95-8/95      Taught children ages 1-5, provided developmentally-appropriate learning activities,
                  worked with parents.

## Publications:

Cummings, R., Mosher, K., & Fu, V. (2003, Fall). A pedagogy based on relationships. *Human
       Development*. Virginia Polytechnic and State University, p. 9.

## Thesis:

Cummings, R. (1999). *An organizational framework of factors affecting family-based program
       implementation: Exploration of community-level factors associated with the Begin Education
       Early program.* Auburn University: Auburn, AL.

## Extension Publications:

Cummings, R. & Abell, E. (Eds.) (1999). *Talking with parents about child development: Early
       childhood training guide.* Auburn, AL: Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

**Presentations at Regional and National Conferences:**

Cummings, R. (2004. March). *More than the teachers and children: Multiple influences on the classroom.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Virginia Association of Early Childhood Educators, Roanoke, VA.

Cummings, R., McCubbins, J., Mosher, K., & Rose, S. (2003, March). *Documentation tools to enhance and extend curriculum.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Virginia Association of Early Childhood Educators, Richmond, VA.

Cummings, R. (2003, March). *It takes a village: The role of community in your early childhood education and parenting education program.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Virginia Association of Early Childhood Educators, Richmond, VA.

Cummings, R. (2003, April). *Community influences on programs for children, youth, and families.* Paper presented at the Southeastern Symposium on Child and Family Development, Auburn, AL.

Cummings, R. (2002, February). *Recognizing factors affecting your program's success.* Paper presented at the Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Forum, Lexington, Kentucky.

Abell, E., Shields, E.B., & Cummings, R. (1999, February). *From implementation to sustainability: Questions arising along the journey.* Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk Initiative, Washington, DC.

Cummings, R. & Abell, E. (1999, February). *Factors affecting the implementation and replication of family-based programming: A review of the literature and  illustrations from the Begin Education Early program.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Conference of Family Relations, Atlanta, GA.