ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS,
                          KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICES
                          RELATED TO CLASSROOM
                          MANAGEMENT

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                          2011

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This study examined preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management. The rationale for researching this topic is based on the role of teachers in the special education referral process, the poor success rate for inclusion for children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic classroom behaviors, and the data on expulsion rates for preschool students.

A multiple case study design was used to explore the following questions: (a) What are the components of classroom management in preschool? (b) What is the role of the preschool teacher in classroom management? (c) What are the sources of preschool teachers' knowledge about classroom management? (d) How have preschool teachers evolved or developed as classroom managers over the course of their careers? (e) How are preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management manifested in their classroom practices? (f) Do preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that support or contradict their stated beliefs?

The research setting was Hawthorne Academy, a private community-based preschool in a suburban county of a mid-Atlantic state. Participants included six

teachers divided over three classrooms. Data were collected via interviews, classroom observations, and document review. Findings are presented as case summaries of each classroom and participant, a descriptive analysis of the setting, and themes from a cross-case analysis outlined in the context of the research questions.

The participants in this study described teaching children the expectations of school as a component of classroom management, along with establishing structure and routines and fostering emotional development. Participants consistently cited other teachers as sources of knowledge about classroom management, but feedback from accumulated classroom experience was the strongest influence. There was considerable evidence to substantiate that participants' knowledge about classroom management came from personal and informal sources. Language was the tool that teachers employed to manifest classroom management beliefs and knowledge in their practices, and their practices were consistent with their stated beliefs. Findings are discussed in connection to pertinent literature, Bronfenbrenner's (2006) bioecological model of human development, and for their potential relevance to preschool children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior.

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE, AND

PRACTICES RELATED TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Daniel, for your endless love and

support, and for always picking up the pieces.

And to our beautiful children: Malka, Yosef, and Ezra. I am so lucky to be your

Mommy.

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- To the teachers of Hawthorne Academy, for giving so generously of your time and sharing many years of accumulated experiences and expertise with me.

- To my family and friends, I feel blessed to be surrounded by so much love, encouragement and support.

The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice --
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do --
determined to save
the only life you could save.

~ Mary Oliver ~

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Increasing numbers of children are having their first school experience at a very young age. In 2005, 43% of three-year-olds and 69% of four-year-olds attended a center-based preschool program, meaning a student entering kindergarten might have been in a classroom setting for one or two years prior (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). At the same time, preschool children are expelled at a higher rate than students in grades K-12 (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shahar, 2006). This alarming problem relates directly to the ways in which early childhood teachers conceptualize and practice classroom management, however there is limited research in this area. Furthermore, teacher-child relationships in the early years of school have been significantly correlated with a number of student outcomes including adjustment to school, academic success and social competence (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004).

Teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management are also uniquely salient to the field of special education. Abidin and Robinson (2002) identified problematic student behavior as the best predictor of teachers' special education referrals, next to academic competence. Teachers are virtually always the ones who initiate the referral process and their opinions regarding student performance are considered vital. It follows that exploring teachers' perspectives on classroom management is necessary in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role that they play in determining educational placement, and whether their judgments concerning student behavior result in uniform and appropriate standards for referral. Furthermore, as greater numbers of children with

disabilities receive educational services in inclusive settings, teacher perceptions of their behavior is essential to understanding the components of successful inclusion. Chazan (1994) found that general education teachers are less likely to tolerate difficult student behavior than special education teachers. This could be a function of a different emphasis placed on classroom management by elementary and special education teacher preparation programs. While the former focuses on large group management skills, the latter stresses individualized intervention strategies and assessment of their effectiveness (Gilberts & Lignugaris-Kraft, 1997). This relates directly to teacher understanding and practice of classroom management and the resulting impact on the inclusion of children with disabilities who demonstrate behavioral difficulties.

Classroom Management

Many worlds converge within a classroom. The teacher, students, parents, curriculum, principal, school, district, public policy, and cultural beliefs are just some of the structures that interact with one another on a multitude of levels to create the framework in which children are educated. The resulting challenge for educational researchers is to isolate precise variables for measurement and analysis while accounting for the multidimensional nature of the context. The body of literature on classroom management is a prime example of this premise. It crosses over several disciplines (education, psychology, sociology, anthropology), as researchers examine such diverse areas as self-regulation, social/moral development, behavioral interventions, conflict resolution, teacher/student beliefs, and the influence of race, gender and class on educational institutions in general and on classroom dynamics in

particular. These divergent strands of research make it difficult to synthesize the literature on classroom management, outline a single trajectory for how this area of study developed, or to examine it as a distinct field of inquiry (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Although there are particular methodological and theoretical orientations that distinguish one area of study from another, there is consensus among many researchers that classroom management is a complex construct that requires multifaceted and sophisticated examination (Fries & Cochran-Smith, 2006). An outgrowth of this increasing tendency to conceptualize classroom management broadly has resulted in a more expansive definition of the term to include a variety of teacher actions: establishing/maintaining an orderly environment conducive to academic instruction, developing positive relationships with students, fostering social/emotional development, and addressing problematic behavior (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). See Appendix A for a glossary of terms.

Teachers' Beliefs and Knowledge

An underlying theme that unites all of classroom management research, irrespective of which conceptual model one adopts, is the centrality of the teacher in all classroom procedures. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, researchers were interested in elucidating teacher factors that contributed to effective instruction by examining observable teacher behavior and the ways in which it correlated with student achievement (Calderhead, 1996; Fang, 1996). This "process-product" model was presumed to be unidirectional, that is teacher performance resulted directly in student performance. Over time this paradigm shifted as researchers became more

interested in "teacher cognition", the mental processes that drive teachers' thinking, knowledge, beliefs, planning, and decision-making. The models that have emerged from this body of literature paint a multidirectional picture of the teacher-student dynamic in the classroom. Teachers plan and execute instruction based on thought processes, knowledge, and beliefs, students respond in specific ways, teacher behavior is then modified accordingly, and so on (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006).

Research on teachers' beliefs and knowledge is a major focus of teacher cognition studies. Pajares (1992) details the effort on the part of some scholars to operationally define and distinguish between knowledge and beliefs. Although there is consensus that knowledge generally refers to formal, objective, and explicit information while beliefs are seen as more subjective and implicit, many researchers support the notion that teachers' ideas "fall in the realm of what is both known and believed" and that "beliefs and knowledge [are] generally overlapping constructs" (Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006, p. 716). Just the term 'beliefs' has been used interchangeably in the research literature with a number of other words including attitudes, perceptions, conceptions, perspectives, judgments, and so forth (Pajares, 1992). Semantics aside, teachers' beliefs and knowledge are a vital component to understanding classroom processes. Meta-analyses of relevant studies have concluded that teachers' beliefs affect their actions, which in turn impacts student learning (Fang, 1996; Pajares, 1992). Finally, there is an important feature of teacher beliefs to bear in mind when examining this area of research. Preservice teachers have spent thousands of hours in their professional arena, the school/classroom, by the time they reach college. They tend to have well developed beliefs about an array

of educational issues, which impacts their training and teaching experience (Pajares, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy, et al., 2006).

Teachers' Beliefs and Knowledge about Classroom Management

Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) outline some of the central themes that have emerged from the literature on teacher beliefs and knowledge about classroom management. A number of studies have explored teachers' *orientations to management*, referring to their philosophical outlook toward the nature of the teacher-student relationship. This is perceived as existing along a continuum from 'controlling' or 'custodial' to 'democratic' or 'humanistic'. The body of literature on orientations to management is closely related to studies that have explored teachers' beliefs about discipline, as both are concerned with the varying perspectives teachers take on the role of adults in child development (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). Beliefs about discipline have been conceptualized using categories that are meant to describe a particular viewpoint. Although the terminology used to label each category changes from one study to the next, there are considerable similarities in the theoretical content underlying them, as researchers explore whether teachers focus primarily on modifying behavior, restoring order, developing social skills, or fostering a teacher-student relationship in their approach to discipline. One subset of research on teachers' orientations to management explores the beliefs and knowledge of pre-service teachers as a means of assessing the quality of teacher education programs. Two other important constructs discussed in the literature on teachers' beliefs about classroom management are *self-efficacy/perception of control* and *causal attributions*. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception of his or her

ability to perform a behavior or accomplish something in a given situation, and is a recurring theme in teacher belief research. It is often applied in studies about discipline as 'perception of control', meaning how teachers view their level of control over their own classrooms. The second construct is teachers' causal attributions, or the reasons given to explain students' problem behaviors. Studies that have examined one or more of the abovementioned themes will be reviewed in the following chapter.

Preschool Teachers' Classroom Management Practices

The primary goal of research on beliefs and knowledge is to identify factors that influence teachers' practices. Carter and Doyle (2006) outline key features of classroom management in early childhood settings. The first is designing the educational environment to facilitate academic learning, ensure safety, and sustain order. Achieving this requires teachers to focus on arranging the physical setup of the classroom, establishing rules/routines/procedures for the various activities of the day, and monitoring student tasks and classroom events. Emphasizing these processes is supported by an ecological approach to classroom management, which is grounded in the work of Kounin and Gump (see Carter & Doyle). This perspective stresses that teacher and student behaviors are contextual; one needs a thorough understanding of the setting, or habitat to understand what is happening in it. Doyle (2006) outlines six characteristics of the classroom-as-context. It is a place where heterogeneous groups of people compete for limited resources to accomplish a variety of goals. Numerous things happen simultaneously in the classroom, events are unpredictable, and teachers do not have time to reflect but must react immediately to ever changing circumstances. Finally, the classroom is a public arena where students and teachers

accumulate a shared set of experiences that serve as a foundation for all subsequent occurrences. Viewing classroom management through an ecological framework involves recognizing that each classroom activity is its own context, with unique rules and procedures. Students and teachers must adapt as routines and expectations change. This is particularly salient in early childhood settings where transitions between various types of activities typically occur at a relatively frequent pace throughout the day.

The second feature of classroom management in early childhood settings is the 'social curriculum', which aims to foster children's moral and prosocial development. This is also uniquely relevant to early childhood education since major developmental areas, cognitive, social and emotional are interconnected in young children, making it difficult to address one without focusing on another (Carter & Doyle, 2006). Establishing a social curriculum adds a pedagogical dimension to classroom management, as teachers explicitly teach the skills necessary for successful social interactions, problem solving, conflict resolution, resilience, and self-regulation. Furthermore, teachers attempt to facilitate the development of moral characteristics such as honesty, responsibility, justice, citizenship, and respect (Carter & Doyle, 2006). There are formal curriculum materials available for early childhood classrooms that include lessons and materials for teaching social skills and encouraging moral growth. Alternatively, some districts, schools and individual teachers use a more informal curriculum, typically developed locally, toward the same end.

The final and most obvious component of classroom management is
discipline, or the actions teachers take to address problematic behavior. Discipline
can take on different forms depending on one's perspective. A classic behavioral
approach is based on the premise that positive and negative behaviors are promoted
or discouraged through reinforcement, or lack thereof. Teachers use reinforcement
systems with groups of students and as an intervention strategy to address the specific
behavior concerns of individual children (Landrum & Kauffman, 2006). However,
the ecological paradigm and social curriculum described by Carter and Doyle (2006)
paints a different picture of the discipline process. With its emphasis on establishing
the educational environment, the ecological approach stresses the proactive aspects of
classroom management, but does not provide a clear protocol for the reactive actions
necessary for discipline. Misbehaviors are viewed as context specific, so that the
teacher might react differently to two instances of the same behavior depending on
the circumstances. The primary function of discipline in an ecological model is to
restore order to the environment that was deliberately established by the teacher with
its requisite rules, routines, and procedures. Implicit in perceiving discipline as
actions taken to sustain order is that teachers address misbehavior as quickly and
quietly as possible so as to minimize disruption (Doyle, 2006). Conversely, a social
curriculum approach to classroom management may result in teachers who view
discipline as an opportunity to teach children what constitutes appropriate behavior, a
process that might be more protracted and perceived as a learning opportunity rather
than an obstacle (Nucci, 2006). When enhancing students' social and moral
development is a component of classroom management, "*how* a teacher achieves

order is as important as *whether* a teacher achieves order" (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p.4). In the following chapter, I will review studies that explore the extent to which preschool teachers' classroom management practices reflect a multidimensional perspective that includes establishing the environment, a social curriculum, and discipline.

Preschool Teachers and the Relationship Between Beliefs/Knowledge and Practices

Within the body of literature on teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management, there are a limited number of studies that focus specifically on early childhood educators. The majority of research on teachers' beliefs in early childhood is centered on the theme of *developmentally appropriate practice* (DAP). Teacher beliefs are influenced by many factors including personal background, educational/professional experiences, content knowledge, and theoretical orientations about child development, the nature of learning, and the role of teachers (Calderhead, 1996; Fang, 1996; Pajares, 1992). Many of these beliefs are embedded in the culture of the discipline. For early childhood educators, that culture has been largely defined by the use of DAP. As delineated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), this is an umbrella term that encompasses a range of principles about how children, birth to age eight, develop and learn (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The optimal developmentally appropriate setting is purposefully set up by the teacher/caregiver to maximize opportunities for child-initiated activity and independent problem solving. Young children learn by actively engaging with age specific, culturally sensitive materials in a safe, nurturing environment. DAP dictates

that adults view child development as an individualistic process that includes multiple domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical) and that the teacher's primary purpose is to serve as an actively involved facilitator of learning. NAEYC recently revised their DAP guidelines in response to changes that have emerged within the early childhood education community over the past several years, an outgrowth of the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation's impact on the broader educational climate. Some of the themes discussed in the new position statement include but are not limited to reducing the achievement gap, providing strong curricular content in preschool, and the need for ongoing, systematic assessment of student progress (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Although these changes represent somewhat of a shift in focus, the fundamental principles of developmentally appropriate practice remain the same.

The primary question examined in the research on teachers' beliefs about DAP is the relationship between beliefs and practice, or the extent to which early childhood educators have developmentally appropriate beliefs and the ways in which that impacts their classroom practices. In a review of the literature on teachers' beliefs and practices from the reading/literacy field, Fang (1996) identified two themes: *consistency* and *inconsistency*. While some teachers reported beliefs about reading that were consistent with how they taught during observed lessons, others performed in ways that were incongruous with their stated beliefs. The resulting question is why teachers' instructional practices would be inconsistent with their beliefs. Fang discusses multiple possibilities including the "complexities of classroom life" (p.53), conflicting messages from teacher education programs and

schools, the various mandates teachers receive that might interfere with their ability to provide the type of instruction they want to implement, as well as possible methodological issues (e.g., whether terms used in questionnaires are universally understood/properly defined).

My decision to include research on early childhood teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices in the literature review for this study is based on a number of factors, one being the limited research on classroom management beliefs for this population. In addition, this body of literature emphasizes the relationship between beliefs and practice, an important consideration for classroom management as well. Finally, DAP is a broad, holistic framework that includes important aspects of classroom management, such as establishing the educational environment and facilitating social/emotional development. DAP is also more than a list of best practices. It is a conceptual construct that has influenced the field of early childhood education for over 20 years. It is possible that teachers trained to view DAP as the standard by which early childhood programs should operate would have beliefs about classroom management that are embedded in this paradigm.

Theoretical Framework: The Bioecological Model of Human Development

My perspective in approaching any inquiry into preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management is grounded in the assumption that teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and classroom practices develop individually based on unique personal, contextual, and temporal factors. Bronfenbrenner's *bioecological model of human development* provides a theoretical framework to support this assertion. This paradigm posits that human development occurs through *proximal*

processes, the "progressively more complex interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.797). These processes are mitigated by characteristics of the *person*, multidimensional features of the *context* in which the individual operates, and the influence of *time*. As a research design, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model is also referred to as the *Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

While proximal processes are the primary agents of development, person, context, and time moderate their effect. Individual person characteristics include multiple factors from biological to environmental: intelligence, temperament, socioeconomic status, and level of education among others. Context is conceptualized in Bronfenbrenner's theory as a series of concentric layers, or *systems* in which the developing person is embedded, so to speak. The first is the *microsystem*, the structures in which the individual operates, such as family, peers, and workplace. The *mesosystem* is the relationship between the structures of the microsystem. The *exosystem* involves the interaction between a setting that contains the individual and one that does not. For example, the connection between parent workplace and a child's home life (Miller, 2002). Finally, the *macrosystem* is comprised of the cultural patters, beliefs and laws that govern the society in which the developing person is situated. As with context, Bronfenbrenner posits that the influence of time on development is multilayered. *Microtime* is the continuity or discontinuity of a given proximal process, while *mesotime* refers to consistency over longer periods of time (i.e., days, weeks). A component of conceptualizing time as

the degree of continuity in process is the understanding that proximal processes must take place on a regular basis in order for development to occur (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The broadest dimension of time is *macrotime*, the changes in circumstances, events, expectations and culture within society as a whole, which impact development over the course of a lifetime.

The bioecological model of human development can be utilized as a paradigm to describe and conceptualize a research topic, while the corresponding PPCT model can serve as a framework to interpret data. Operationalizing a complex theory invariably results in some difficulty matching the details of the model with the specifics of a particular study, however Bronfenbrenner asserts that, "even when the theoretical and operational requirements of the bioecological model are not met in full, the results can still contribute to understanding the forces that shape human development" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.813). Bearing this in mind, I view preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management as developing through an increasingly complex network of interactions with their students over extended periods of time. These proximal processes are mitigated by individual characteristics of the teacher, such as personality, motivation, background, and educational/teaching experiences. The microsystem for teachers includes the particular characteristics of their students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and family. An example of the mesosystem might be the relationship between school parents and administrators and its subsequent impact on the teacher. The exosystem may consist of the connection between the district office and the teacher or between the students' home life and the teacher. Finally, the macrosystem

could contain factors such as local/state educational policy, cultural beliefs about child behavior and the role of the teacher, as well as broad historical events. According to the bioecological model, teachers will be impacted by all of these factors, but will impact them as well, creating a multidirectional relationship between themselves and their environments. All systems (context) operate concurrently with the teacher (person) during their interactions with students (process), a situation that repeats itself and becomes cumulative (time), collectively contributing to the individualized development of preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practices related to classroom management. As a component of data analysis, this framework can serve as a template onto which the specific concepts and themes that emerge from this study are applied.

Pianta (2006) utilizes a similar theoretical paradigm to analyze a body of research on teacher-student relationships. The teacher and student are at the center of this model and each presents with unique individual characteristics as well as conceptions of their relationship with one another. These factors mitigate *informational exchange processes*, complex bi-directional interactions between the teacher and student that are not comprised of just discrete behaviors, but rather form a feedback loop that includes multiple components such as language, nonverbal communication, and level of engagement (Pianta, 2006). The teacher-student relationship is further moderated by outside influences such as the school setting and culture. This study does not explore the relationship between individual students and their teacher as the unit of analysis, but aims to elucidate "features of individuals" (Myers & Pianta, 2008; Pianta, 2006). Developing a richer, more substantive

understanding of the individual teacher may result in a better understanding of some factors mitigating the relationship. Myers and Pianta (2008) assert that, "Teacher beliefs and perceptions…have been found to be much more salient to the formation of supportive relationships in the classroom than traditional indicators…such as teacher experience and education…Decisions that teachers make every day in the classroom are not only based on their views of their student, but determined by their own beliefs [and] values (p.603)." In the discussion of the results from this study, I will return to Pianta's theoretical paradigm, rooted in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, as a perspective from which to analyze the data.

Summary

Exploring preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management is important in light of the data on preschool expulsion rates and as a means of better understanding the factors that influence the inclusion of preschool-age children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior in general education settings. Classroom management is a multifaceted and complex construct that researchers approach from varied and diverse perspectives. One such perspective is examining teachers' beliefs and knowledge. A strong correlation has been established across domains of educational research between teachers' beliefs/knowledge and their classroom practices. Within the literature on beliefs and knowledge about classroom management, relevant themes include *orientations to management, self-efficacy/ perception of control*, and *causal attributions*. Selections from this body of literature will be reviewed and evaluated in the following chapter.

Since teachers' beliefs and knowledge relate to their practices, another section

of the subsequent chapter focuses on the classroom management practices of

preschool teachers. Features of classroom management practices in early childhood

settings include establishing the learning environment, teaching prosocial behavior,

and discipline. While there is limited research on classroom management beliefs and

knowledge for preschool teachers, there is a body of literature on the level of

consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to DAP.

Consistency between beliefs and practices is an important and relevant consideration

for classroom management as well. Finally, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of

human development is the theoretical framework I use to conceptualize this research

project.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to review and analyze research literature on general education teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management. The rationale for this study is based on the role of teachers in the special education referral process, the success of inclusion for children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic classroom behaviors, and the data on expulsion rates for preschool students, all of which applies to general education teachers and settings. Whenever possible, studies examining early childhood educators and classrooms were selected, however the literature on teachers' beliefs and knowledge related to classroom management is limited for this population.

In the first section of this chapter, I describe the process and criteria for selecting relevant studies. The results from the literature search are organized around the following themes:

➢ Teachers' orientations to management and self-efficacy/ perception of control (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006)

➢ Preservice teachers' orientations to management

➢ Causal attributions (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006)

➢ The development of teachers' management knowledge

➢ Preschool teachers' classroom management practices

➢ Developmentally appropriate practice and the consistency between beliefs and practices

Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview and breakdown of the studies by topic.

Table 1.

Teachers' beliefs and knowledge related to classroom management

Section	Citation	Variables
Teachers' orientations to management and self-efficacy/ perception of control	Appleton & Stanwyck (1996)	Teacher personality, pupil control ideology, leadership style, corporal punishment
	Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy (1990)	Self-efficacy, teacher orientation, control, student motivation
	Emmer & Hickman (1991)	Teacher efficacy, classroom management efficacy, strategy preferences and performance
	Rydell & Henricsson (2004)	Perception of control, teacher orientation, strategy preferences
	Hammarberg & Hagekull (2002)	Perception of control, frequency/intensity of misbehaviors, proportion of boys to girls, classroom size, adult to child ratio
Preservice teachers' orientations to management	Witcher, Jiao, Onwuegbuzie, Collins, James, and Minor (2008)	Orientations to management, perceptions of an effective teacher
	Kaya, Lundeen, & Wolfgang (2010)	Orientations to management
	Kaufman & Moss (2010)	Conceptions of classroom management, anticipated management practices
	Weinstein (1998)	Beliefs about caring and beliefs about order
Causal attributions	Ho (2004)	Cross-cultural comparison: causal attributions
	Mavropoulou & Padeliadu (2002)	Causal attributions and perceptions of control
	Bibou-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogiannidou (2000)	Causal attributions and management strategies
	Bibou-Nakou (2000)	Causal attributions
	Scott-Little & Holloway (1992)	Causal attributions and authority orientation
	Scott-Little & Holloway (1994)	Causal attributions, type of misbehavior, discipline strategy, teacher characteristics
The development of teachers' management knowledge	Garrahy, Cothran, & Kulinna (2005)	Knowledge of classroom management
	Martin (2004)	Knowledge of classroom management

Table 2.

Preschool teachers' classroom management practices and the relationship between beliefs and practices

Section	Citation	Variables
Preschool teachers' classroom management practices	Branson & Demchak (2011)	Classroom management practices and classroom quality
	Quesenberry, Hemmeter, & Ostrosky (2011)	Classroom management practices
	Lara, McCabe, & Brooks-Gun (2000)	Protocol/practices for addressing challenging behaviors and the use of mental health consultants
Developmentally appropriate practice and the consistency between beliefs and practices	Oakes & Caruso (1990)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs, developmentally appropriate practice, authority orientation
	Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, Mosley, & Fleege (1993)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs and developmentally appropriate practice
	McMullen (1999)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs, developmentally appropriate practice, self-efficacy, locus of control, teacher characteristics
	Wilcox-Herzog (2002)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs and developmentally appropriate practice
	Stipek & Byler (1999)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs and developmentally appropriate practice
	Vartuli (1999)	Developmentally appropriate beliefs and developmentally appropriate practice

Literature Search

To gather information on teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management and teachers' beliefs and practices in early childhood education, I conducted an electronic search of the ERIC, EBSCO, and PsychInfo databases. Keywords entered into the databases in varying combinations included *teacher beliefs*, *teacher knowledge, teacher cognition*, *teacher attitudes*, *early childhood*, *preschool*, *classroom management*, *practices, classroom behavior*, *student behavior*, and *developmentally appropriate*. I established criteria for selecting studies in order to maintain a relatively narrow and cohesive topic for discussion, focusing primarily on the dominant themes identified by Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) from the literature on teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management: teachers' orientations to management, self-efficacy/perception of control, and causal attributions. In addition, I searched for studies related to teachers' knowledge of classroom management as well as the classroom management practices and developmentally appropriate beliefs/practices of early childhood educators. The limitations I imposed on this review eliminated studies that compared teacher, student, and parent perceptions of classroom management (or any combination thereof), teacher beliefs regarding the challenging behaviors of a specific disability subgroup (e.g., children with autism), effects of behavior intervention programs, beliefs about inclusion, and analyses that examined classroom management with race/gender from a critical theory perspective.

Ultimately, I identified 26 studies dating back to 1990. The decision to include research from the 1990s was based on a number of factors. The majority of

investigations into teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices were

conducted during this period. Similarly, teachers' orientations to management are not

discussed at length in current literature, with the exception of preservice teachers.

Furthermore, a number of studies from the 1990s focus on particularly noteworthy or

relevant topics such as the construct of teacher efficacy, efficacy in classroom

management, preschool teachers' causal attributions, and whether teachers'

conceptions of classroom management are multidimensional. Including this research

is necessary in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the existing

literature on teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom

management and developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices.

Teachers' Orientations to Management and Self-Efficacy/Perception of Control

Teachers' orientations to management refer to beliefs about the nature of the

teacher-student relationship and the role of the teacher in various classroom practices.

A *custodial* orientation implies strict classroom direction, strong disciplinary

consequences for misbehavior, and an impersonal relationship with students. A

humanistic orientation is characterized by following student initiatives, encouraging

self-discipline, discussion, and close teacher-student relationships (Woolfolk Hoy &

Weinstein, 2006). Teacher orientation has also been referred to as *pupil control*

ideology within the research literature. Appleton and Stanwyck (1996) explored the

correlation between teacher personality, pupil control ideology, and leadership style

and how these variables related to attitudes about corporal punishment. They

administered a personal questionnaire and three additional measures to a group of 115

graduate students employed as teachers in grades K-12. *The Basic Adlerian Scales*

for Interpersonal Success- Adult form (BASIS-A) was used to examine teacher

personality. It is comprised of five scales and numerous subscales organized around

personality characteristics (e.g., "Taking Charge", "Being Cautious", "Striving for

Perfection"). The authors provide some background information on Adlerian

psychological theory, specifically the concept that personality is a behavioral

manifestation of one's underlying beliefs. The second instrument, the *Pupil Control

Ideology Form* (PCI) contains 20 statements structured on a 5-point Likert scale to

assess teacher orientation. The final measure, the *Leader Behavior Description

Questionnaire* (LBDQ) is comprised of 40 items rated on a Likert scale to examine

two aspects of leadership behavior: *Initiating Structure* refers to actions taken to

establish effective organization, communication and goal achievement, while

Consideration refers to behaviors that promote an interpersonal working relationship

between a leader and members of a group. The authors provide alpha values for the

BASIS-A scales along with split-half reliability coefficients for both the PCI and

LBDQ.

Results were computed via t-tests, correlations, and post-hoc analyses.

Participants who scored high and low on the Taking Charge scale of the BASIS-A

had significantly different PCI means, suggesting that teachers with personality

characteristics described in the Taking Charge scale (e.g., dominant, aggressive,

assertive) have a custodial orientation. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation

between PCI scores and the Striving for Perfection subscale of the BASIS-A and a

negative correlation between PCI scores and the Consideration portion of the LBDQ,

the latter result suggesting that teachers with a custodial orientation are less

concerned with establishing relationships as leaders. The authors note at the end of the discussion that the BASIS-A was designed to be analyzed in its entirety, not by individual scale, however this seriously undermines the validity of their analysis. Another significant finding in this study was a difference between PCI means and attitudes about corporal punishment. The choice of corporal punishment as a variable is unusual considering its questionable relevance to a modern day educational setting. Finally, post-hoc analyses revealed significantly higher PCI scores (more custodial) for secondary as opposed to elementary teachers and for males. These findings are interesting, but presented tangentially. It is unclear how the primary focus of this study should be interpreted, since it seems to corroborate what is already known about teachers with a custodial orientation: they are authoritative and less inclined to establish close interpersonal relationships with students.

In an earlier study, Woolfolk, Rosoff, and Hoy (1990) examined teachers' orientations to management along with attitudes about control and student motivation to assess the relationship between these variables and teachers' sense of *self-efficacy*. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception of his or her ability to perform a behavior or accomplish something in a given situation. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore teacher efficacy as a construct. While this term has largely been used to describe teachers' belief in their ability to impact student performance, the authors review relevant literature to suggest that the term needs to be defined more precisely. They adopt a two dimensional model of teacher efficacy described by Gibson and Dembo (1984; as cited in Woolfolk, et al., 1990). *General teaching efficacy* refers to the ability of any teacher to impact achievement regardless of

student background, while *personal teaching efficacy* refers to the effect of a specific teacher.

In this study, 55 sixth and seventh grade language teachers from Hebrew schools (supplemental after-school programs) completed a modified version of Gibson and Dembo's efficacy scale, which contained 22 items structured on a 6-point Likert scale to assess both general and personal teaching efficacy. The researchers established internal consistency reliability and construct validity via alpha calculations and factor analysis. The participants also completed the PCI, the *Problems in School Inventory* (PSI), and a measure of student motivation designed for this study. The PSI contains eight vignettes describing typical classroom misbehaviors with four possible intervention strategies for each scenario. Each choice reflects a different type of teacher reaction to the misbehavior: *highly controlling*, *moderately controlling*, *moderately autonomous*, and *highly autonomous*. Participants rated each option on a 7-point scale. The authors provide test-retest and internal consistency reliability coefficients for these four dimensions, both from the original development of the instrument and this study, however it should be noted that some of the alpha values are low (e.g., .43). Finally, the student motivation instrument examined teachers' beliefs about the use of extrinsic rewards as a motivation technique and their perspective on students' satisfaction with Hebrew school along a 25 item/5-point scale. The researchers tested this measure in a pilot study, performed a factor analysis, and calculated alpha coefficients.

Data analysis revealed a number of significant relationships. High personal teaching efficacy was associated with low pupil control scores, or a humanistic

orientation. Teachers with high general teaching efficacy were also significantly less custodial and promoted student autonomy in their intervention strategies (as per PSI scores). The opposite was also indicated, as teachers with a more custodial orientation favored controlling responses to misbehavior. In addition, a custodial orientation was significantly correlated with the belief that extrinsic rewards are an effective way to motivate students, while the perception of student satisfaction with Hebrew school was negatively associated with a preference for extrinsic rewards. The authors also explored teaching experience as a variable and found no relationship between pupil control ideology and years of experience in either public or religious schools. In general, participants with more experience favored intervention strategies that encouraged student autonomy, however correlations between subscales of the PSI and years teaching in public or religious schools indicated some significant associations between preferences for specific strategies and having more experience teaching in one setting versus the other. Finally, two multiple regression analyses were performed; only general teaching efficacy contributed independently as a predictor of pupil control ideology. While this study has many methodological strengths, particularly the extensive psychometric analyses, the external validity of these findings is limited to Hebrew school teachers. Hebrew school as an institution presents with numerous unique characteristics. It is unclear whether these results would apply to the same participants in a different setting, much less teachers in a typical school environment.

Emmer and Hickman (1991) cite data supporting the factorial distinction between general and personal teaching efficacy, but attempt to further define this

construct psychometrically by investigating whether efficacy in classroom management/discipline is another distinct dimension. The rationale provided for exploring this type of efficacy as a separate domain is that teachers perform behaviors to promote and restore order that are not directly related to academic instruction. The authors designed a teacher efficacy scale comprised of items related to classroom management/discipline taken both from the *Gibson Dembo* (GD) scale and created from concepts in the research literature. Additional general efficacy items with high factor loadings from the GD questionnaire were included to distinguish one construct from the other during factor analysis. The resulting instrument was piloted, revised, and administered in this study to 119 teacher education students and 42 student teachers. Participants completed the efficacy measure and a questionnaire designed to explore the relationship between teacher efficacy and decision making, which contained six vignettes describing student academic and behavior problems. Respondents rated 14 strategies on a 5-point Likert scale for each scenario to indicate how likely they were to use that intervention. Meanwhile, supervisors for 30 of the student teachers completed a measure evaluating the candidates' teaching and managing skills on a 12-item/5-point scale, in order to assess the relationship between efficacy and performance in the classroom. Finally, a subset of participants completed the efficacy measure again, one week after the initial data collection to calculate test-retest reliability.

Three constructs emerged from the factor analysis: *classroom management/ discipline*, e*xternal influences*, and p*ersonal teaching efficacy*. The second factor refers to the belief that student performance is impacted by influences other than the

teacher and contains many items from the general teaching efficacy scale of the GD, while the third factor is virtually identical to the personal teaching efficacy scale of the GD. Three efficacy subscale scores were calculated for each participant and used to compute correlation coefficients, alpha values, and test-retest correlations. Results indicated low correlations between scales on the efficacy measure and moderate internal consistency and test-retest reliability. In the next phase of data analysis, a factor analysis was conducted on the vignette instrument and three constructs emerged: *reductive strategies* (e.g., time out, consequences), *positive strategies* (e.g., praise, modifications), and e*xternal support* (e.g., referral, peer support). These factors were correlated with the efficacy subscales, resulting in significant positive correlations between both the classroom management and personal teaching efficacy subscales and the use of positive strategies, while favoring external influences was negatively correlated with employing positive strategies. These results were anticipated by the researchers, however there was also a positive correlation between high personal teaching efficacy and the use of external support strategies, which the authors suggest might indicate that teachers perceive themselves as having successfully addressed misbehaviors by seeking external support. Finally, there were no significant correlations between student teachers' scores on any of the three efficacy scales and supervisor ratings. Emmer and Hickman posit that high self-efficacy may reflect denial on the part of the teachers or a lack of feedback from the supervisors. This is conjecture, as it could just as well be an indication of how the teacher candidates perceived themselves as a result of student teaching, having received feedback from their supervisors. While the psychometric analysis in this

study is strong, the lack of descriptive information yielded from rating statements and vignettes makes it difficult to interpret the relationship between efficacy and strategy preference/ performance too broadly. Reviewing these findings with the participants could have strengthened validity.

Self-efficacy is sometimes referred to as *perception of control*, applied in classroom management/discipline research to mean how teachers view their level of control over their own classrooms. Rydell and Henricsson (2004) investigated perceived control, examining its relationship to teacher orientation and strategy preferences for managing *externalizing* behaviors. Externalizing behaviors refers to disruptive behaviors such as hyperactivity, defiance, aggression, or inattention (as opposed to *internalizing* behaviors, i.e., extreme shyness, anxiety, and withdrawal). Eighty-six first grade teachers from Sweden participated in this study by completing a demographic data sheet and three questionnaires. In the first instrument, participants were presented with vignettes describing common student misbehaviors and asked to choose one of six possible responses, each representing a different strategy type: Two reflected a custodial orientation ("firm verbal reprimands", "physical restraint"), two a humanistic orientation ("discussion with student", "weak authority"), while the final two described a behavior modification strategy and contacting parents, respectively. Teachers could also respond to the vignette in an open-ended format that was then coded along these six dimensions. Inter-coder reliability was established, and teachers in a pilot study nominated the types of misbehaviors described in the vignettes. However, there was no attempt made to determine the construct validity of the strategy preferences. The second questionnaire in this study assessed perception

of control with 10 items adapted from an existing scale. The final instrument measured teacher orientation along two domains: *attitudes to classroom practices* and *teacher characteristics*. The first section contained eight pairs of statements, each reflecting one custodial and one humanistic practice. Participants chose which described them most accurately. In the second section, teachers rated 21 personal characteristics (e.g., "warm", "empathetic", "in control") on a 7-point scale. Alpha coefficients were provided for the perceived control and teacher characteristic scales (factor analysis generated two constructs for the latter), however there was no reliability or validity information for the classroom practices scale.

Results from the vignette instrument indicated that discussion was by far the most preferred management strategy, followed by contacting parents and weak authority (e.g., pleading, ignoring), while physical restraint was rarely selected. On the teacher orientation measure, participants overwhelmingly emphasized humanistic attitudes toward classroom practices and teacher characteristics. The authors discuss the possibility that social desirability influenced these findings, as the Swedish school system stresses democratic ideals. This is a valid point, however it is also important to note that the teacher orientation measure did not present humanistic and custodial attitudes as a continuum, rather as a choice between one and the other. Given that context, teachers might have selected the statement that most accurately described them, but it does not mean that all the participants shared a humanistic orientation to the same extent. In the next phase of data analysis, correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationships between strategy preferences, perceived control, and teacher orientation. Perceived control was not significantly related to the

teacher orientation measures, however perceived high control was correlated with humanistic strategy preferences (weak authority and contacting parents). Teacher orientation was also associated with strategy preferences; teachers with humanistic attitudes favored discussion, while those with custodial attitudes preferred calling parents and verbal reprimands. The authors performed a regression analysis to determine whether perceived control and teacher orientation interacted in their relationship to strategy preferences and determined that they produced independent effects. Finally, Rydell and Henricsson did include some direct observation of the teachers -one year after the other data were collected as part of another study. The results from this analysis suggest the possibility that teachers' actual classroom intervention strategies are correlated with perceived control and authority orientation, however these findings are preliminary at best given the time lapse. In future research, observations that are an integral part of the design from the beginning would enhance the validity of the self-report.

Hammarberg and Hagekull (2002) used a similar methodological approach to explore preschool teachers' perceived control relative to a number of classroom factors: the frequency and intensity of behavior problems, proportion of boys to girls, classroom size, and adult to child ratio. The authors cite research to support the salience of these variables and hypothesize that more frequent/intense misbehaviors, a high proportion of boys, large classroom size, and a high adult to child ratio would contribute to low perceived control. Forty preschool teachers from Sweden participated by completing two questionnaires. In the *Teacher Control of Child Behavior* scale, respondents rated seven statements of perceived control on a 5-point

scale. This measure was adapted from an existing parenting instrument for this study

and the authors provide an alpha value along with data from a factor analysis.

Participants also completed the *Preschool Behavior Questionnaire* (PBQ) for each

student to identify those with externalizing and internalizing behavior problems.

Alpha and inter-rater reliability coefficients were calculated for this questionnaire.

Correlational analyses indicated effects for the number of externalizing

behaviors and ratio of boys to girls on perceived control, that is, teachers who

reported a high proportion of externalizing behaviors and a high number of male

students scored significantly lower than their counterparts on perceived control in the

classroom. A regression analysis showed that these two variables predict perceived

control independently, suggesting that the number of boys represents its own

challenge to teachers. The number of internalizing behaviors, classroom size, and

adult to child ratio did not contribute significantly to perceived control. The external

validity of this study is limited, not just for culture, but as noted in the article Swedish

children attend preschool for the first time at six-years old. Applying these results to

either three- and four-year old preschool children or six-year old first grade students

in America presents a host of potential confounds. However, the notion that

perceived control/self-efficacy might not be a stable teacher characteristic, but one

that can fluctuate based on contextual factors has significant implications for this area

of research and warrants further investigation.

Summary. The studies reviewed in this section suggest that teachers'

orientations to classroom management are related to personality characteristics,

leadership style, and intervention strategies. A custodial orientation to management

was associated with dominant, assertive personality traits, a decreased likelihood to promote interpersonal relationships as the leader of a group (Appleton & Stanwyck, 1996), using verbal reprimands or calling parents as a management strategy (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004), and an overall preference for controlling responses to misbehavior (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Teachers with a humanistic orientation favored discussion as an intervention strategy (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004) and promoted student autonomy in their reactions to misbehavior (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Results were inconclusive regarding the relationship between teacher orientation and self-efficacy. Woolfolk, et al. (1990) found that teachers with a humanistic orientation demonstrated high general teaching efficacy, while Rydell and Henricsson (2004) did not find a significant association, only a correlation between perceived control and custodial or humanistic intervention strategy preferences. However, a notable finding from the research reviewed thus far is the compelling psychometric analysis to support a multidimensional model of self-efficacy that includes general, personal, and management efficacy (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Woolfolk et al., 1990). Finally, Hammarberg and Hagekull (2002) provided preliminary data to suggest the possibility that self-efficacy is not a stable characteristic, but fluctuates based on contextual factors, such as the number of male students and amount of externalizing behaviors in the classroom.

Preservice Teachers' Orientations to Management

I was unable to identify a current body of literature dedicated to examining teachers' orientations to management. Rather, recent research on this topic focuses on preservice teachers as a means of examining the effectiveness of teacher education

programs. While the population and purpose of these studies are not salient to my

investigation, the conceptual frameworks and findings discussed in this research are

relevant. Witcher, Jiao, Onwuegbuzie, Collins, James, and Minor (2008) explored

whether preservice teachers have a predominant orientation to management and if

that is correlated with their perceptions of what makes an effective teacher. Sixty-

three preservice teachers enrolled in the same education course at a southeastern

university completed two instruments. The *Beliefs on Discipline Inventory* (BODI)

was designed by Wolfgang and Glickman (1986; as cited in Witcher et al., 2008)

based on three discipline styles: non-interventionist, interventionist, and

interactionalist. Non-interventionist also referred to as a *Relationship-Listening*

orientation to management is a humanistic approach characterized by student-

centered discipline strategies. Interventionist, or a *Rules/Reward-Punishment*

orientation to management is a behaviorist approach characterized by positive

reinforcement and negative consequences as discipline strategies. Finally,

interactionalist or *Confronting-Contrasting* is an approach rooted in social-learning

theory and strikes a balance between teacher-directed management strategies and

providing students with opportunities for self-correction and problem solving. The

BODI is comprised of 12 items, each with two response options representing one of

the three discipline orientations, resulting in the possibility of a respondent choosing

one approach up to eight times. Moderate alpha coefficients of .77, .72, and .80 were

calculated for the non-interventionist, interventionist, and interactionalist subscales,

respectively. Participants in this study also completed the *Preservice Teachers'*

Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers Survey (PTPCETS), in which

they were asked to describe and rank 3-6 characteristics of effective teachers via open-ended questions.

Data were analyzed using a sequential mixed methods approach that correlates quantitative and qualitative results. Dependent t-tests on the BODI scores (with Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type I error) indicated that although the greatest percentage of teachers demonstrated an interventionist orientation there was no statistically significant difference between scores on the interventionist and interactionalist subscales, but each was significantly higher that the non-interventionist subscale, with large associated effect sizes. The PTPCETS was analyzed using phenomenological methods whereby responses were divided into individual units and compared to an existing framework of seven effective teacher characteristics previously verified in the research literature. Results confirmed all seven characteristics: student-centered, ethical, effective classroom/behavior manager, competent instructor, enthusiastic about teaching, knowledgeable about subject, and professional. Witcher, et al. do not indicate the use of any qualitative reliability/validity measures for this portion of the data analysis such as searching for disconfirming evidence, expert review, or member checks, any of which would have strengthened the PTPCETS results. The final step of data analysis for this study involved reviewing individual participant's PTPCETS results and assigning a binary value (0 or 1) to each teacher characteristic based on whether that respondent included it in their answers. Percentages were calculated for the prevalence of each characteristic in the preservice teachers' responses and then correlated with the BODI subscales. Student-centeredness was the most commonly cited characteristic of an

effective teacher, but this seemingly contradicts the low non-interventionist, humanistic orientation scores. The second and third most prevalent characteristics were ethicalness and being an effective classroom/behavior manager. The correlational analysis between the BODI subscales and the PTPCETS results indicated that preservice teachers who believe that effective teachers are competent instructors, knowledgeable about their subject areas, and effective classroom/behavior managers are more likely to have an interventionist orientation to management and less likely to be non-interventionists. While the authors of this study discuss these findings in the context of improving teacher education programs, they also note the need for richer qualitative data to better understand the thought patterns behind the participants' responses.

Kaya, Lundeen, and Wolfgang (2010) also used the *Beliefs on Discipline Inventory* (BODI) to analyze preservice teachers' orientations to management before and after student teaching, in order to evaluate whether there was any change as a result of this internship experience. In this study the authors describe the three discipline models of Relationship-Listening (non-interventionist), Confronting-Contracting (interactionalist), and Rules-Consequences (interventionist) as existing along a continuum. Participants included 220 teacher candidates from three southeastern universities. Five elementary education professors, who also supervised participants at their assigned schools, collected data over three semesters. Kaya et al. (2010) used numeric coding for subject anonymity. As in the previous study, the authors reported moderate alpha coefficients for the BODI subscales of .73, .84, and

.76 for Relationship-Listening, Confronting-Contracting, and Rules-Consequences, respectively.

Results were calculated via paired sample t-tests (with Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type I error). There were no variations between university groups; therefore separate analyses were not necessary. Prior to student teaching Rules-Consequences scored significantly higher than Relationship Listening, while Rules-Consequences and Confronting-Contracting were not significantly different after the Bonferroni adjustment. After student teaching Rules-Consequences scored significantly higher that Confronting-Contracting and Relationship-Listening, and Confronting-Contracting was higher than Relationship-Listening. Both before and after student teaching, the preservice teachers in this study favored a Rules-Consequences orientation to management, however there was a significant increase in these scores and a significant drop in Relationship-Listening scores from pre- to post testing. Confronting-Contracting remained steady throughout. Interestingly, the authors note that the first BODI was administered over three semesters while the participants were completing coursework. It is possible that the content of these classes are a confounding variable in interpreting these results. As in the previous study, the authors note the need for qualitative data to better understand why a teacher candidate's orientation to management may change over the course of student teaching.

Kaufman and Moss (2010) utilized qualitative methodology to examine preservice teachers' conceptions of classroom management and their anticipated management practices in order to determine how closely they were aligned.

Participants included 42 elementary and secondary teacher candidates from a New England university, completing the final semester of a five-year joint bachelors/masters degree program and actively engaged in student teaching at a local public school. Data were collected via a survey comprised of nine open-ended questions designed to elicit responses about both beliefs and practices. The authors established content validity through expert review by teacher educators and then piloted the survey with a group of graduate students enrolled in an education seminar.

Data were analyzed using a constant comparison method for coding, rooted in a grounded theory approach. Responses were first divided into units, identified by a focus on one distinct idea. Units were then coded and similar codes were placed into broader categories from which themes were developed. The authors conducted multiple independent and joint readings of the data and searched for disconfirming evidence. Results indicated that preservice teachers in this study primarily defined classroom management as discipline and behavior control, however there was a disconnect between responses to the beliefs and practices questions. While more progressive and humanistic ideals were expressed in the theoretical responses, participants anticipated using more traditional disciplinary classroom management practices. In theory classroom organization and rules were noted as important for students and teachers alike to facilitate order and learning, but in the practical answers were described as a help and support for teachers only so they can maintain order. The authors discuss the results in the context of improving teacher education programs, but also note the limitations in not collecting multiple sources of data or conducting follow-up interviews with the participants for member checks.

In a considerably earlier but related study, Weinstein (1998) explored preservice teachers' beliefs about classroom management from the framework of their perspectives on caring and order. Specifically, the author investigated whether preservice teachers view caring primarily as establishing close interpersonal relationships with students, or if they include more dimensions in their perspective, such as teaching prosocial skills and maintaining an orderly environment conducive to learning. Weinstein also examined teacher candidates' conceptions of order to determine whether they think order is achieved mainly by establishing rules/procedures, or if it also includes aspects of teaching and creating interpersonal relationships. An additional question was whether beliefs about caring and order differed for students entering the program as opposed to those further along in their studies, as well as for elementary versus secondary education teacher candidates. Participants in this study included 141 teacher education students. They completed a *Teacher Beliefs Survey* comprised of six questions related to caring and order. Some were open-ended, as in "list five specific things you might do to indicate you care about the students in your classroom". The others required that participants rank statements in order of importance. These statements were structured along three dimensions: *pedagogy*, *interpersonal relationships*, and *management*. As a validity check, 26 external auditors categorized the items, percent agreement was determined, and the scale was revised accordingly. Although the agreement percentages were relatively high, a factor analysis of the statements in the fixed-choice questions would have bolstered the construct validity of a three-dimensional model for caring and order. The author and an assistant coded responses to the open-ended questions into

pedagogy, interpersonal relationships, and management categories and inter-rater reliability was established. Weinstein identified four additional themes ("parents", "help", "rewards", "other"), however they represented a small minority of responses and were therefore excluded from further analyses. It would be interesting to know whether the author found any disconfirming evidence in these answers.

Results from the open-ended questions indicated that the majority of participants viewed caring in terms of establishing interpersonal relationships and order as the use of management strategies. The author reports a number of significant differences related to the status (entering teacher education student versus student teacher) and level (elementary versus secondary) of the participants. Entering teacher education students were more likely than student teachers to cite pedagogical strategies and interpersonal relationships as ways of establishing order, and significantly less likely to mention management. Meanwhile, student teachers indicated management as a form of caring more than entering students, while secondary teacher candidates were more likely than their elementary counterparts to perceive order and caring as encompassing pedagogical elements. Secondary teacher candidates were also significantly less inclined toward both management strategies for achieving order and interpersonal relationships as a component of caring. These associations are described by the author with accompanying p-values, however there are no correlation coefficients provided. The analysis of the fixed-choice questions revealed low internal consistency reliability for the ranks assigned to the items in each category, therefore the findings are reported as mean scores for individual statements. This study combined aspects of qualitative and quantitative research

designs: the teacher beliefs instrument included open-ended questions with responses coded into conceptual categories, while differences between the level and status of participants were seemingly analyzed statistically. Perhaps the results could be strengthened by a qualitative design that included triangulated and richer sources of data (e.g., interviews) or a quantitative design that established a factorial distinction between management, pedagogy, and interpersonal relationships, while incorporating a regression analysis to predict the effects of level and status.

Summary. The studies reviewed in this section suggest that preservice teachers favor behaviorist discipline strategies centered on rules and consequences (Kaufman & Moss, 2010; Kaya, et al., 2010; Witcher, et al., 2008). This interventionist orientation to management correlates with the belief that effective teachers are characterized as competent instructors who are knowledgeable in their subject areas and effective classroom/behavior managers (Witcher, et al., 2008). Preservice teachers' orientations to management may change over time as a result of student teaching (Kaya, et al., 2010). Furthermore, teacher candidates can develop dissonance between their stated beliefs and anticipated practices related to classroom management (Kaufman & Moss, 2010). When classroom management beliefs are framed in terms of caring and order, preservice teachers demonstrate one-dimensional perspectives, with some notable differences between students entering and completing teacher education programs, as well as between elementary and secondary teacher candidates (Weinstein, 1998). Researchers agree that multiple methods of qualitative data need to be gathered and analyzed in order to develop a substantive understanding of how preservice teachers develop their orientations to management,

the ways in which that evolves over time, and the reasons behind any inconsistencies between beliefs and practices.

Causal Attributions

Causal attributions, the reasons teachers give to account for student misbehavior, is another component of teachers' beliefs related to classroom management (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). It has been explored by researchers in relation to a host of secondary variables including type of behavior, choice of intervention strategy, teachers' authority orientation and perception of control. Ho (2004) conducted a cross-cultural comparison of Chinese and Australian teachers' causal attributions for student misbehavior and whether those explanations varied for different types of behavior. An additional intent on the part of the researcher was to examine whether response patterns within-cultures corresponded to cultural attitudes and expectations. The participants included 204 Australian teachers and 269 Chinese teachers employed in 30 high schools, 15 from each cultural setting. The author used stratified random sampling to divide the schools proportionally by student achievement level: average, below average and above average, and distributed a questionnaire to all the teachers at each site. The respondents evaluated six vignettes describing problem behaviors, two for each of three categories: learning/motivational problems, disruptiveness in class, and inappropriate interpersonal behavior. The vignettes were rated for four factors: students' lack of ability/skills, students' lack of effort/self-discipline, students' family backgrounds, and a teacher/teaching related issue. The misbehavior categories and the attribution factors were based on data from preliminary studies conducted in both cultural settings. In the first study, teachers

were asked to describe common misbehaviors, while in the second they were given the completed vignettes and asked to suggest causal attributions. The author indicates that two teachers from each context reviewed the vignettes "for validity checking" (p. 378), however more specific information on establishing the reliability and validity of the measure is not provided.

Ho (2004) performed a 2 (cultural setting) x 3 (school achievement level) x 4 (causal attribution factors) way ANOVA combining the attribution ratings on all six vignettes to create a composite score that served as the dependent variable. Causal attributions differed between Chinese and Australian teachers, but not based on school achievement level either between groups or across the sample. Post-hoc analysis indicated that both Australian and Chinese teachers identified students' lack of effort/ self- discipline as the most important causal attribution and teacher/teaching-related issues as the least important. However, Australian teachers stressed ability/skills significantly more in their responses, while Chinese teachers placed more emphasis on family factors. In a second phase of data analysis, the researcher provides results from a 2 (cultural setting) x 6 (vignettes) MANOVA, with each of the four causal attribution categories serving as dependent variables, along with post-hoc analysis. These findings identified the similarities and differences between Chinese and Australian teachers' responses for the six types of behavior described in the vignettes (e.g., bullying, talking in class), across each causal attribution category.

The findings from this study provide general information about Chinese and Australian teachers' causal attributions for misbehavior. Both groups favor lack of

student effort/self-discipline, minimize teacher issues, but differ on ability and family factors. The author suggests that this might represent a culturally influenced pattern, as Australia values western-individualistic ideals (i.e., ability), while China is a collectivist society and would expect the family to play an active role in shaping student behavior. If this is in fact accurate, the notion of collective responsibility was not extended to the teacher, as Chinese teachers did not attribute teacher-related causes to any more behaviors than their Australian counterparts. Ho (2004) suggests that teachers in multicultural classrooms need to account for cultural differences in relation to student behavior/ behavioral expectations. While this is a valid point, the findings are still limited in their applicability to students outside of these countries. A Chinese-American family, for example, would likely share some, but not necessarily all of the cultural beliefs and attitudes of a family living in China. However, a researcher looking to explore whether certain attitudes about student behavior are consistent across cultures might use this study.

Rather than examining type of behavior as a variable, Mavropoulou and Padeliadu (2002) explored the relationship between teachers' causal attributions for misbehavior and their perceptions of control. A sample of 305 teachers from Northern Greece received a vignette describing one child with behavior problems and they were asked to rate 12 possible causes, each structured on a 4-point Likert scale. Basic demographic data for the participants was provided excluding the grade level(s) they taught, a potentially important piece of information for both interpretation and replication. The authors cite research to support the types of behaviors illustrated in the vignettes as common classroom misbehaviors and to divide the causal attributions

into three broad categories: pupil-related, family-related, and school-related. However, they do not provide a factor analysis to support this assertion, or any additional attempts to establish the reliability/validity of this questionnaire. A second measure completed by the participants, the *Spheres of Control Scale*, measured their perceived control in personal efficacy, interpersonal relationships, and sociopolitical behavior. Each dimension was measured on a subscale containing 10 items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Here the authors provide alpha values, test-retest correlations, and a factor analysis to support the three facets of perceived control.

Results were calculated via ANOVA and post-hoc comparisons, indicating that teachers attribute problem behavior to pupil- and family-related factors, not to school or teacher factors. The specific subcategories rated significantly were family problems, parental attitude, learning difficulties, and low self-esteem. Teachers scored high on perceptions of control in all areas, but sociopolitical behavior was significantly lower than the other two. Finally, perceived control in interpersonal relationships was the only measure significantly correlated with causal attributions. The authors discuss the results in the context of *ecological systems* theory, Bronfenbrenner's paradigm which views the developing person (in this case the student) as influenced by layers of factors, including self, family, school, society-extending as far as the cultural expectations that provide an overarching context. In considering this approach, the participants were limited in their perspective, since they did not take school- and teacher-related factors into account. As a possible explanation, the authors note that perceived control scores for sociopolitical behavior were significantly lower that the others, perhaps indicating that teachers do not feel

empowered in their role and therefore minimize their impact. Mavropoulou and Padeliadu urge teacher education programs to focus on systems theory in developing teacher attitudes about problem behavior. Despite a thought provoking discussion, there are limitations to consider. Most notably, there is restricted generalizability of the findings to any group outside of this cultural sample. In addition, the vignette is just a short, three-sentence paragraph that seems too simplistic to result in such broad conclusions. Finally, it is interesting that the researchers sought to evaluate the teachers' perceptions of control within their lives in general, not specifically in connection to teaching, without justifying the assumption that job- and life-related attitudes would correspond to one another.

In another study utilizing similar methodology, Bibou-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, and Stogiannidou (2000) evaluated teachers' causal attributions for misbehavior in relation to their management strategies. A sample of 200 elementary school teachers from Northern Greece completed a demographic data sheet and three questionnaires. The first measure rated the frequency of minor misbehaviors divided into four categories: disobedience, "playing the clown", disturbing others, and off-task behavior. In the second questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the above behaviors on a list of eight possible causes, each set on a 5-point Likert scale. The third instrument was structured identically, but described eight intervention strategies that teachers might choose to address the misbehaviors. The researchers indicate that the validity of the second questionnaire was tested in a pilot study, but they do not provide details or additional reliability/validity information for the other measures. However, a factor analysis was conducted on both the causal attribution and

intervention scales for each of the four misbehavior categories. The three factors derived from teachers' causal attributions were teacher-related, external pupil-related, and internal pupil-related explanations. Three constructs also emerged to define the intervention strategies: punishment, "social-integrative" practices, and neutral actions.

Descriptive statistical results identified disobedience and off-task behavior as the most frequently reported problem behaviors. Internal pupil-related factors were the most common causal attribution, while teacher-related factors accounted for the fewest explanations of misbehavior. Teachers chose neutral actions most often as an intervention strategy, whereas punishment was the least used. ANOVA results showed that teachers attribute off-task behavior to external pupil-related causes and disobedience to internal pupil-related explanations, while teachers concur with using neutral actions to address "playing the clown" behaviors and social integrative practices/punishment to deal with disruptive behaviors. Further statistical analyses (t-tests) were calculated to ascertain the relationship between teachers' causal attributions and choice of intervention strategy. The authors assert that the significant findings indicate that teachers prefer certain practices based on their perceived explanation for the misbehavior. While the results point to a correlation between causal attributions and management strategies, the precise nature of this association needs to be examined further to control for other variables that might contribute to choice of intervention. Interestingly, in their discussion Bibou-Nakou et al. (2000) dismiss the validity of neutral actions as an effective strategy and assume that teachers who use them do not have an alternative strategy. This may not be entirely fair as planned ignoring can be a successful method to address negative attention-

seeking behaviors (such as "playing the clown"). The authors note the limited generalizability of the results to any group outside of this cultural context. They also comment on the limitations of the questionnaire format, which is not based on real classroom situations and yields little descriptive information. Multiple measures, including direct classroom observation are needed to understand this topic more fully.

In an attempt to provide a more detailed account of teacher perceptions, Bibou-Nakou (2000) designed a qualitative study to explore teachers' causal attributions for problem behavior. Elementary school teachers (presumably from Greece, where the study is authored) who completed inservice training in child developmental psychopathology and psychosocial well-being were asked to lead focus groups in pairs. Each group consisted of 8-10 teachers who had not completed the above coursework. The questions centered around defining and evaluating school problems, causal attributions for school problems, comments on the continuity of problems, and ways of dealing with them. All the focus groups were audiotaped and transcribed. Within the course of conversation, teachers described students that were "good" and those that did not match the prototype (indicating, perhaps, some sort of cultural norm/expectation). Teachers described broad categories of "problem behavior", borrowing many psychological terms (e.g., "aggression", "poor socialization"). There was a tendency to describe extreme situations, even though these presumably do not occur that frequently. Teachers attributed the cause of problem behaviors to parental/family factors, and sometimes to child factors, particularly immaturity. When teacher- or school-related factors were suggested, the participants rejected them and provided explanations emphasizing that teachers are

doing the best that they can and are asked to take on roles outside of their job description.

Bibou-Nakou (2000) concluded that a shift in thinking is necessary, with teachers emphasizing what they can control. The focus groups were an excellent means of accessing a richer source of data. Using teacher pairs to lead the discussions ensured maximum comfort for the participants, and a greater likelihood that their answers reflected their actual opinions. The study is replete with direct quotations that support the conclusions drawn from the data. However, the author could have done more to improve the credibility of the results. There is little or no demographic data on the participants and there was no prescribed protocol for the moderators to follow. More importantly, the questions were developed based on "common sense knowledge" (p. 93), as opposed to previous research. Finally, measures such as member checks and an external auditor would have contributed to the reliability of the data analysis.

In an earlier study, Scott-Little and Holloway (1992) explored causal attributions relative to teachers' authority orientations. Forty female caregivers from 34 childcare centers participated; each served as head teacher in a classroom where 50 percent or more of the children were four years old. The participants were observed for two hours during which the researcher recorded detailed accounts of the first two demonstrated instances of aggression or noncompliance, including the child involved, a description of the misbehavior, and the teacher's response. These responses were coded on a 4-point scale for "power assertion", the extent to which the teacher exerted her authority when addressing the misbehaviors. The authors

explain the criteria for choosing each rating and provide examples. Inter-observer reliability was established for identifying the incidents, as was inter-coder reliability for the ratings. The second measure, examining causal attributions was assessed via interviews, where the teachers were asked to describe why they thought the children involved in the recorded misbehaviors had acted out. Their responses were coded along three dimensions of causality that are part of a theoretical paradigm reviewed by the authors in the introduction. These are the locus of causality (internal or external to the child), controllability by the child, and whether the cause of behavior is stable over time or the result of a temporary circumstance. Inter-coder reliability was calculated for each dimension.

The proportion of internal, controllable, and stable causal attributions for each caregiver was correlated with her power assertion ratings. Teachers who described misbehaviors as internal and controllable were significantly more likely to exert authority in their responses. The level of stability ascribed to the behavior was not significantly associated with caregivers' power assertions. An ordered regression analysis confirmed these results after controlling for the varied amounts of education, training and childcare experience completed by the participants. In their discussion of the results, the authors acknowledge that caregivers' reactions to misbehavior are undoubtedly influenced by many factors, but examining causal attributions is one approach toward dissecting the complexity of teacher-student interactions. The use of real classroom scenarios and teacher interviews in this study avoids some of the concerns that are often raised with hypothetical vignette questionnaires, such as the constraints of predetermined response categories and the generalizability of the

findings to actual classroom situations. However, evaluating only two instances of aggression or noncompliance with particular students still limits the extent to which these findings represent a general pattern of teacher beliefs about causal attributions or their authority orientations when responding to misbehavior.

Scott-Little and Holloway (1994) worked with the same group of participants (judging by the identical demographic information) to examine the relationship between causal attributions and type of misbehavior, choice of discipline strategy, and caregiver characteristics (education, training, experience). Teachers completed three measures. The first contained four hypothetical vignettes of misbehavior in a childcare classroom. Two scenarios described *norm violations*, aggression toward people or property, while the other two were examples of *failures to behave altruistically*, or a failure to share/help. Participants rated each vignette for internal, external, controllable and stable causal attributions on a 3-point scale. In the second questionnaire, the caregivers rated 11 discipline responses for the two types of misbehavior (norm violations and failure to behave altruistically) on a 3-point scale. These strategies included punishment, ignoring, redirection, and forcing the behavior, as well as how important they felt it was to intervene at all. The final measure was a 15-item scale adapted from the *Pupil Control Ideology Instrument* (PCI) to evaluate authority orientation. The researchers computed an alpha coefficient for this instrument, however they did not provide any reliability or validity information for the first two questionnaires.

One composite score was generated for norm violations and another for failure to behave altruistically across each of the causal attribution categories and for

each management strategy. Repeated measures ANOVAs were calculated to assess

the relationship between type of misbehavior and causal attribution ratings. External

and stable factors were ascribed to norm violations significantly more than for

failures to behave altruistically. Meanwhile, caregivers rated failures to behave

altruistically as controllable. Correlations were performed for each type of

misbehavior between the causal attribution ratings (internal, external, controllable,

stable) and four caregiver characteristics: authority orientation, education, training,

and experience in childcare, generating a total of 32 coefficients. For norm

violations, teachers who were more authoritarian and had less training and education

favored internal explanations for behavior, and caregivers with less training also

emphasized stable attributions. Meanwhile, for failures to behave altruistically,

participants with less training stressed internal causal attributions. They also

minimized controllability, as did teachers with less education. There was a

significant relationship between caregivers with less experience and external

explanations. Further correlational analyses were calculated for each type of

misbehavior between the four causal attribution categories and each of the 11

intervention strategies, generating a total of 88 coefficients. Caregivers who favored

internal explanations for behavior were more likely to respond forcefully to both

types of misbehavior. Failure to behave altruistically was negatively correlated with

scolding and forcing behavior, but positively associated with ignoring and redirecting.

Ordered regression analyses examined these relationships further while controlling

for caregivers' authority orientation, education, training, and experience. For norm

violations, internal causal attributions were positively correlated with disapproval and

sternness, while teachers who ascribed stable factors to behavior emphasized the importance of responding to the incident, but were less likely to force behavior. Finally, for failures to behave altruistically, internal causal attributions were positively correlated with redirecting and disapproval, while external attributions were negatively associated with ignoring, but teachers who favored this explanation were more likely to use inductive reasoning to explain to the child why the misbehavior was inappropriate.

The data suggest that caregivers might attribute causal explanations for misbehavior differently depending on the type of behavior. This finding is preliminary since it is undetermined whether two hypothetical scenarios each for norm violations and failures to behave altruistically are representative of all behaviors that might fall under these categories. A measure that included more items and an attempt to establish construct validity or internal consistency reliability would increase understanding of this relationship. The authors hypothesized that teachers who were authoritarian or who had less education/training/experience were more likely to favor internal explanations for misbehavior. The data supported this in some cases (e.g., authoritarian caregivers with less training and education attributed internal causes to norm violations), however it was contradicted in others (e.g., teachers with less experience favored external explanations for failures to behave altruistically). The authors do not highlight this inconsistency but they do note the absence of a strong data pattern to interpret the association between causal attributions and intervention strategies, which they ascribe to the multidimensional nature of this complex relationship. The researchers also discuss the possibility that social

desirability influenced participants' responses on the intervention strategy questionnaire. Further research is necessary to elucidate the interactions between causal attributions, teacher responses, authority orientation, and education/training/experience.

Summary. A consistent finding of the studies reviewed in this section was that teachers favored pupil/family related causal attributions for misbehavior over school/teacher explanations (Bibou-Nakou, 2000; Bibou-Nakou, et al., 2000; Ho, 2004; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002). However, data from Ho (2004) suggested the possibility that cultural differences might impact whether teachers emphasize student or family factors. Furthermore, while off-task behavior was correlated with a preference for external pupil related causal attributions, disobedience was related to internal pupil related explanations, indicating that teachers might associate particular student related attributions with different types of misbehavior (Bibou-Nakou, et al., 2000). Finally, Scott-Little and Holloway (1992; 1994) demonstrated a connection between causal attributions and intervention strategies: Preschool teachers who favored internal, controllable student related explanations were more likely to exert authority and respond forcefully to misbehavior.

The Development of Teachers' Management Knowledge

The following two studies explored teacher perceptions of classroom management using the framework of *knowledge* rather than beliefs. Garrahy, Cothran, and Kulinna (2005) cite research literature to support a three-dimensional conceptualization of this term: *Pedagogical knowledge* refers to general knowledge about effective teaching practices, *subject-matter knowledge* is specific knowledge of

teaching content, while *pedagogical content knowledge* implies the synthesis of the first two domains. The authors further acknowledge the lack of research related to teachers' pedagogical knowledge of classroom management, particularly studies that include teachers' voices as a source of data on their perspectives. For the purpose of this study, management was defined as a range of behaviors that teachers engage in to create an optimal learning environment, as the researchers explored what teachers know about management, how that knowledge was acquired, and how it changed over time. Twenty elementary physical education teachers were interviewed; 12 in person and 8 via telephone. The researchers created a guide with questions and follow-up probes to structure the interviews. Sessions were recorded, transcribed, and shared with the teachers for member checks. Although the authors assert that data triangulation occurred in this study through the use of multiple teachers from diverse settings and three different researchers, perhaps the design could have been strengthened further by including another source of data, such as observations of the participants.

Data analysis involved the constant comparison and analytic induction methods to identify themes from the interviews. The authors provide a thorough description of the coding process and note one case of disconfirming evidence. Three final themes included *knowledge origin and influences*, *knowledge evolution*, and *knowledge content*. Trial and error/learning from children's reactions were the most frequently cited sources of knowledge. Teachers also noted the influence of colleagues, student teaching mentors, and professional development. Only one participant credited the coursework from her teacher education program as

contributing to her management knowledge; the other teachers agreed that their

programs either provided minimal information on this topic or taught it in a way that

was not applicable to a real school setting. With regard to knowledge evolution,

many teachers reported that change occurred gradually and involved more than just

adopting new strategies, but included a philosophical shift toward a more humanistic

orientation. Some credited changing to increased confidence, while others attributed

it to societal and school policy shifts. Finally, teachers' content knowledge included

the importance of consistency and stressed democratic values such as understanding

students, developing mutual respect, and modeling appropriate behavior. Participants

also emphasized students' responsibility for their own behavior and cited written self-

reflection as a means toward this end. In future research, it would be interesting to

apply these themes toward classroom teachers' knowledge about management. The

authors note that elementary physical education teachers need to adapt their

classroom management strategies to multiple grade levels, which sets them apart from

classroom teachers. An equally significant confounding variable is the entirely

different nature of physical education and academic instruction.

Martin (2004) also investigated how teachers' knowledge of classroom

management develops by closely following three beginning elementary school

teachers through the first two years of teaching. Data sources were triangulated to

include interviews, observations, and teacher education portfolios. Interviews

occurred at the start and end of student teaching and 11 times over the following two

years. The portfolios were created while the participants were students and included

items related to educational philosophy and classroom management. Observations

occurred throughout the two-year teaching period. Data analysis was a continuous process that involved transcribing interviews, summarizing field observations, coding, and looking for disconfirming evidence. Findings were shared with the participants for member checks. Martin created a conceptual framework for this study based on prior research and theoretical perspectives, which paints a picture of classroom management as a complex process influenced by the interaction of teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs and contextual classroom conditions.

Analyses of the portfolios and interviews indicated that all three teachers began teaching with the belief that classroom management involves creating a "positive learning environment" (p. 406). The participants also shared a number of other perspectives such as the importance of organization and caring for, understanding, and respecting students. While all three teachers reported and demonstrated difficulty with classroom management initially, two were able to move beyond it and achieve success while the third was not. The author provides a detailed description of the differences in personalities, teaching styles, student populations, and school demographics among the participants, but asserts that these circumstances did not seem to account for this finding. Instead, Martin identified four themes that emerged from the interviews, observations, and portfolios of the successful teachers, but were absent from the conceptions of the struggling teacher: assuming a role of authority, explicit teaching of social skills, task analysis, and self-management. The participants who overcame their difficulties with classroom management believed it was important to establish authority as teachers along with clear expectations of appropriate student behavior. They provided direct instruction in social skills for

various academic tasks and classroom activities (e.g. how to work with a partner).

Furthermore, these teachers employed task analysis to understand what their students

were expected to do. Finally, they understood the need to control personal emotional

reactions when addressing problematic behavior. Interestingly, these teachers

attributed their conceptions of classroom management to a teacher education course

that the third teacher had not taken, as opposed to the previous study in which

participants cited the irrelevance of such courses. The author makes a compelling

case for the results of the analysis. The two studies reviewed in this section suggest

that training in classroom management varies across teacher education programs,

with promising results for those that provide high quality preparation.

Preschool Teachers' Classroom Management Practices

As delineated in Chapter 1, Carter and Doyle (2006) describe a three-

dimensional approach to classroom management practices in early childhood settings.

The preschool teacher intentionally designs the educational environment to facilitate

academic learning, ensure safety, and sustain order. A social curriculum is utilized to

explicitly teach students the skills necessary for successful social interactions,

problem solving, conflict resolution, resilience, and self-regulation. At the same time,

early childhood educators implement discipline strategies to directly address

problematic behavior as it occurs. Preschool teachers whose classroom management

practices feature all of these components are considered to employ best practices

(Carter & Doyle, 2006; Sandall & Schwartz, 2002). In this section, I review two

studies that explore the extent to which preschool teachers' classroom management

practices are multidimensional and one that examines teacher/program procedures for

addressing problematic behaviors. The majority of studies on classroom management practices in early childhood settings focus on the effects of implementing specific behavior intervention strategies or social curricula, which is outside the scope of this study.

Branson and Demchak (2011) frame their study around a classroom management approach called the *Teaching Pyramid* (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; as cited in Branson & Demchak, 2011). It is a three-tiered model that emphasizes establishing teacher-student relationships and the classroom environment to prevent problematic behaviors (*universal level*), explicitly teaching prosocial behaviors (*secondary level*), and implementing strategies for addressing problematic behaviors (*targeted level*). While the Teaching Pyramid is intended for use with 3-5 year olds, the authors were interested in using the program's assessment tool as a rubric of best practices in order to explore the extent to which toddler teachers demonstrate multidimensional classroom management practices. The *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for Preschool Classrooms* or TPOT (Hemmeter & Fox, 2006; as cited in Branson & Demchak, 2011) was designed to evaluate the degree to which preschool teachers employ universal, secondary, and targeted classroom management strategies. It is comprised of 38 items over three sections and is scored via teacher interview and classroom observation. There are no psychometric reliability or validity measurements calculated for this instrument. The *Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale* (ITERS) was also administered to determine whether classroom management practices correlate with classroom quality. The ITERS contains 35 items that assess the physical and social environment in

infant-toddler childcare settings. Inter-rater, test-retest, and internal consistency

reliability coefficients are provided for this instrument from a prior study, but should

ideally have been calculated for the purpose of this investigation. Participants in this

study included four toddler teachers, two from separate Head Start sites, and one each

from college campus and community childcare centers. Data were collected through

structured interviews and two 2-hour participant observation sessions.

The authors used a concurrent explanatory design for data analysis. This

mixed methods approach utilizes qualitative data to expand on and clarify

quantitative results. The TPOT and ITERS were scored and means calculated. Items

on both instruments were then coded and codes merged to create themes. Scores

were then analyzed based on these themes and TPOT and ITERS results were

compared. Findings indicated that all four toddler teachers demonstrated a number of

universal, secondary, and targeted classroom management strategies, meaning they

each employed some practices to prevent problematic behaviors, promote prosocial

behaviors, and address persistent challenging behaviors. Universal strategies were

rated highest and within this category responsive practices related to teacher-student

relationships (e.g., greeting students upon arrival, generating supportive

conversations, and speaking with children at eye level) were more prevalent than

preventive practices related to establishing the classroom environment. While some

preventive practices were observed (e.g., providing warnings before transitions)

posted visual schedules and rules were noticeably absent in all four classrooms and

planning/preparing in advance of activities was only apparent with one teacher. For

secondary strategies, scores were also scattered. Teachers used books and songs to

teach children about emotions, but relied more on naturally occurring "teachable" moments to reinforce social skills and problem solving strategies, rather than using a more systematic approach such as a social curriculum. Finally, the portion of the TPOT that examines targeted strategies focuses more on process and procedures for addressing problematic behaviors than on specific interventions. Involving families scored high across all four classrooms, while only two teachers endorsed consulting outside experts and formal behavior plans were not developed. The ITERS scores indicated a rating of 'excellent' for three of the classroom environments and one as 'good'. The classroom with the lowest quality rating implemented fewer Teaching Pyramid practices than the other classrooms, however the lack of statistical analysis makes it difficult to evaluate the significance of this finding. Another limitation of this study (noted by the authors) is the generalizability of the TPOT to toddler classrooms.

In a similar study Quesenberry, Hemmeter, and Ostrosky (2011) explored whether Head Start programs have a multifaceted approach toward classroom management that includes *promotion* of appropriate behaviors, *prevention* of problematic behaviors, and *intervention* for persistent challenging behaviors. Teacher training, parent involvement, and written policies were also examined as benchmarks of best practice. Six Head Start sites participated in this study. Interviews were conducted with four randomly selected teachers, one mental health consultant, and between one and three administrators from each program. All interviews were recorded and transcribed while 20 percent were also observed by an independent auditor to ensure fidelity of implementation. Documents reviewed included behavior

policies and procedures, the program information report (PIR), and parent handbooks. The authors developed a rubric for data analysis based on Head Start performance standards, the *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for Preschool Classrooms* (TPOT), and relevant research literature. The instrument was reviewed by field experts and piloted. It contains five items: 1) Social and emotional teaching curriculum strategies, 2) Screening, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of children's social-emotional development, 3) Involving families in social-emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors, 4) Supporting children with persistent challenging behaviors, and 5) Training and supporting staff. Data were analyzed using qualitative coding methods and then scored on the rubric. An independent auditor scored the data on the rubric as well and the results were discussed with the authors until 100% consensus was reached.

Results are presented as rubric scores along with quotes from interviews and documents to support the findings. Scores for each item on the rubric ranged from 1-7 and mean scores for the programs ranged from 1.4 to 6.4. Programs received high scores when practices were reported consistently by all staff members and verified in the document analysis. Moderate scores indicated discrepancies in reported practices between staff members and/or a lack of supporting written evidence of policies and procedures. The lowest scoring programs provided little indication of meeting the benchmarks of best practice outlined in the rubric during interviews and had few written policies or procedures. These findings suggest that there is considerable diversity in the quality of classroom management practices in Head Start programs. Sites that rated high in one area tended to rate high in others and vice versa, with one

notable exception. Five of the programs received the lowest possible score for

supporting children with persistent challenging behavior. Although they each used

various strategies to address problematic behavior, they had also expelled students

and lacked written policies in this area. However, these programs did differ in the

steps they took prior to expulsion and levels of parent involvement. The authors

acknowledge the limitations of this study. The assumption that the absence of written

evidence of a practice means it is not implemented may not be accurate.

Triangulation of data sources to include classroom observations and member checks

to verify the results would have strengthened the findings of this study.

     While the two prior studies in this section examined all three aspects of

classroom management in early childhood settings (promotion, prevention, and

intervention), Lara, McCabe, and Brooks-Gunn (2000) examined Head Start

procedures for addressing problematic behaviors (intervention) and the extent to

which these practices were collaborative and included seeking support from mental

health consultants. Twenty-three Head Start staff members across five sites

participated in 2-3 focus groups across a 2-3 month period, each lasting

approximately 75 minutes. Participants included directors, teachers, classroom aides,

home visitors, and social workers. The authors describe the process involved in

obtaining informed consent, collecting demographic information about each program

(via director survey), and establishing rapport. Focus group interviews were semi-

structured, recorded and transcribed, and the facilitators generated notes after each

session. A list of sample questions was provided. Examples included, "How do you

define problematic behaviors?"/ "What strategies do you use to deal with problematic

behaviors?" and "When do you decide to refer children to a mental health consultant?"

Data were analyzed using manual qualitative coding methods and a qualitative software program (NUD*IST) designed to identify recurrent patterns in the focus group transcripts. Lara et al. (2000) organize their findings around the themes of *horizontal* and *vertical* classroom management practices. A horizontal model is characterized by a team approach that involves collaboration on multiple levels. The classroom teacher seeks support and guidance from fellow teachers, the program director, social workers, and mental health consultants, all while communicating regularly with the child's parent(s). Once an intervention strategy is established, the teacher works together with the classroom aide to plan and execute implementation. Four of the five sites demonstrated a horizontal approach to addressing children's problematic behaviors. In contrast, one of the five programs evidenced a vertical model in which teachers reported students' problematic behavior to the program director, but did not seek advice from fellow teachers or communicate regularly with parents. At this site, social workers were perceived more as a resource for parents than teachers and mental health consultants could only be accessed through a formal referral process. Interestingly, Lara et al. also noted a difference in the intervention strategies reported by the programs with a horizontal model versus the one with a vertical approach. While the authors support their assertions with direct quotes from the focus group interviews, this study is missing many of the hallmark reliability and validity measures of qualitative research. Triangulation of data sources to include classroom observations and the review of written program policies for addressing

problematic behaviors, as well as prolonged field engagement and member checks would significantly strengthen these findings.

Summary. The studies reviewed in this section suggest that Head Start teachers demonstrate a number of classroom management practices that promote prosocial behaviors, prevent problematic behaviors, and address persistent challenging behaviors, but these do not represent the full range of best practices identified in the research literature (Branson & Demchak, 2011). Noticeably absent from a number of programs is the use of formal social curricula and clearly defined policies and procedures to support students with persistent challenging behaviors in order to avoid expulsion (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Quesenberry, et al., 2011). However, many Head Start programs seem to endorse and implement a collaborative team approach to meeting students' social-emotional needs (Lara, et al., 2000). Still, there is evidence to suggest considerable differences in the quality of classroom management practices between programs (Quesenberry, et al., 2011).

Developmentally Appropriate Practices and the Consistency Between Beliefs and Practices

Of the aforementioned studies on teachers' beliefs and knowledge related to classroom management only three focused specifically on preschool teachers. Research on teacher beliefs in early childhood has largely centered on the construct of *developmentally appropriate practice* (DAP). Although these studies have incorporated variables from the broader field of teacher belief literature, such as authority orientation and self-efficacy, the research has primarily focused on the consistency between teachers' stated DAP beliefs and their classroom practices and

can serve as a relevant foundation for examining the relationship between beliefs and practices in classroom management. Moreover, DAP is a framework of ideas that has strongly influenced the field of early childhood education and might impact teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management.

Oakes and Caruso (1990) cite evidence to support a lack of developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms, hypothesizing that it is related to teachers' authority orientations. These attitudes are conceptualized along a continuum from "authority sharing" to "authority centered". The researchers in this study expected that authority sharing teachers would demonstrate more developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom than their authority centered colleagues. The participants included 25 public school kindergarten teachers from a small midwestern city. Observational data was collected in one session and coded on the *Teaching Strategies Checklist*, a measure developed for this study based on the developmentally appropriate guidelines from NAEYC and consisting of seven corresponding categories of appropriate and inappropriate practices. In addition, the teachers completed two questionnaires. The *Problems in School Questionnaire* contains vignettes describing typical problem situations in the classroom. Participants rated four responses on a 7-point Likert scale for each scenario to assess their authority orientation. The second measure completed by the teachers was a questionnaire about their educational and professional backgrounds.

The authors embedded the research question and hypothesis within a framework supported by the literature. Specifically, they cite findings to suggest that authority sharing teachers provide many opportunities for their students to actively

engage in self-initiated learning, thereby forging a theoretical connection between authority orientation and developmentally appropriate practice. However, the NAEYC guidelines for the *Teaching Strategies Checklist* were written descriptively, albeit with literature citations, but have never been empirically tested. There was also no attempt made at establishing internal consistency reliability or construct validity for this measure. Inter-observer reliability was calculated for coding the observational data. Whereas the *Problems in School Questionnaire* existed prior to this study, no reliability or validity information is provided for it either.

Results indicated that all but one teacher scored in the authority sharing range, however collectively they demonstrated low levels of developmentally appropriate practice. Although this does not immediately support the hypothesis that authority sharing teachers would engage in more developmentally appropriate practices, individual correlations computed for each category on the checklist and authority orientation scores revealed moderate levels of significance for five of seven items, meaning higher levels of authority sharing were correlated with specific developmentally appropriate practices. In the last phase of data analysis, researchers calculated correlations between authority orientation scores and teachers' backgrounds, including years of experience, degrees/licenses held, and membership in professional organizations. No significant relationships were demonstrated between these variables. While this finding is informative in its own right, it does not add to our understanding of the primary relationship explored in this study, namely the association between authority orientation and level of developmentally appropriate practice. An ordered regression analysis would have been an effective

way to control for background factors while further analyzing the central research question.

Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, Mosley, and Fleege (1993) attempted to address some of the methodological concerns that are raised when designing measures to assess teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices. Motivated by a reported lack of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood classrooms and the possible resulting impact on student growth and achievement, the researchers reviewed a number of studies on this topic in order to address limitations. Specifically, they noted the lack of empirical inquiry behind the NAEYC guidelines and the need to establish construct validity and internal consistency reliability for any measures of teacher beliefs and practices. The investigators also identified a need to examine developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices as existing along a continuum, rather than as dichotomous categories of "appropriate" or "inappropriate". The measures created in response to these concerns were a self-report questionnaire comprised of two components and a corresponding observational checklist. The items for the instruments were all drawn from the NAEYC guidelines. The first part of the questionnaire, the *Teacher Beliefs Scale* (TBS), contained 36 statements that teachers rated along a 5-point Likert scale. The accompanying *Instructional Activities Scale* (IAS) required responses to 34 items regarding how often certain activities and materials are made available to students, and is also set on a 5-point Likert scale. The researchers conducted a factor analysis on the TBA/IAS and tested for internal consistency reliability. Tables were provided outlining factor structures, eigenvalues, alpha coefficients, means and standard

deviations. The observational checklist was derived from the same NAEYC

guidelines with a rating continuum from most appropriate to least appropriate. It

should be noted, however, that there was no separate psychometric analysis provided

for the observational instrument; rather the items were taken directly from the

questionnaire and placed into a checklist format. Ideally, independent reliability and

validity data would be computed for this measure as well. Still, the procedures for

collecting the observational data were well controlled. In order to identify

participating classrooms, the investigators generated factor scores from the TBS/IAS

and selected teachers whose overall scores fell either one standard deviation below or

above the mean. Two separate observers, unaware of TBS/IAS scores, observed each

participant independently and inter-rater reliability was established.

Two hundred four public school kindergarten teachers completed the

TBS/IAS questionnaire and 20 classrooms were observed. Four composite factor

scores were calculated for each participant: appropriate and inappropriate beliefs

(data from TBS) and appropriate and inappropriate activities/practices (data from

IAS). Correlational analyses indicated a moderately significant relationship between

developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices and a slightly stronger association

between inappropriate beliefs and practices. The authors attributed this result to the

skewness of the distributions. Inappropriate beliefs and practices ratings closely

resembled a normal distribution of scores, whereas appropriate beliefs and practices

were rated most frequently as important/occurring more often. Meanwhile, ratings on

the classroom observation measure were largely consistent with TBS z-scores;

teachers with more appropriate beliefs demonstrated more appropriate practices when

observed and vice versa. However, it should be noted that only two participants scored on either extreme end of the observational measure. Most teachers used a combination of appropriate and inappropriate activities/materials in their classrooms.

McMullen (1999) examined the level of consistency between early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices, but extended the question to identify factors that predict a teacher's ability to implement developmentally appropriate practices. The first variable, *self-efficacy* was divided into *educational efficacy*, or beliefs about the ability of education to impact student achievement and *personal teaching efficacy*, or the ability of a teacher to impact student performance. The second potential predictive factor explored was *locus of control*, which refers to the extent to which people view the circumstances in their lives as contingent on their own behavior (internal locus of control) or a result of outside factors beyond their sphere of influence (external locus of control). In addition, the researcher explored the extent to which stress, educational background and professional experience contribute to developmentally appropriate teacher beliefs and practices. The participants included 20 teachers assigned to positions in preschool through third grade at both public and private schools. They each completed a packet of questionnaires and were observed twice by the researcher and an assistant, respectively. However, for the second round of observations, only 13 of the teachers were willing/able to participate. The self-completion measures included two instruments to assess developmentally appropriate beliefs (one for preschool, one for elementary), two for developmentally appropriate practices (again, preschool and elementary), and one each for self-efficacy, locus of control, stress, and educational background. Although numerous measures were

administered in this study, there was no description of the instruments or sample items offered. There was also no internal consistency reliability or construct validity data provided for the measures, either from their original source or within this investigation. Inter-observer reliability was established for the observational scoring.

In the initial phase of data analysis, the scores from the belief and practice measures were weighted and re-scaled on a 100-point scale to allow for easier comparison. The researcher then combined scored from the two belief instruments and the two practice instruments respectively to create a "combined belief" and a "combined practice" score. These two items were significantly correlated; however preschool teachers scored higher on both the developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices measures than their elementary school counterparts. Regression analysis indicated that the strongest predictors of developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom were developmentally appropriate beliefs, followed by high personal teaching efficacy when preschool and elementary teachers' scores were analyzed separately. Using the "combined belief" scores in the regression equation isolated developmentally appropriate beliefs and an internal locus of control as the strongest predictors of developmentally appropriate practice. When practice scores were characterized simple as "high" and "low", a chi-square comparison indicated that a degree in early childhood education or child development was significantly associated with high levels of developmentally appropriate practice. The discussion of early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices relative to possible mediating factors is an important contribution toward elucidating this relationship further. However, the small sample size comprised of teachers representing a broad range of grade levels in

both public and private schools greatly reduces external validity. Furthermore, the

high correlation reported for the combined belief and the combined practice score (r =

.794, p< .001) might not be representative of their relationship, but inflated due to the

wide range of scores grouped together for analysis.

Citing inconsistent data on the relationship between early childhood teachers'

beliefs and practices, Wilcox-Herzog (2002) also attempted to explain this lack of

consensus. Specifically, the author speculated that it might be due to a lack of

similarity between items found on teacher questionnaires designed to gather data on

beliefs and observational measures. This incompatibility decreases the likelihood of

calculating significant correlations. Alternatively, teachers might not feel free to act

on their beliefs. Another possible factor is the strength of teacher training, such as

whether or not their beliefs are embedded in a broader theoretical framework of child

development. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher

beliefs and practices, while focusing on these factors. Forty-seven teachers of three

to five year olds participated from private, Head Start and Montessori programs

across four states. Beliefs were measured using a self-report questionnaire developed

for this study, with items drawn from existing observational tools. Four domains of

teacher-child interactions were explored: teacher sensitivity, verbal responsivity,

teacher involvement, and play styles. Teacher sensitivity referred to qualities such as

warmth and enthusiasm, while verbal responsivity related to the type and amount of

verbalizations teachers engage in with their students. Teachers' beliefs about the

level of involvement they should have when interacting with students and their role in

facilitating play were assessed as well. Participants were also asked to answer

questions about the extent to which they were able to implement beliefs and provided information on their educational/professional backgrounds. To gather data on teacher practices, the researcher videotaped teachers in their classrooms over two half-hour sessions, which was then coded along the same four domains of teacher-child interactions. This was recorded on two existing scales and two instruments created for this investigation. The author presented a solid justification for exploring the four teacher-child interaction factors, as each is well grounded in the literature as indicators of best practice in early childhood education. In addition, inter-rater reliability was established for each subcategory of the observation instrument and a thorough descriptive account is given for the development of each measure. However, although two components of the teacher behavior scale came from pre-existing instruments, the rest of the measures were designed for this study. An alpha coefficient was provided for the teacher sensitivity portion of the questionnaire and observation tool, but otherwise no attempts were made at establishing reliability or validity.

The majority of participants indicated that they were able to implement their beliefs most of the time, while a few teachers reported that they were always or almost never able to practice their beliefs. Individual ANOVAs were performed between perceived ability to implement beliefs and the four interaction domains, as well as each background variable (e.g., years of experience, degree obtained, certification held). None of the results were significant, so this variable was not included in subsequent analyses. Meanwhile, intercorrelations between the scores on the belief and practice measures also indicated no significant relationship. Regression

analyses revealed teaching experience as a negative predictor of sensitivity, while early childhood teaching certification was a positive predictor of involvement and verbalization behaviors. The author discussed the finding that teachers' beliefs and practices were not correlated by noting the possibility that other mediating variables might influence this relationship. One proposed explanation was the lack of consensus within the scholarly community over the definition of developmentally appropriate practice, as well as a disconnection between the research on this construct and teachers' perceptions of what it means. While this is a valid point, another perspective to consider is that the absence of a significantly positive or negative relationship between beliefs and practices suggests that the teachers in this study did not manifest extreme beliefs or practices in either direction of the developmentally appropriate paradigm. This supports the idea that developmentally appropriate practice represents a continuum of beliefs and practices, which makes it difficult to identify significant patterns for groups of teachers relative to their thought processes and behaviors.

A different angle that some researchers have explored in studies of teachers' beliefs and practices is whether or not results vary across grade level. Stipek and Byler (1999) examined a host of teacher variables across pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade. Specifically, they questioned if teachers do hold explicit beliefs about early childhood education and whether that informs their goals for their students and classroom practices. The expectation was that teacher beliefs would map onto a predominantly child-centered or basic skills approach. Additional variables explored were teacher attitudes about delaying the start of kindergarten for certain students,

retaining children in kindergarten, and the value of standardized testing in early childhood. Furthermore, the authors examined teacher perceptions of their ability to implement their beliefs, ethnic differences between teachers as an indicator of beliefs, and the socioeconomic status (SES) of students as a possible predictor of teacher beliefs.

The sample in this study consisted of 60 public and private school teachers. Data were provided on participants' ethnicity, educational background, and years of experience, as well as a classification of the overall SES level of their classrooms as "high" or "low". The measures were a questionnaire and observational instrument designed by one of the authors for previous research. Stipek's early childhood program observational measure contains 47 items across two subscales, classroom instruction and social climate. Factor analysis from an earlier study divided the classroom instruction items into "basic skills" and "child centered" domains. Alpha coefficients are provided for each subscale and inter-observer reliability was established. Furthermore, this instrument was standardized within each grade to account for the extent to which basic skills are emphasized at each level. Meanwhile, the self-report questionnaire contains three sections. In the first two, participants' rated the importance of seven program goals and 31 belief statements, each structured on a 5-point Likert scale. The authors divided the belief statements into basic skills and child centered orientations, and calculated alpha coefficients for each. In the third part of the questionnaire, teachers responded to open- ended questions on a number of policy issues relevant to early childhood education, such as delaying school entry and the use of standardized tests.

Results indicated significant negative correlations between the two belief subscales for preschool and kindergarten teachers, meaning the more they supported child centered practices the less they supported a basic skills approach. This relationship was not significant for first grade teachers. Meanwhile, each belief orientation was positively correlated with certain student goals. The particular goals varied across grade levels for child centered teachers, but basic skills teachers shared the same goals at all three grade levels. Other correlations included no significant relationship between teacher beliefs (either child centered or basic skills) and delaying school entry or retention, with the exception of kindergarten teachers' views on retention. In addition, beliefs were significantly correlated with practices for preschool and kindergarten but not first grade, while practices were associated with certain goals depending on the grade level. One-way ANOVAs revealed no significant relationship between teacher ethnicity and their beliefs, goals, and practices. Finally, student SES was marginally significant to a basic skills teaching orientation. While the data analysis provides important information on the relationship between various factors explored in this study, computing only individual correlations between variables (with the exception of the ANOVAs on teacher ethnicity) limits an understanding of how these components interact. A regression analysis exploring the relationship between beliefs and practices while controlling for some of the other variables (e.g., positions on policy issues) would enhance these findings.

In another study examining teachers' beliefs and practices across grade levels, Vartuli (1999) examined variations in reported beliefs and observed practices of Head

Start, kindergarten, and first through third grade teachers. Data were collected from the Fall of 1992 to the Spring of 1997, however for the purpose of this article analysis is provided for the 137 teachers who participated in the Spring and Fall of 1995. Beliefs were measured via self-report using two previously developed instruments: the *Early Childhood Survey of Beliefs and Practices* (ECSBP) and the TBS/IAS. The author provided a thorough description of each measure, its history/format and established internal consistency reliability (via alpha coefficients) for each one. Each classroom was observed twice within one academic year and teacher behavior was coded on the *Classroom Practices Inventory* (CPI). This instrument was modified for use with this population; the revised version was piloted and reviewed by both experts in the research field and primary teachers. Inter-observer reliability was established.

Correlational analyses revealed moderately significant correlations between beliefs and practices. However, the relationship was stronger for Head Start and kindergarten teachers that for teachers in first through third grade. ANOVAs were performed along with post-hoc analyses to compare beliefs and practices across grade levels. Head Start teachers' mean scores on the ECSBP, TBS, and CPI were significantly higher than teachers in kindergarten through third grade, while kindergarten teachers' mean scores were significantly higher than teachers' from first through third grade. Chi-square analysis, paired-sample t-tests, and ANOVAs were used to compare beliefs and practices with teacher education level, certification, and years of experience. Teachers with more years of teaching experience and higher education levels did not demonstrate significantly higher developmentally appropriate

practice or belief scores. However, teachers with early childhood certification had significantly higher belief and practice scores than teachers with elementary education certification. The author discussed the finding that as grade level increased developmentally appropriate beliefs/practices and the relationship between them decreased, by proposing possible explanations such as greater focus on academics in the primary grades, district/state mandates, and school climate. While these are undoubtedly important contributing factors, a broader issue should be considered. Developmentally appropriate practice dictates a child centered, play based approach to early childhood education and de-emphasizes teacher directed instruction in basic skills. Once children reach the elementary grades there is a strong focus on academic content, creating the possibility that teachers at that level do not view a basic skills approach as developmentally inappropriate. The relevance of the DAP guidelines for the primary grades needs to be explored further to perhaps include best practices for academic instruction.

Summary. The studies reviewed in this section yielded mixed results. Some data analyses indicate a moderate correlation between developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices, while others show no association. There is also evidence to suggest that appropriate and inappropriate beliefs/practices exist along a continuum, as teachers demonstrate a combination of both (Charlesworth, et al., 1993; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). Furthermore, variables such as self-efficacy and a degree in early childhood education are predictors of DAP (McMullen, 1999). Finally, level of developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices and correlations between them are stronger for preschool and kindergarten teachers than for first through third grade

teachers, suggesting that this paradigm might not be equally appropriate for both groups (Stipek & Byler, 1999; Vartuli, 1999).

Summary and Discussion of Literature

Research on teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management has generated a number of interesting findings. Custodial and humanistic orientations to management are associated with certain personality characteristics, leadership style, and choice of intervention strategies (Appleton & Stanwyck, 1996; Rydell & Henricsson, 2004; Woolfolk, et al., 1990). Preservice teachers favor interventionist discipline strategies centered on rules and consequences, and there is evidence that they have difficulty practicing classroom management practices that are consistent with their evolving beliefs (Kaufman & Moss, 2010; Kaya, et al., 2010; Witcher, et al., 2008). Psychometric analyses suggest that teacher efficacy is multidimensional with management efficacy developing separately from general, personal efficacy and possibly influenced by contextual factors such as the number of male students and amount of externalizing behaviors in the classroom. (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Hammarburg & Hagekull, 2002; Woolfolk, et al., 1990). In addition, one of the most consistent findings is that teachers favor pupil/family related causal attributions for misbehavior over school/teacher explanations (Bibou-Nakou, 2000; Bibou-Nakou, et al., 2000; Ho, 2004; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002). However, cultural differences might impact whether teachers emphasize student or family factors (Ho, 2004) and teachers may associate specific student related attributions with different types of misbehavior (Bibou-Nakou, et al., 2000). There is also evidence to indicate that causal attributions influence intervention strategies (Scott-Little & Holloway, 1992;

Scott-Little & Holloway, 1994). Finally, data suggest that training in classroom

management varies across teacher education programs, with promising results for

those that provide high quality preparation (Garrahy, et al., 2005; Martin, 2004).

Most of the abovementioned studies on teachers' beliefs and knowledge

define classroom management as discipline (Garrahy, et al., 2005, and Martin, 2004

are exceptions), in contrast to a multifaceted model that includes establishing an

environment conducive to learning and teaching prosocial skills (Carter & Doyle,

2006; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). One could

argue that developing positive relationships with students is implied in teacher

orientation/pupil control ideology. Weinstein (1998) found that teachers held one-

dimensional perspectives on caring and order, but it is unclear how they combine

these views with other beliefs to create a paradigm for classroom management. In

addition, six of these studies were conducted outside of the United States, which

limits external validity due to demographic and cultural differences. However, the

results illustrate the importance of considering the influence of culture on behavior

expectations and causal attributions, a pertinent issue for ethnically diverse school

districts in this country. There is a need for more research on teacher perceptions of

behavior within representative public school samples across demographic domains

within the United States.

The most common instruments used to examine teachers' beliefs and

knowledge were questionnaires comprised of hypothetical vignettes and

predetermined statements/rating scales. The obvious advantage to this approach is

that it eliminates the unpredictable, confounding effects of real classroom situations.

However, limiting the influence of context in this particular case is problematic. The ecological approach to classroom management indicates that all classroom activities and events are relative, to the extent that teachers do not respond to the same behavior in identical ways (Doyle, 2006). The results on strategy preferences are flawed from this perspective. Furthermore, the lack of descriptive information generated from these measures makes it difficult to interpret findings. It is unclear whether teachers' orientations to management, strategy preferences, causal attributions and so forth are more nuanced than predetermined categories allow for. Perhaps teachers generalize in their responses based on the constraints of the methodology, while there are mitigating factors they consider for individual students in actual classroom situations. Although researchers from these studies acknowledge that they are exploring only some aspects of a complex entity, they tend to presume teachers' motives, intentions, and thought processes when discussing results. Conspicuously absent from the procedures and analyses are teachers' voices, which could serve to provide richer sources of information and/or qualify findings. Some important questions that such research could address include: Does the terminology used by researchers reflect the ways in which teachers conceptualize classroom management? Do teachers' stated beliefs about their role as classroom managers map onto a predominantly custodial or humanistic orientation? Do teachers view their self-efficacy in classroom management as having developed independently from their efficacy in other areas of teaching? Why do teachers consistently attribute causality to student/family related factors? Does it necessarily follow that attributing behavior to outside factors means abdicating responsibility for intervention? These questions and others need to be

investigated in order to develop an accurate understanding of teachers' perceptions of student behavior and their roles within the classroom.

While the research on teachers' beliefs and knowledge conceptualize classroom management as discipline, studies on preschool teachers' classroom management practices are primarily focused on the extent to which teachers and programs implement multidimensional strategies. While Head Start teachers demonstrate a number of classroom management practices that promote prosocial behaviors, prevent problematic behaviors, and address persistent challenging behaviors, these do not represent the full range of best practices identified in the research literature (Branson & Demchak, 2011). Noticeably absent from a number of programs is the use of formal social curricula and clearly defined policies and procedures to support students with persistent challenging behaviors in order to avoid expulsion (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Quesenberry, et al., 2011). However, many Head Start programs seem to endorse and implement a collaborative team approach to meeting students' social-emotional needs (Lara, et al., 2000). Still, there is evidence to suggest considerable differences in the quality of classroom management practices between programs (Quesenberry, et al., 2011). While these studies provide important insights, they are limited to the Head Start population and data sources included little or no direct classroom observation, which is a prominent feature of this study.

The research on teachers' beliefs in early childhood yielded mixed results. Some data analyses indicate a moderate correlation between developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices, while others show no association. There is also evidence to suggest that appropriate and inappropriate beliefs/practices exist along a

continuum, as teachers demonstrate a combination of both (Charlesworth, et al., 1993; Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). Furthermore, variables such as self-efficacy and a degree in early childhood education are predictors of DAP (McMullen, 1999). Finally, level of developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices and correlations between them are stronger for preschool and kindergarten teachers than for first through third grade teachers, suggesting that this paradigm might not be equally appropriate for both groups (Stipek & Byler, 1999; Vartuli, 1999). None of these studies directly address the relationship between early childhood teachers' beliefs about classroom management and their practices. It is possible that researchers view classroom management as embedded within DAP, since the guidelines deal extensively with creating a classroom environment to support learning and facilitating social-emotional development, however the association between preschool teachers' beliefs and practices for classroom management warrants its own investigation.

A consistent methodological issue that emerges from this review is establishing the validity and reliability of measures. Some researchers computed alpha and test-retest coefficients, performed factor analyses, and generated values for inter-rater reliability, while others just grounded their instruments in the literature. Although this provides a strong theoretical framework for the study, it is not methodologically sound. Furthermore, validity and reliability should ideally be established for each instrument, even when using pre-existing measures.

Research Questions

Although research on preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management is limited, the studies reviewed in this chapter create a

foundation for designing an investigation of this topic by identifying salient variables, illustrating methodological approaches, and providing a potential framework for interpretation. Based on the abovementioned gaps in the literature, I am interested in utilizing preschool teachers' narratives to create profiles of their beliefs and knowledge about classroom management and how that relates to classroom practice. The specific research questions are as follows:

Beliefs:

> *What are the components of classroom management in preschool?* The primary intention of this question is to examine whether preschool teachers have a multidimensional perspective on classroom management that includes establishing the environment, teaching social skills, and disciplining students or if they view classroom management primarily as discipline. While there are studies that examine whether preschool teachers' classroom management practices include all three elements (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Quesenberry, et al., 2011), there is no comparable body of literature on beliefs. Furthermore, this study features extensive classroom observation of practices, which was limited in the research reviewed for this chapter.

> *What is the role of the preschool teacher in classroom management?* The aim of this question is to explore whether teachers' stated beliefs about their role as classroom managers are similar to the conceptual frameworks outlined in the research on teachers' orientations to management: custodial/humanistic and interventionist/interactionalist/non-interventionist.

Knowledge:

➢ *What are the sources of preschool teachers' knowledge about classroom management?*

➢ *How have preschool teachers evolved or developed as classroom managers over the course of their careers?* The studies by Garrahy, et al. (2005) and Martin (2004) examine similar questions, but not for preschool teachers. I am particularly interested in the extent to which preschool teachers credit teacher education programs as sources of classroom management knowledge and whether or not they discuss self-efficacy in classroom management as part of their development.

Practice:

➢ *How are preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management manifested in their classroom practices?*

➢ *Do preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that support or contradict their stated beliefs?* These questions relate directly to the studies on teachers' DAP beliefs and practices in early childhood.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the methodology and methods used to conduct this study. Topics covered include descriptions of qualitative methodology, multiple case study design, and the rationale for choosing these approaches for my research. This is followed by an account of the setting, recruitment process, participants, data collection and analysis procedures. Subsequently, I report on the reliability and validity measures utilized in this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations and my role and biases as a researcher.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is characterized by holistic investigation of situated phenomena. Individuals, groups, events, activities, and processes are examined comprehensively in their naturally occurring contexts and meaning is interpreted locally, for the particular time and setting in which the research occurs (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005; Merriam, 2002). This contrasts with a quantitative approach to research that aims to isolate variables and minimize the effects of context so as to generalize the findings to a population represented by the sample of participants (Stake, 1995). Qualitative methodology is further characterized by the central role of the researcher as an "instrument"; for utilizing multiple methods of data collection (i.e., interviews, observations, document review); and producing a rich, detailed descriptive analysis of the findings (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002). Data evaluation in a qualitative study is often described as an *inductive* process, whereby general concepts and themes are derived from particular examples. Finally, as in all empirical research, a qualitative

design involves the systematic application of particular methods and credibility measures to ensure the validity and reliability of results (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002). These will be detailed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The research questions I posed to examine preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management are particularly appropriate for a qualitative inquiry. The ways in which teachers conceptualize classroom management, understand their roles as managers, have evolved professionally are individualized and complex. It follows that examining these variables requires methods of data collection, such as interviews with and observations of teachers, which are designed to access information of sufficient depth to address multidimensional, nonlinear phenomena. Furthermore, qualitative methodology stresses the essential role that context plays in constructing and understanding reality, a position corroborated by both an ecological approach to classroom management and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development. As described in the introduction, an ecological approach to classroom management posits that all classroom events and interactions are unique, situated, and continuously evolving (Carter & Doyle, 2006). Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's paradigm views development (of the teacher, in this case) as occurring through a complex network of simultaneous, multidirectional interactions between process, person, context, and time, a perspective that necessitates a holistic examination of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). When the research questions are perceived through this lens, the emphasis in a qualitative design on natural context, local

interpretation, and subjective experience does not function as a liability, but emerges as the most accurate and fitting framework for conducting this study.

Multiple Case Study Design

The preceding section highlights the features that characterize qualitative methodology in general. However, within this genre there are specific types of research designs, each with a distinct focus and interpretive framework. For the purpose of investigating preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management, I utilized a multiple case study design (also referred to as collective case study). According to Yin (2003), "[a] case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). A case is often described as a "bounded system", meaning a multifaceted but contained entity, such as an individual, group, program, event, or setting (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Stake, 1995). In an *intrinsic* case study, the researcher is interested in investigating the unique qualities of a particular case, while the focus in an *instrumental* case study is to explore the specifics of a case to better understand a topic/issue. These issues can be *etic*, brought to the study by the researcher, or *emic*, emerging from the participants during data collection (Stake, 1995). In this study, the cases (teachers) were instrumental, chosen as sources of information to address the etic issues outlined in the research questions.

A multiple case study is used to examine a collection of cases within a set of common research questions. However, given the emphasis in case study design on the unique nature of each individual case, how do multiple cases add to ones

understanding of the broader phenomena? Stake (2006) refers to this as the "case-quintain dilemma". A quintain is a target, used here to mean the topic that connects the multiple cases to one another. In this study, the individual cases (teachers) are bound together by the quintain: research questions examining their beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management. The goal of analysis in a multiple case study design is to evaluate each case independently and then apply that information to better understand the quintain (Stake, 2006). Cases are not compared, nor are they considered representative of cases outside the study. Rather, the breadth and depth of data generated from multiple cases allows the researcher to make stronger, more persuasive assertions about the quintain (Stake, 2006). My goal in choosing a multiple case study design was to address both the unique, situated experience of each individual teacher and the issues outlined in the research questions.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following six research questions:

1. What are the components of classroom management in preschool?

2. What is the role of the preschool teacher in classroom management?

3. What are the sources of preschool teachers' knowledge about classroom management?

4. How have preschool teachers evolved or developed as classroom managers over the course of their careers?

5. How are preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management manifested in their classroom practices?

6. Do preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that support or contradict their stated beliefs?

Setting

I attempted to recruit teachers from private childcare centers, community-based or faith-affiliated preschools. These types of sites were all included in the studies on preschool expulsion rates along with Head Start programs and public school classrooms (family childcare programs were excluded). Head Start and public school preschool teachers were less likely to expel students than teachers in faith-affiliated, community-based, and private childcare settings, but all used expulsion significantly more often than their K-12 counterparts (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shahar, 2006). As these data were my primary rationale for examining preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management, I looked to recruit participants from a type of setting similar to those demonstrated to have the highest expulsion rates.

The setting for this study was Hawthorne Academy (HA), a private community-based preschool in a suburban county of a mid-Atlantic state. The preschool has two 3-year old classes and two 4-year old classes. The classes are co-educational, however the school also has an all-girls elementary, middle, and high school program resulting in a higher proportion of boys to girls in the preschool. A more detailed description of HA is presented in Chapter IV.

Participants: Recruitment Criteria

I utilized purposeful sampling to select participants for this study. There is consensus among many researchers that purposeful sampling is the most appropriate

sampling procedure for a qualitative inquiry, with an emphasis on choosing

participants who serve as rich sources of information (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995).

My criteria for selecting cases in this study were:

- ➢ Three teachers from the same program. Triangulation is the standard used in

    qualitative research to corroborate and strengthen findings (Brantlinger, et al.,

    2005). I chose teachers from the same site in order to gain the deepest

    understanding possible of some of the contextual variables that are critical to

    the conceptual framework of this study.

- ➢ Teachers of students ages 3-5. This is the age range of the children included

    in the data on preschool expulsion rates (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shahar,

    2006), creating a connection between the participants and rationale for this

    study.

- ➢ Teachers who have taught preschool for a minimum of two years. This

    qualification is necessary to adequately address the research question

    examining how preschool teachers have evolved or developed as classroom

    managers over the course of their careers.

Participants: Recruitment Process

From 2004-2006 I worked for a local public school district as an itinerant

special educator for 3-5 year olds, traveling to various private, general education

preschools to provide special education services to individual students. I became

familiar with a number of local private childcare centers, community-based and faith-

affiliated preschools through this position. For the purpose of this study, I identified

one program director that I thought might be particularly inclined toward my project,

although I had no personal relationship with her. I called her and explained the purpose and parameters of this study. The director indicated a high level of initial interest and requested a written handout detailing the information I had given her, to be forwarded to potential participants. I requested an opportunity to present to the teachers in person, but there were no occasions when the staff at this program met as a group. I sent the director a description of my study via email (see Appendix B: *Research Study Information*). One week later she called me, along with the program's assistant director. They reiterated their interest but voiced concern about whether the teachers would be willing to participate. As per the informational handout I had sent, we discussed the possibility that I would provide professional training and development after the study was completed. I suggested three areas I could possibly offer support in: classroom management, adapting preschool curricula to meet the needs of diverse learners, and working with children who have IEPs. The director and assistant director conveyed enthusiasm for these topics and said they would contact me again shortly. A week later, I received an email from the director, copied to the assistant director, asking if the school was permitted to offer a benefit to the teachers in order to entice them to participate, such as an extra personal day (at this point the teachers had not yet been approached about the study). I phoned my graduate advisor, Dr. Lieber, to discuss and we concurred that it would be preferable if the study were presented to the teachers without any additional benefits to participation, which I subsequently communicated to the director in a return email. Nine days later I received an email from the director, copied to the assistant director, stating that three teachers were willing to participate. One of these teachers taught 2-

year olds and therefore did not meet the criteria for this study. As there were no other teachers willing to participate, I was not able to meet the other criteria of three teachers from the same program. I sent the director and assistant director an email thanking them for their interest and explaining why I would not be able to conduct research at their school.

At that point I had no reason to prefer a particular program, so I identified two private childcare centers and three faith-affiliated preschools that I was familiar with through my work as a consultant special educator. I went to the website of a local community publication that provides parents with information about daycare options in order to access the names and email addresses for each program's director. When I was not able to find an email address, I phoned the school and requested it from the receptionist/secretary. I sent each director an email explaining my research project (see Appendix C: *Recruitment Email*) and attached the *Research Study Information* handout. Two of the directors responded the following day that they were not interested in participating. A week after sending the emails, I phoned the other three directors. I left each a voicemail message stating that I was following up on the email and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the project with them. Two of the directors did not call me back, at which point I decided not to pursue the matter any further. One director responded to my initial email stating that she was not interested in participating.

I subsequently repeated this recruitment process with directors from two private childcare centers, three faith-affiliated and three community-based preschools. I was familiar with only three of these programs; the rest were identified through the

local community publication noted previously. One director responded immediately that she was not interested in participating and four did not respond to the email or the follow-up phone call I made one week later. The three remaining directors each responded to the email indicating interest. I reiterated my request to have an opportunity to present to the teachers. Two of these directors declined, preferring to speak with their teachers first, while the third agreed and we made an appointment for an end-of-the-year staff meeting scheduled two weeks later. Of the two who wished to speak with their staff rather than have me present, one sent an email that she had only one teacher willing to participate and I did not receive any further communication from the other.

I attended the staff meeting at Hawthorne Academy (HA) two weeks later. I met the program director first and she introduced me to the teachers. I passed out copies of the *Research Study Information* guide and spoke for about five minutes. I answered questions from two teachers related to information in the handout, thanked everyone for the opportunity to present and left. The following day I received an email from the director, copied to the assistant director and teachers, stating that three classrooms were interested in participating. She explained that in this preschool classrooms were staffed by a teacher and an *associate teacher*, described as "not the lead teacher but definitely more than an assistant or aide." I wrote back that I would welcome the participation of all six teachers, as each met the criteria of teaching 3-5 year olds for at least two years. The director provided me with email addresses for each of the participants as well as for the assistant director, who would serve as my primary administrative contact from that point forward. We agreed that I would

contact the participants at the start of the following school year and begin data

collection shortly thereafter.

Participants

The six participants in this study were:

1. Classroom A: Janet (teacher) and Debbie (associate teacher)

2. Classroom B: Tracy (teacher) and Jennifer (associate teacher)

3. Classroom C: Becca (teacher) and Michelle (associate teacher)

Each participant completed a demographic data questionnaire (see Appendix D), the

results of which are presented in Table 3. Detailed descriptions of each teacher will

be presented in Chapter IV.

Table 3.

Participants' demographic information

Name	Current position	Number of years teaching preschool	Number of years at Hawthorne Academy	Number of years teaching	Degree/ Certification	Ethnicity	Gender
Janet	Teacher 3-year olds	25	25	30	BS; M.Ed.	Caucasian	Female
Debbie	Associate teacher 3-year olds	7	7	18	BA; MA	Caucasian	Female
Tracy	Teacher 4-year olds	28	28	28	BA; M.Ed.	Caucasian	Female
Jennifer	Associate teacher 4-year olds	3	3	3	BS; M.Ed., in progress	Caucasian	Female
Becca	Teacher 4-year olds	10	10	10	BA; M.Ed., in progress	Caucasian	Female
Michelle	Associate teacher 4-year olds	6	4	8	BS; M.Ed., in progress	Caucasian	Female

As part of data collection, I interviewed the director and assistant director once

separately, in order to gain a deeper understanding of some of the contextual variables

impacting the participants. Peggy, the preschool director has the title of *Head of Lower Division*. Jane, the assistant preschool director, has the title of *Assistant Head of Lower Division*. Demographic data for Peggy and Jane are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4.

Administrators' demographic information

Name	Position	Number of years in position	Degree(s)	Ethnicity	Gender
Peggy	Head of Lower Division	10	BA; MA; M.Ed.	Caucasian	Female
Jane	Assistant Head of Lower Division	7	BS; M.Ed.	Caucasian	Female

Method

Data Collection

One of the hallmarks of qualitative methodology is the use of triangulated sources of data. The goal of this design is for all three methods to collectively contribute to and corroborate the research evidence, rather than independently address separate aspects of the study (Yin, 2003). For the purpose of investigating preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management, I used the three data collection procedures most often utilized in qualitative research: interviews, observations, and document review.

Interviews. The level of structure imposed on interviews varies across studies, from fixed questionnaires that must be administered according to a predetermined protocol to unscripted interviews with few or no guidelines. Many qualitative researchers opt for semi-structured interviews, which include a set of

questions designed to access information relevant to the study, but allow the examiner to improvise according to the responses of the participant and the circumstances of the situation (Merriam, 2002). Weiss (1994) recommends designing questions to elicit substantive material that will contribute to the final report, but addressing participants' responses with questions that extend the interview naturally. I used a semi-structured interview format for this study. Questions highlighted key issues related to the research topic, but were administered flexibly. Items were often modified or added based on the open-ended responses of the teachers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to maximize both the depth and precision of data analysis. Data saturation, the point at which the teachers were no longer providing new or different information pertaining to the research questions served as the criteria for concluding interview sessions (Merriam, 2002).

The teachers participated in five interviews over a 10-week period, each lasting approximately 45 minutes. I used an interview guide for the first session (see Appendix E), but subsequent interview questions were individualized based on the participants' prior responses and information gathered during classroom observations. The teachers had scheduled breaks over the course of a week during planned 'specials' (i.e., gym, science, music, and art), so interviews took place during these times. Associate teachers typically escorted their students to specials, but the lead teachers volunteered to go in their places so they could participate in the interviews. I intentionally staggered the scheduling so I would have more than one opportunity to observe the classes at each special. In addition to the teacher interviews I interviewed Peggy and Jane, the preschool administrators, once separately (see Appendix F for

interview guide). These occurred on days I was not scheduled to observe in any classroom.

Qualitative researchers stress the importance of establishing rapport with participants during interviews, a relationship of "sufficient trust for the conduct of a study" (Glesne, 2006, p.112). This dynamic is evident when participants are comfortable and willing to share the information that is of interest to the researcher (Glesne, 2006). Although there is no prescribed formula for achieving rapport, I took certain measures to help facilitate it. The scheduling, location, and length of the interviews were determined at the discretion of the participants. I explained the purpose of the study, reviewed the steps taken to ensure confidentiality, and inquired if there were any questions or concerns. Furthermore, I indicated to the teachers that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to the interview questions, but that I wanted to listen to and understand their experiences and perspectives. However, it is important to bear in mind that despite these measures, "rapport…is something to be continually negotiated" requiring "conscious attunement to the emerging needs of the relationship" (Glesne, 2006, p.115).

Observations. Observations afford researchers a "firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2002, p.13), which for this study was the teacher in the classroom. As with the different levels of structure imposed upon the format of interviews, the role of the researcher during observations varies with regard to the degree of involvement in the research setting. The term *participant observation* is often used in qualitative studies to capture these differences (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002). Glesne (2006) identifies four levels of participant

observation: observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and full participant. Observer as participant most aptly describes my position during data collection for this study. By virtue of my presence in the classroom I was more than an observer, however I primarily functioned as a passive bystander, positioning myself on the periphery of the classroom and taking notes. I tried to remain as unobtrusive as possible, but responded to any interaction that was initiated by the teachers or students, although these instances were uncommon. While I was initially concerned that the students might be distracted by my presence, they generally did not speak to me or indicate awareness of my being there, with few exceptions.

I observed each classroom from 8:00am to 12:00pm once a week over a period of 10 weeks. I intentionally arranged that I would observe each day of the week more than once for each classroom. Data collected through participant observation are typically recorded as field notes- detailed descriptive accounts of the setting, its participants, and all relevant events and actions therein (Glesne, 2006). Qualitative researchers are advised "to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (Glesne, 2006, p.51) during observations. The former refers to understanding novel phenomena, while the latter means including all aspects of the observation experience in the field notes, even the seemingly mundane. This creates an explicit picture for the reader, but also heightens the researcher's sensitivity to all potentially salient information. While thoroughly descriptive, field notes are also used to interpret data (Glesne, 2006). The format of my field notes reflected both functions. I used the center of the page to record explicit descriptions of the physical space, time of day, number of students, location of adult(s)/children within the

classroom, activities occurring, and specific interactions between the teacher and her environment. Meanwhile, I used the margins of the field notes to jot down thoughts and questions that pertained to analysis, as well as possible directions for future observations. After each session, I immediately reviewed my notes to fill in gaps and to develop ideas to their fullest (Glesne, 2006). Data saturation, the point at which the observations were no longer generating new or different information pertaining to the research questions, served as the criteria for concluding observation sessions (Merriam, 2002).

Document Review. Various items can function as documents in a qualitative study including written, visual, and oral materials. A unique feature of analyzing documents is that their existence precedes the investigation and are therefore not subject to the inevitable effect that the presence of a researcher has on the setting/participants (Merriam, 2002). In this study, documents included the school's website and a number of written items related to classroom management that the participants identified as something that has contributed to their beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection and interpretation occur simultaneously (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002). Transcripts and field notes are analyzed throughout the investigation, so that earlier findings inform subsequent interview and observation sessions. At the same time, documents are reviewed for relevant information. In this instrumental multiple case study, I followed the content analysis procedures used by Quesenberry et al. (2011):

1. **Prepare the data for analysis:** Interviews were transcribed within three days of completion. I reviewed field notes immediately after each session, filling in gaps and expanding on ideas. The teachers who provided documents made them accessible to me on a regular basis so I could refer back to them as needed.

2. **Become familiar with the data:** I read through the transcripts, field notes, and documents multiple times until I became familiar with their content.

3. **Identify units of analysis:** As I read through the interview transcripts and observation field notes, I used colored highlighters to mark distinct phrases, ideas, or units of information. I labeled each of these with a code. Codes were constantly revised as I aggregated and continued to review more data. Documents were reviewed and relevant portions were coded as well.

4. **Define temporary categories for coding the responses:** Initially these highlighted, coded excerpts from the transcripts, field notes, and documents were placed into computer files based on preliminary categories (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 1995). I began with four files: one each for classroom management beliefs, knowledge, and practices and one for evidence that did not fit into any of those three themes (Weiss, 1994; Yin, 2003).

5. **Refine categories:** Coded items from the beliefs, knowledge and practices folders were combined and placed into categories such as classroom setup, students, daily routine, and approaches to classroom management. I wrote case summaries for each classroom, teacher, and associate teacher. I then reviewed the summaries, highlighted units of information, and generated

codes, searching for similarities and differences across cases. Through this

process I identified themes related to the six research questions. I used visual

displays, specifically charts and matrices to assist with the cross-case analysis

and identification of themes (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 2006; Weiss, 1994). See

Appendix G for a list of codes and themes.

6. **Establish category integrity:** I provided each participant with a copy of her

case summary as well as the themes. I received universal support for the

results of my analysis.

Credibility Measures: Validity and Reliability

An essential component of any empirical research design is the use of explicit

measures to establish the validity and reliability of the findings (Brantlinger, et al.,

2005; Merriam, 2002). However, the ways in which this goal is conceptualized and

implemented varies greatly between quantitative and qualitative studies, and within

each genre the specific procedures chosen depend largely on the parameters of a

particular investigation (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002). In a qualitative

inquiry, internal validity is understood as the steps taken by the researcher to

substantiate his or her interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002). For the purpose of

this study, I utilized triangulated sources of data and prolonged field engagement,

searched for disconfirming evidence and engaged in member checks to support my

conclusions. Triangulated sources of data (interviews, observations, and document

review) helped bolster the accuracy of my descriptive analysis and demonstrated that

identified themes were recurring, thereby making a stronger case for their legitimacy.

Prolonged field engagement is generally considered the amount of time necessary to

develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants and setting (Merriam, 2002). I interviewed each participant for 3.5-4 hours over five sessions and observed each classroom for 40 hours over ten weeks. I examined disconfirming evidence to determine whether there were data that challenged identified codes and themes. Member checks refer to sharing the results with the participants in order to verify the analysis. In each interview subsequent to the first, I verified my understanding of the prior interview and observations with the participants. I also shared the findings with them after data collection and analysis for their input and corroboration.

After internal validity, the researcher needs to consider both reliability and external validity. Reliability in qualitative research is conceptualized as the extent to which "the results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 2002, p.27). This is somewhat similar to the definition of internal validity and therefore involves utilizing many of the same credibility measures, such as triangulation of data sources and peer review or external auditors. However, another method for strengthening the reliability of the findings is establishing a strong audit trail- an explicit, detailed account of every step of the research process including participant recruitment, site selection, data collection and interpretation. This allows the reader to ascertain whether the researcher's conclusions are logical and consistent with the findings. The reader is also involved in determining the external validity of a qualitative analysis, that is whether the conclusions are applicable, or generalize, to his or her own circumstances (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002). Researchers strengthen external validity by accumulating substantial evidence and producing a "thick rich description" (Merriam, 2002, p.29) of the results. The more precise and complete the

description, the better the reader can decide on its relevance to another situation. In Chapter IV, I provide a comprehensive description of the data analysis supported by quotes from interviews, episodes from observations, and documentary evidence (Merriam, 2002).

Ethical Considerations

Just as a researcher provides a rationale for the purpose of a study and its potential contribution to an academic field, he or she must also consider the ethical ramifications of conducting an investigation. The primary concern is that involvement in a study should not result in any harm to the participants (Glesne, 2006). In this study, I provided each participant with a consent form that outlined the purpose and parameters of the research and explained that participation was voluntary and withdrawal acceptable at any point without repercussions (see Appendix H). Confidentiality was guaranteed; pseudonyms were used for the program and participants, while information about one participant was not shared with others. All data were made available to participants for review at any time. I was unsure as to what type of consent, if any, was required from the students' parents, since the children were not participants in the study, although I would be in their classrooms on a regular basis. As per the recommendation of the University's *Institutional Review Board* (IRB), I composed a letter home to the parents describing the project and purpose of my presence in the classroom, while reassuring them that I would not be soliciting information from or about their children (see Appendix I). I provided contact information at the end of the letter in case parents wanted to ask questions, but none did.

Many qualitative researchers extend the discussion of ethical considerations beyond establishing that there are no known risks to participation. They challenge the fairness of data collection as a unidirectional relationship; participants share their knowledge and experiences at obvious benefit to the researcher, but with no apparent advantage to themselves (Glesne, 2006). Engaging in reciprocity can alleviate this concern somewhat. In this study, the teachers may find that the process of self-reflection contributes positively to their growth as professionals (Glesne, 2006). However, in order to be of service in a more concrete way, I offered to assist the teachers and/or program with professional training and development after the study is completed. Although the teachers and program directors expressed gratitude for the offer, they declined my services.

Researcher Role and Biases

In a qualitative study, the researcher is considered the primary "instrument" for data collection and analysis (Brantlinger, et al, 2005; Merriam, 2002). The investigator designs and administers interviews, conducts observations, selects documents, generates transcripts/field notes, and interprets these data according to the framework of the study. Given that the researcher constructs this entire process, establishing objectivity is unfeasible. Rather than attempting to be neutral, qualitative researchers are explicit about personal experiences and viewpoints that inform their perspective on the research topic (Brantlinger, et al, 2005; Merriam, 2002). The purpose of acknowledging potential biases is to monitor how they might affect data collection and analysis.

I began my career as an early childhood special educator, teaching a classroom of 3-5 year olds with moderate to severe disabilities. I was initially far more skilled at implementing curriculum and making academic modifications for my students than I was at classroom management. My efforts to become a more competent teacher began what has become a long-term interest of mine in factors that contribute to effective classroom management in preschool. After seven years of classroom teaching, I became an itinerant special educator for 3-5 year olds, traveling to various private, general education preschools to provide special education services to individual students. Many of my students demonstrated disruptive, defiant, and aggressive behaviors with their teachers and peers, and one of my primary responsibilities was to collaborate with the classroom teacher to create an intervention plan that would reduce these undesirable behaviors. My experience working with these teachers was fairly consistent: While I found them to be skilled at and informed about early childhood practice in general, they had few or no classroom management strategies. They did not overtly teach prosocial behaviors, nor did they use consistent language and techniques for addressing problematic behaviors. Over the next two years, I became concerned about the ramifications of this pattern I was witnessing on the success of inclusion for all students with disabilities, as those of my students who demonstrated problematic behaviors were much less likely to be included successfully in a general education setting than my students who manifested cognitive or physical disabilities.

Through these experiences, I have constructed a personal set of beliefs, body of knowledge, and repertoire of practices related to classroom management.

However, my role as a researcher was to listen to, observe, and understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Glesne (2006) refers to this as adopting a position of "researcher as learner" (p.46), which guided my approach toward data collection and analysis. I came to this study with the outlook that there are multiple effective ways of managing a preschool classroom. I maintained a journal to reflect on my role as a listener, learner, and agent for transmitting the viewpoints and experiences of the participants. Triangulation of data sources and participants, generating detailed descriptions, and the corroboration provided by member checks also ensured that the findings were reflective of the data rather than my own experiences or biases.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present findings from the analysis of the interview, observation, and document data. Results are organized around case summaries of the classrooms and each is divided into two sections:

➢ Teacher's story, approach to classroom management and associate teacher's story, approach to classroom management

➢ A day in teacher and associate teacher's classroom, including descriptions of the physical space, students, weekly schedule, and daily routine

The case summaries are followed by a descriptive analysis of Hawthorne Academy and some of the contextual variables impacting the participants. The remaining part of this chapter is dedicated to presenting the themes that emerged from the cross-case data analysis, which are presented through the six research questions.

Case Summary: Janet and Debbie's Class

Janet's story. Janet is a Caucasian female in her mid-60s who has been teaching three-year olds at Hawthorne Academy for 25 years. She grew up as one of six children and was the only of her siblings to attend college. After working her way through college, Janet became a physical education teacher for five years, during which she worked at two local public schools. She subsequently left teaching to manage a restaurant with her husband for several years, but stopped shortly after the birth of their first child:

I had my first child, which was a miracle because I didn't think I was going to have any children. So this magical little boy appeared, which was you know, wonderful. And we closed the restaurant after that. We could renew the lease

or close it, so we decided to close it. I thought 'I don't want to be doing this' because it was 24/7. I was there at 9:00am and left at 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning.

Although Janet enjoyed being a mother she felt restless:

> I was young, full of energy…I just wanted something to do. So I ended up doing a little playgroup in the neighborhood…because there was this lady that was doing a playgroup and she couldn't do it anymore. So I was interested in that and I did it for a couple of years.

Meanwhile, the founding director of Hawthorne Academy's preschool was looking for someone to teach the three-year old class. Janet was reluctant at first but then agreed to try it:

> I said I've never really taught threes because I taught PE for first through sixth grade…But she [the director] said 'Just promise me that you'll stay for at least two years' because they had gone through three-year old teachers. I said 'Well, if you get me you may never get rid of me'…and it was a marriage made in heaven.

Janet expressed a high level of job satisfaction:

> I've loved it…I enjoy it. People- my best friends go 'How do you do that every day?' But it's just something that I like…I enjoy watching them. I enjoy seeing them interact and trying to figure out why they're doing this as opposed to that…I like these little people and I think threes are just so special. They're fun- they can't not be fun.

Janet described multiple sources of knowledge for and influences on her teaching and
classroom management practices including personal experiences with children,
instinct, feedback from students and colleagues:

> I grew up in a family of six children plus I have my own two, so family and
> children have been an intricate part of my life…family is very important to
> me. And I think just helping children- I just want to give the best I can to
> each child.

> Instinct is a lot of it for me. Following the spontaneity of the children, seeing
> what works and what doesn't.

> I do love to visit other classrooms and see what the teachers are doing…I do
> love to pick other teachers' brains and I have done that all long.

While colleagues have contributed to Janet's growth as a teacher, she expressed
ambivalence toward professional development workshops on topics related to
classroom management:

> I go in there [to a workshop] and think 'This has nothing to do with what I
> do'. It's hard to find something really at your level…something I can bring
> back to the classroom.

During her early years at Hawthorne, Janet completed a Master's degree in
elementary education, which she does not discuss as a source of knowledge for or
influence on her teaching and classroom management practices, however the
considerable time lapse since that experience needs to be considered. Janet did not
identify any written materials that inform her beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices

related to classroom management for the purpose of the document review in this study.

Janet's approach to classroom management.

"I call it organized chaos". Janet described her approach to classroom management in preschool as combining aspects of advanced planning, organization, structure, and limit setting on the one hand with flexibility, spontaneity, and freedom on the other. She believes teacher preparation is an important component of classroom management as well as a personal characteristic:

> Maybe there's a teacher that can come in and not be prepared or you know, I've seen teachers cutting things out while the children are there. Now I come early in the morning. I'm here at ten of 7:00 or 7:00. That's my personality. If I need to cut out something, I want to have it ready when they walk in the door…I want the paints out…the playdough out so when they walk in the classroom is ready to go. And I'm basically ready to go.

When I arrived for an observation session at 8:00am the classroom was always set up with a choice of activities in different areas of the room and materials put aside for any projects or activities scheduled for later that morning. While Janet credited her personality for contributing to her planning and organization as a teacher, she went further and described a general disposition needed for successful classroom management that cannot necessarily be taught or acquired:

> I think you have to have control to a degree before you can actually teach. The children need to respond to you. If they don't then you're in trouble. I think a teacher can have all the knowledge in the world, but if you don't know

how to pull them together you can't do it…I always felt I had the presence to pull them together.

Janet also shared her belief that children, like adults, need limits and guidelines for their own benefit:

I truly feel that children need discipline and guidelines just like we as teachers and parents. I know I need to be in school at a certain time. That's a secure thing for me. That's what I have to do…that's what I need to do to function in this world.

There was abundant evidence of structure and limit setting in Janet and Debbie's class. The physical space was organized into areas that were understood by the students: they responded to directions such as "please put this where it belongs" by taking the item to its appropriate place and "time for circle or snack" by sitting in the correct designated area. There was a daily schedule of planned activities that Janet and Debbie prepared in advance to ensure minimum downtime. The children were constantly given verbal reminders of the behavioral expectations during an activity, as well as physical prompting to stay focused and involved. The teachers gave warnings before transitions, told children about what they could expect at upcoming activities, and used songs, fingerplays, and physical exercises to assist with downtime and transitions.

While Janet expressed the importance of structure and limit setting she also values flexibility, spontaneity, and freedom. She fondly described the unpredictability of young children:

> I just love teaching threes. It's so spontaneous, so different everyday. You
>
> never know what you're going to get…I have found every year, every child is
>
> different in some way and every class is different…I don't care how many
>
> three-year old classes you have, it will always be a different bunch.

Janet believes that teaching young children requires flexibility and also appreciates
opportunities to be spontaneous:

> I try to stick to the schedule but I've learned that you have to be flexible. You
>
> cannot teach this age and say ' we have to do this now'. You can't do that
>
> because things just happen at this age.
>
> Some of the best ideas I've come up with have been spontaneous. All of a
>
> sudden a light comes on and I think 'Wow, why didn't I think of that before?

There were multiple occasions when I observed Janet improvising based on particular
circumstances. Some examples include extending the amount of time designated on
the schedule for self-directed play because the children were interacting and playing
with one another independently with minimal teacher involvement, which Janet
wanted to encourage. A visitor once came to present to the children immediately
following circle and snack, after which Janet took the children out to the playground
because "they have been sitting too long- they need to move around", even though
outdoor play was scheduled for later that morning. Janet once arrived with the
children at PE (physical education) to find that the gym teacher was absent and there
were small plastic cones set up all over the floor. She immediately created a game
where the children had to zigzag between the cones and jump over them. When one
of the students put a cone on his head, she encouraged the other students to do the

same and try to see if they could balance it. Often when returning from a special (activity located in a separate building from the preschool) with the children, Janet would stop and show them items in nature that were related to the current seasonal curriculum unit. Janet described her desire to give the children structure and expectations along with choices and freedom:

> I do like structure but I also hope I give them enough freedom, that I'm not, you know, closing them in. I think there is a balance of that. I think finding a balance in the classroom is what you need.

She used the self-directed play that the children engage in when they arrive as an example of that:

> I mean you might walk in this classroom, there's playdough here, there's rice over there. There's things going on in here, there's things going on over there. And they're all involved…and I call it organized chaos.

"Different places have different sets of rules". Janet shared her belief that one aspect of her role as a teacher is to help her students learn to be a part of a group outside of their families and understand a new set of expectations that comes along with that:

> When they come in they're used to every need being answered right when they want it. And in here we're all of a sudden, we're in a group situation. Because parents will tell me at conferences 'Well he doesn't do that at home'. I say 'Well he's the center of attention at home'. In school we're sharing that attention now and we're learning to cooperate and work within a group, and be functional in that group, and wait and be patient.

I will sometimes say to a child, I know your rules at home might be different,

you know, Mommy and Daddy might allow you to do this at home…but in

Miss Janet's classroom these are my expectations…and I even tell the parents

that. I say, you know, we [adults] know every situation is different. You go

to church, maybe there's a certain way you act there. But you learn that

through society and social interactions- that different places have different sets

of rules. So when you come to school it might be a little different. Maybe

you don't have to pick up your book at home, but in school we have to pick up

our books and put them back on the shelf, that kind of thing.

Janet's expectations of her students seemed to center on becoming more independent

and learning to be a member of a peer group. She frequently talked children through

the steps of using the bathroom, cleaning up from playtime/snack, putting

on/removing jackets, and hanging up their belongings in their cubbies. The longer I

spent in the classroom, the more frequently I observed students initiating and

completing these tasks on their own. Janet shared:

I think we're here to foster independence, to help them grow…I expect you'll

eventually come in and hang your coat up in your cubby and I won't have to

tell you each time…it will just become a habit.

Janet often used naturally occurring moments to teach students something about

being a member of a group. For example, when a child tried to climb into a wooden

boat that was filled to capacity with four other children, Janet came over and counted

the children with her, explained that it was full, and pointed to a spot she could wait

by until a seat became available. Janet frequently used broad language to explain

appropriate behavior. When two children did something together she would say 'This is called working with a partner'.

"It's the process that matters". With all of her attempts to facilitate the children's independence and social skills development, Janet expressed a belief that the process of learning and experiencing was more important for three-year olds than the product or outcome. There was value to the students trying to put on their jackets or attempting to take turns, even if they were not able to do these things independently:

> We want them to be comfortable in the classroom before we lay a whole lot of
>
> expectations on them. I'm here to support them, to encourage them, to take
>
> them, you know, that one step beyond…I think it's just their first experience.

Janet frequently modeled conversations for students, most often related to taking turns.   Although Janet modeled such interactions multiple times a day, she did not expect the children to initiate or even repeat them:

> I don't have a lot of rules in the threes. My biggest rule is 'If Debra has it, it's
>
> hers until she puts it down'. Then if someone else picks it up she has to wait.
>
> As the year goes on, if Debra wants a doll or whatever, then we'll show her
>
> what to say. We'll say 'When you're finished can you please give me a turn?'
>
> that kind of thing. But I don't expect them to be able to do that on their
>
> own…I just want them to experience it.

This viewpoint extended to a discussion I had with Janet about curriculum and the benefits of doing projects in preschool:

I use the word exposure a lot…that's what we're trying to do. I think it's the

process that matters…it's the process that's taught. It's not the end product so

much.

While Janet's perspective on process and exposure influenced her expectations of the

children, it was also related to her outlook that children should try all activities, if

only briefly. When we discussed a situation where a student does not want to

participate in a project, Janet remarked:

I think you have to encourage them and not let them not do anything. So I

have [a student] this year, he doesn't like glue…so I'll say 'Let's just try one

time and then you can go wash your hands if they're sticky'. I just think it's

important that they try, that they have the experience.

One of the last questions I asked Janet was what she wanted her students to walk

away from the school year with. She responded:

Loving school, being happy, and wanting to come back.

Debbie's story. Debbie is a Caucasian female in her mid-40s who has been

an associate teacher at Hawthorne Academy for seven years. This is her third year

working with Janet- prior to that she had been partnered with Tracy in the four-year

old program. Debbie majored in English as an undergraduate and went on to get her

Master's degree in English as well. After her freshman year at college, Debbie taught

in a summer program at a nearby boarding school. It was there that she became

interested in teaching:

I don't know, the second I walked in the classroom I was hooked. I was

working with master teachers. These teachers were phenomenal and the

energy and enthusiasm that they brought to the classroom was just
incredible…and even though we were 19 years old, 19 to 22, somewhere in
that range, they always gave us the opportunity to teach a little bit in the
classroom.

Debbie began her first teaching job right out of college, but continued to work at this
summer program for a total of eight years. For 11 years, she taught English in
various settings including middle school, high school, community college, and
university. Debbie then stopped teaching for several years after her children were
born, but began working as a substitute at Hawthorne once she became a parent in the
school:

I started subbing. One thing I learned quickly about subs is you become the
favorite sub if you never say no…and I never did. And then after a while
Peggy [preschool director] took a chance and hired me so I came. My early
childhood education background really started here at Hawthorne - it's very
different than the teaching I had done prior to that.

Debbie described multiple sources of knowledge for and influences on her teaching
and classroom management practices including her upbringing, teachers, and mentor
colleagues. Debbie's father had a strong impact on how she views her role in the
classroom:

My dad…he was just a constant factor. He never seemed to get too ruffled
about anything- the calm in the storm, so to speak. I think that you need to
have a lot of that as a teacher because you don't know what's going to come
up on any given day in the classroom…especially with the three-year olds.

My dad was a good problem solver. He was always a good listener. You need those qualities to be a good teacher, so I kind of go back to a lot of the things that I learned as a kid.

Debbie recalled teachers she had as a student:

There were some teachers that I had in high school- I can still remember going to their class. I don't necessarily remember the content, but I remember that I loved going to the class because of the teacher…I think I have a love of learning that I got in the classroom as a student that I want to make sure is in my classroom as a teacher.

Debbie also credited the teachers from the boarding school she worked at in the summers at the beginning of her career:

I mean, just being with a master teacher and seeing the potential of what a classroom could feel like and be like…I still go back to that sometimes.

By far the greatest influence on Debbie's classroom management and teaching practices for preschool students came from the two teachers she has worked with at Hawthorne:

Janet is a master teacher. She's been at the school for over 20 years. She's been teaching three-year olds for all that time so she has a wealth of knowledge and a wealth of experience, which I have benefited from.

Debbie described her strong working relationship with Janet and how their approaches to classroom management have become largely similar:

Janet and I have a fabulous partnership. My role is to help her…to aid and assist in any way that I can with how she sort of envisions the classroom. But

having said that, she is wonderful. In her mind we are co-teachers. She'll say 'Do you have an idea? Bring it in.' Fortunately we have very similar philosophies about working with young children and how to manage a classroom- how to keep them productive and happy and feeling comfortable and safe and welcome and all of those things.

Debbie described herself as a lifelong student who always looks to learn new things. This school year, she was involved in an ongoing series of professional development workshops focused on technology in the preschool classroom. Although she has found professional development opportunities in general to be highly beneficial, Debbie has not participated in any related to classroom management. Debbie did not identify any written materials that inform her beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices related to classroom management for the purpose of the document review in this study.

Debbie's approach to classroom management.

"It doesn't change from day to day". Debbie expressed her belief that consistency is an important factor in classroom management. When adult behavior is stable and predictable to the children, they respond accordingly:

I think consistency is so important to the children. They always know just how I'm going to be…and they always know 'Miss Debbie likes us to do it this way.' It doesn't change from day to day. We all do it the same way…it is how we like our classroom to run. I think this is something a teacher brings to the classroom that really helps the children.

Debbie always greeted the students warmly when they arrived and created connections between school and home as a means of making the students feel safe and comfortable.

> With the little ones, first and foremost I think they need to feel safe in the classroom. They need to feel safe and loved, and so the second they walk in the door we always greet them: 'Hi, how are you Debra? Good to see you today'. We try to get to know the parents or grandparents who are dropping them off…maybe their dog at home and what the name of their dog is…so you have that comfort level with them and it helps them feel safe.

She sat among the children during classroom activities and at specials (music, science, and PE), modeling expected behavior, unless she was setting out an upcoming activity. Debbie's classroom management practices were embedded throughout her interactions with students across the day. These included providing ongoing verbal directions, modeling conversations, using positive language, and physically prompting/assisting, among others.

"I'm in charge of my own behavior". As with Janet, Debbie also expressed the idea that students were learning to be members of a group apart from their families, which involved new and different expectations:

> With the threes what you're working on is how to come to school, how to separate from Mom and Dad and feel safe, know that our teachers take care of us…and how to follow directions in a group because most of them are not

used to it. They're at home and they don't have to share- they can get what they want.

Debbie regularly directed and encouraged students to hang up their belongings, use the bathroom, clean up toys and snack independently. This sometimes involved talking them through each step and/or providing physical assistance. She explained:

We do hold them accountable for a lot of things, probably more than they have to do at home. We tell the parents that up front- 'When they come to school we're going to be teaching them the bathroom routine.' They are potty trained when they come to us, but a lot of times Mom and Dad are right there to help them manage their clothing and we tell them- 'If you could send them in easy to manage clothing because we're going to be teaching them and encouraging them to do that themselves.' We're there in case they need us, but we want them to try on their own.

Debbie shared her belief that when children take ownership of their self-care (clothing, belongings, and bathroom) and of their membership in the classroom (play and snack clean up), it improves classroom behavior in general:

Promoting independence and self-management is very good for the overall discipline of the classroom because they [the children] know- I'm in charge of my own behavior.

"We try to give them the tools". While the students became increasingly self-sufficient in their abilities to remove/put on clothing, use the bathroom without assistance, and clean up after themselves, independence with social interactions and

conflict resolution did not develop at the same pace. Debbie (and Janet) continuously modeled what to do in these situations. Debbie explained:

> If someone grabs a toy from me and I had it first, well, the first step that we try to teach them is use your words and say to the other child 'I had that first.' That's really hard for them…they need us to model a lot. Sometimes what I'll do is I'll walk over and say 'Ok, well let's go tell them together that you had the toy first- you say it and I'll stand right there and listen.' And then the other child will just stand there and I'll say to that child 'Ok, now you say- I'm very sorry, here you go.' And then you say to the one who grabbed the toy to say to the first child- 'Can I use it when you're finished?' You give them the tools. You're sort of doing the conversation for them but you are not asking them to parrot it back. After a while they, you hope anyway, by the end of the year they're learning to do that kind of stuff.

Debbie shared Janet's belief that it was always important to get the child to try, be it cleaning up, participating in a project, or solving a conflict with a peer:

> Sometimes we literally go over and take them by the hands and say 'I'll do it with you- come on.' But don't let them just stand there. Let's say it's clean up, even if they just put away one car, I'll say wonderful, that's great.

Although Debbie provided this level of assistance and support, it was grounded in the belief that she was fostering behavior that would ultimately result in independence:

> You try not to, as much as you can, you try not to solve their problems for them. That's what parents are for and parents do that a lot. But we at school, we try to give them the tools to do it themselves.

I asked Debbie what she wanted her students to walk away from the school year with. She responded:

> Love of learning. School is a great place. Teachers are fun, school is fun, and learning is fun.

A Day in Janet and Debbie's Room

Physical space. Janet and Debbie's classroom is a large open space divided into different areas. Upon entering, the right side of the room had cubbies, a block center, housekeeping area, rug for circle time/reading, and two bulletin boards displaying students' work. The left side of the room had a sink, countertop, cabinets, closet, easel, art shelf, bookshelf, science table, rice table, and two rectangular tables, each with eight chairs. Shelving units and a storage bench separated one area from the next and contained toys relevant to that space, playdough, puzzles, etc. Figure 1 provides a visual display of the room layout (not drawn to scale).

Figure 1

Janet and Debbie's classroom
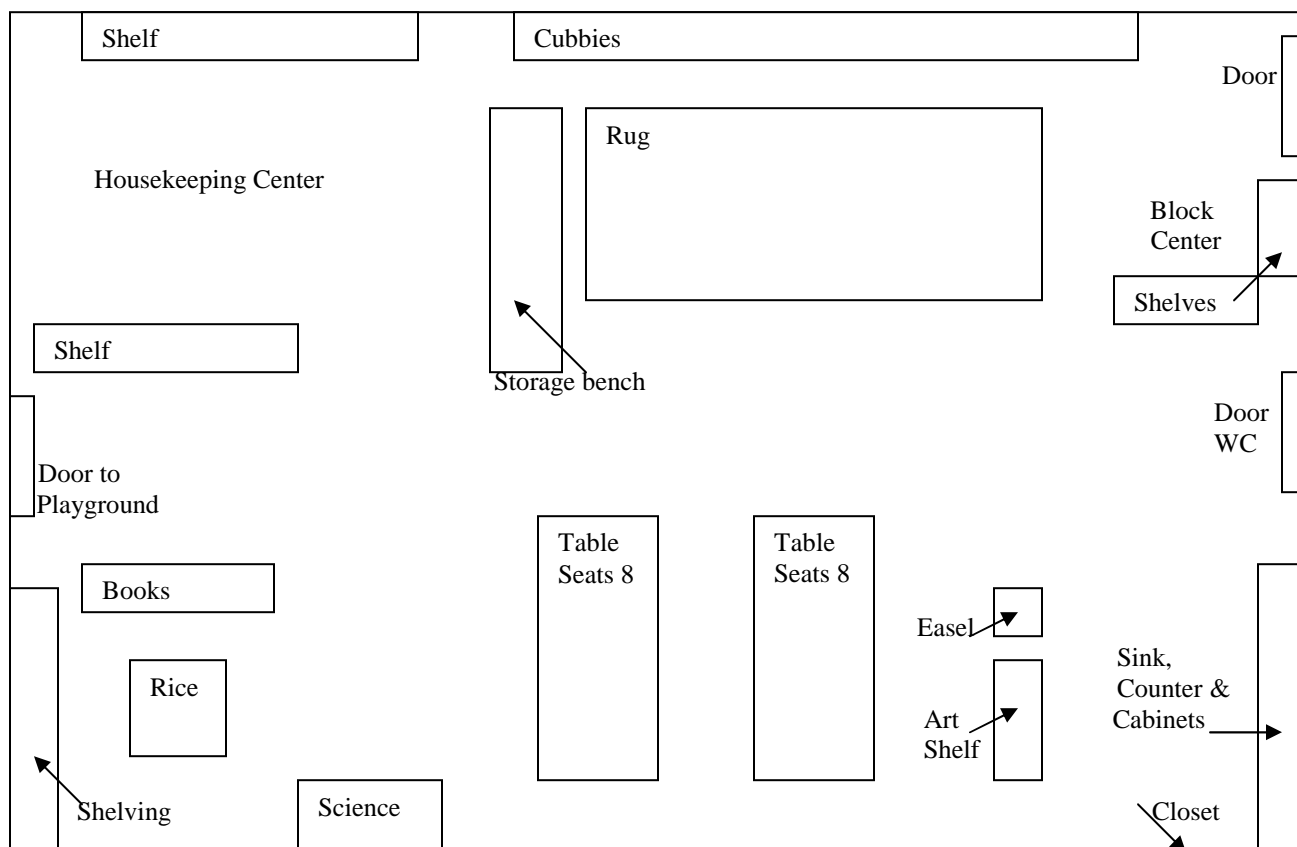
This classroom had become Janet's at the start of the previous school year and she

described her arrangement of the space:

I thought about where the children should sit on the floor for circle. I decided to

do it here with the children's backs to the door. So if we had visitors, they're not

looking at them because they may end up distracted.

I want there to be a place for everything and for the children to know their way

around…I like an open space, a bright, cheery room. I like a room that reflects

the children's work…and I think the classroom, to me, it's organized.

I observed additional aspects of the physical environment used to support classroom management, other than the division of the room into areas. There was an X on the floor outside the bathroom where children waited when it was occupied. The cubbies were along the wall closest to the door and used as a target for lining up ("Go stand by your cubby"). During circle time, Janet often placed individual carpet squares on the rug for the children to sit on.

Students. There were seven children in the class, four girls and three boys. This was unusual compared to prior years when they had 12-15 students. Janet explained that her class meets three days/week:

> I was supposed to have two more children but they ended up next door [in the
> five day/week class]. The parents decided that they wanted five days…more
> parents are looking for five days. People say to me 'Oh it must be great
> having only seven', but I actually prefer a larger class. I like the group
> dynamic better.

Specifically, Janet felt that the children sought out teachers more often with fewer children in the class, rather than one another. Debbie related another factor influencing their low enrollment:

> Given the economic times, bringing your child to an independent school has
> become much more of a stretch for families. The threes used to always have
> 15…having only seven changes the dynamics of the class.

Weekly schedule. Janet and Debbie's class met three days a week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00am-12:00pm. In the afternoon some children stayed for extended daycare, but students and teachers divided differently for this part

of the day. There was a weekly schedule posted in the classroom by the door. Each day began with self-directed activities, circle time, snack, and ended with curriculum enrichment and outside play. From approximately 10:00am to 11:00am activities rotated between 'specials': physical education (PE or gym), music, and science. Hawthorne Academy is situated on a campus with several buildings and each special was located in a building outside the preschool. Science was in the adjacent building, while music and gym were in buildings next to one another and took approximately 5-6 minutes to walk to with the children. See Table 5 for the weekly schedule, as posted in the classroom.

Table 5

Weekly schedule: Janet and Debbie's class

Class Schedule 2010-2011

Miss Janet and Miss Debbie   Three-Day
Threes

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	Self-Directed Activities		Self-Directed Activities		Self-Directed Activities
9:00-9:30	Circle Time		Circle Time		Circle Time
9:30-10:00	Snack		Snack		Snack
10:00-10:30	PE		9:50-10:20 Science		PE
10:30-11:00	Music		PE		Music
11:00-11:30	Curriculum Enrichment*		Curriculum Enrichment*		Curriculum Enrichment*
11:30-12:00	Outside Play		Outside Play		Outside Play

*Curriculum enrichment includes activities such as projects, additional stories, and outside exploration
Our goal is to adhere to the schedule above; however, we will be flexible to best meet the needs of your children

Daily routine. The following section describes the daily routine and is structured around the activities listed in the weekly schedule. There are various classroom management strategies and other teacher actions mentioned: stating verbal directions, repeating directions at eye level, providing physical prompting/assistance, giving warnings, singing songs/fingerplays, using physical movement, stating rules broadly, explaining consequences, using positive language, and modeling dialogue. I explain each in the framework of one activity to provide an example of how it was used, but in fact Janet and Debbie demonstrated these behaviors throughout the day in

multiple contexts. Furthermore, these practices were observed interchangeably between both teachers.

     Arrival. Although the school day officially began at 8:30am, parents were permitted to drop their children off beginning at 8:00am, so arrival was staggered. When a child arrived, Janet or Debbie greeted him/her warmly. The children generally removed their backpacks and jackets independently. If a child did not, one of the teachers would tell the child to and, if necessary, repeat the direction at eye level, talk the child through the steps, and/or physically assist.

     Self-directed activities. The first part of the day was self-directed play, when the children were permitted to choose activities from any area of the room. Janet would also set up options in advance of the children's arrival, such as easel painting, playdough, manipulatives or puzzles. This was intentional, in order to maximize the possibility that the children would experience as wide a variety of activities as possible. Janet explained:

> I think some teachers don't set anything out so the children make the choices
>
> naturally and that's fine, but for me- they might not bring the playdough out
>
> for three weeks or they may not paint for two weeks. I want to keep bringing
>
> those things out every day because I think it's important for them to
>
> experience.

Janet and Debbie typically sat with a student or group of students during self-directed play, asking questions and expanding on their language. This was the time of day when the teachers frequently modeled conversations between two students, most often related to turn taking. For example "Debra you have to say 'Joan, I'm playing

with that' and Joan, you say 'Debra, when you're finished with that can I have a

turn?" At one point, Janet or Debbie stood by the bathroom and called the children

over one at a time. If a child did not complete the bathroom routine independently,

she talked them through each step. The children were given a verbal warning five

minutes before it was time to clean up, accompanied by one of the teachers turning

off and on the light. After five minutes, the children were told "everybody freeze"

and then Janet and Debbie sang a clean-up song with them. Both teachers sang songs

throughout the day- during snack, circle, and while walking to and from specials.

Janet explained:

> Well, I do them [the songs] mainly to get the attention of the children, to give
>
> them something to focus on at transitions, because at this age their minds
>
> might be at that truck over there or whatever. Sometimes, I just make them
>
> up. And for some reason when you sing they seem to listen better.

Debbie expanded further:

> There is definitely something to the music thing and when we sing they stop
>
> and they listen. Maybe it's because it's different than a talking voice or a
>
> lecturing voice or an instructional voice. Music is magical- it really is. And it
>
> helps with classroom management tremendously.

The students typically needed verbal direction to participate in clean up, sometimes

repeated at eye level to an individual child. If that did not work, Janet or Debbie

would physically prompt the child to help, by handing him the toy, turning his body

and pointing to where it belonged.

Circle time. After cleaning up, the children were directed to sit on the rug for circle time, which always began with singing the same song. Janet then read a book, sang a song, and/or taught a lesson related to the current curriculum unit. She used a feltboard with cutouts, puppets, or other objects to teach and reinforce concepts and would always call the children up one at a time to take turns with these items. Janet frequently paused during circle time to verbally redirect a child (e.g. "Molly, look over here"; "I need your help. If I don't have all my friends' help I won't be able to do it"). Debbie also refocused the children by whispering to them or physically prompting them (e.g. touching their shoulders). She sat with the children for most of circle and explained why:

> You always have to model as much as you can the behavior that you want. In other words, it's circle time and Miss Janet has said we're listening now. Well, I'm certainly not going to be on my cellphone or talking to another teacher. Most of the time I'll be sitting in the circle with them.

Toward the end of circle, Debbie left the group and began setting up snack at the table. She explained:

> At first, as an associate [teacher] you don't know where the gaps are…where does she [lead teacher] need me? So at first Janet had to be really good at verbalizing 'This is what I usually have an associate do- while I'm reading the story she's setting up snack.' But then after a while, I mean Janet and I have been working together for a few years, so I just know…I anticipate it.

Snack. Following circle time, the children were directed to use hand sanitizer and find a seat at the table. Snack began with singing the same song. Janet or Debbie

served the food, while the other sat next to the children. The teacher distributing the

food asked each child 'would you like [apple slices]?' and then modeled 'yes please'

or 'no thank you' if the child did not initiate one of those responses. Janet and

Debbie often reacted to behaviors they wanted to correct by stating rules broadly, for

example, "we don't touch other people's napkins" and "we don't share food." They

would also explain the consequences of a behavior; such as "if you shake the water it

might spill." Janet and Debbie frequently responded to 'negative' behavior with

positive language, for example "our feet are for kicking balls" when a child was

kicking the table. Debbie explained that using positive language instead of saying

'no' or 'stop' was something she learned since working at Hawthorne Academy.

Janet remarked:

> I try to say it in a more positive way- that's something I've worked on for
>
> years. Do I do it all the time? No, because sometimes it's a spontaneous
>
> thing…but I try because I don't want them to hear 'stop' all the time.

> *Specials.* After snack the children were directed to line up at their cubbies for

the scheduled special, since attending science, PE, and music involved walking to a

building outside the preschool. Janet or Debbie engaged in songs, fingerplays, and

physical movement (e.g. "let's pretend to be a turkey") with the children who were

ready earlier while they waited for the others. When they walked outside, Janet stood

on one end of the line with Debbie on the other. They frequently reminded the

children to stay with the group, but also sang songs, marched, and pretended to be

driving a train on the 'tracks' (bricks that bordered the sidewalk). Janet explained:

In the beginning of the year I start out with a choo-choo line…and it's just to keep their attention, to keep them focused. It helps with organization.

Debbie discussed the goal when walking to a special:

At this age it's not really about having them stand in a straight line from an orderly sense- it's more of making sure they're all there with you and that they all know we're going somewhere.

In each special, the respective teacher had a planned activity. Janet and Debbie modeled expected behavior by participating alongside the children, but also verbally and physically redirected them to stay focused and involved. They both described their role during specials similarly. Janet stated:

I would like to think I'm there to assist…to help the teacher. I don't want to be teaching the class and I don't want to do anything that the teacher doesn't want me to do. But with Debbie and I helping you can give the children individual attention- and they benefit from it.

Debbie explained:

I think our role in the specials is like my role in the classroom- it's to assist that specials teacher. That teacher is the lead teacher. They're the one that created the lesson…we try to take care of the classroom management stuff so that they can teach the lesson. We'll make sure the kids are focused, listening, not bothering their friends. If they are doing that we try to quietly go over and correct them and move their body back into place…if everyone is following along we do whatever we can to model.

Curriculum enrichment. This part of the day is described in the posted weekly schedule as "activities such as projects, additional stories, and outside exploration." For example, Janet directed the children to sit on the rug and showed them small paper plates they had previously colored black and black strips of paper folded to resemble spider legs. She asked 'how many legs does a spider have?' and demonstrated counting and gluing eight strips of paper, four on each side of a plate. Janet then told the children to sit at the table, which had been set up by Debbie with the black paper plates, strips of paper, and glue. Both teachers helped each child count eight 'legs' and then repeated the instructions to glue them on the plate. If a child had difficulty completing the project independently, Janet or Debbie provided physical assistance. Debbie discussed the goals of projects:

> Well, it's to reinforce what we're learning about…what does a polar bear look like? To give them a hands-on experience making one on their own. But it also gets the child to transition to the table and be part of the group…try a new experience. You know, at first they might come over and put two pieces on and they're done- and that's fine. We hope that by the end of the year we can get them to complete a project.

As each child completed their spider, Debbie directed them to sit on the rug where Janet was reading a book related to spiders. Once all the children were seated back on the rug, Janet sang songs and fingerplays about spiders as well.

Outside play. There was a door in the classroom that opened onto the playground. The other three-year old class was also on the playground at this time and all four teachers supervised and interacted with all of the children. When one

child tried to push in front of the other on top of the slide, Janet repeated a rule, "One at a time down the slide." When a child wanted to join a game, Debbie modeled language, "Use your words, say I want to play." Janet called over two children to sit on a bench because they had pushed one another. She asked, "What do we use our hands for?" and each child gave an answer. Janet expanded on their answers and sent them back to play. Janet or Debbie called out a warning five minutes before it was time to return to the classroom. After five minutes, they called the children over and sang a song ("playground is finished…time to go inside").

Case summary: Tracy and Jennifer's Room

Tracy's story. Tracy is a Caucasian female in her early-50s who has been teaching four-year olds at Hawthorne Academy for 26 years. She began her tenure at the school as an associate teacher in the three-year old class, a position held for two years, after which she became a lead teacher in the prekindergarten. Tracy majored in philosophy as an undergraduate student, but toward the end of college decided on a career in education:

> I didn't go into college thinking I was going to be a teacher, but my aunt ran a preschool- she owned her own preschool. I helped her there and I had also worked in summer camps…so sometime later in college I decided I wanted to teach.

Tracy had a personal connection with the head of Hawthorne Academy at the time, who invited her to interview for an associate teacher position in the preschool. She immediately began taking classes toward a Masters degree in early childhood education at a local university, but does not credit her teacher education program as

influencing what she currently does in the classroom, although the considerable time lapse since that experience needs to be considered. Tracy described multiple sources of knowledge for and influences on her teaching and classroom management practices including colleagues, professional development workshops and publications. Throughout her career, she has actively pursued these resources on various topics of interest based on a personal desire to change the way she taught or did something in the classroom:

> Personally, I will just become interested in a particular area. You know, as I have gone through my career the very first thing that I was interested in was math. I was like, we can't just be pointing out numbers to them and it was painful watching them trying to do these workbooks we had back then…I needed to break it down to what we were actually trying to get them to learn. Then I was interested in language arts…at one point I was interested in fine motor…then it was social-emotional development.

Tracy has put together a comprehensive approach to classroom management that she described as developing through her ongoing search for more information on practices she wished to modify:

> It's just built over the years. Basically, when something is bothering me I go 'OK, this isn't working for me. I need to address this. What's the solution to this?' Like when I felt I was always telling the children what to do and I thought 'how can I get them to take ownership of that behavior' or 'how can I do it more smoothly where it's not going to be as disruptive.' So I guess

starting with whatever's bothering me the most that's where I'm moving from, and then I'm building on it so it's an accumulation of things over the years.

While Tracy regularly seeks input from fellow teachers and looks for professional development workshops and publications on topics that currently interest her, she also described how all the experiences she has in her life inform her classroom practices, from her summer job teaching students with reading disabilities to her personal yoga training:

> It's everything. It's what I do during the summertime, you know, learning about dyslexia and teaching in a one-to-one environment. It's learning that I've done in other things that I do. Anytime I've learned something, I feel what it's like to learn something and then I apply it to how children are responding to my instruction. You know, I teach yoga in the classroom because I take yoga and so it's anything and everything. It's very organic. I am interested in brain development and then learning about that and seeing how to observe those things in the classroom and then how to apply things that I've learned.

Tracy's approach to classroom management.

"I have so many things that I do." Tracy's approach to classroom management is a prime example of the general process she has followed to facilitate her professional growth and development. Tracy identified areas related to classroom management that she wanted to address differently because there was something about the status quo that bothered her. She then sought out knowledge about that topic and modified her practices accordingly. Over the years, this has resulted in a

comprehensive system that addresses classroom management from various angles.

Tracy explained:

> Classroom management is something I have worked and worked on and I
> have so many things that I do that I have found that work.

The following is an explanation of Tracy's multifaceted classroom management

practices:

1. Sign language. Tracy taught the children signs for the following responses,
   requests, and directions: yes, no, bathroom, drink of water, turn off your voice
   (quiet), sit criss-cross, wait, focus, and stop fooling around. She used these
   signs throughout the day to communicate with the students, while they used
   them with her and each other. Tracy described multiple benefits to using sign
   language including diminishing the constant flow of repetitive verbal
   directions, creating a more fluid atmosphere during classroom activities,
   reducing social isolation for students who demonstrate problematic behavior,
   and generating a sense of group belonging among the children. Tracy
   explained:

   > I use sign language in the classroom so I don't have to constantly be saying,
   > 'Daniel sit down, Daniel sit down.' You know, a name with the direction, a
   > name with the direction. I can just show them to sit, to turn off their voice.
   > If they need to go to the bathroom, if they need to get a drink of water, they
   > can show me with sign language. It's less disruptive to the group. I can
   > show them to wait for a turn instead of turning to them and talking, because
   > as soon as you turn to them you've begun a conversation and then it breaks

down whatever you were trying to do…for me it keeps the management

fluid.

For those classes where you have a particular child who is constantly being

reminded, you don't hear that name, name, name. Where the other kids

know that's the child who's always getting in trouble…I also feel that it's a

bonding thing for the class, something that we use together that's different.

There were cards posted in the circle time area of the classroom, featuring a

visual depiction of each sign. One other nonverbal strategy Tracy taught the

children was to touch her leg if they wanted her attention while she was doing

something. After a minute she would turn to the child and say 'OK, it's your

turn.'

2. Problem-solving chart. Tracy taught her students a four-step approach to

problem solving: stop because something is not right, try to think of

something to do to solve the problem, check to see if everyone is alright, and

if the answer is no ask a teacher for help. Figure 2 shows a copy of the chart

that was posted in the circle time area of the classroom.

Figure 2

Problem-solving chart
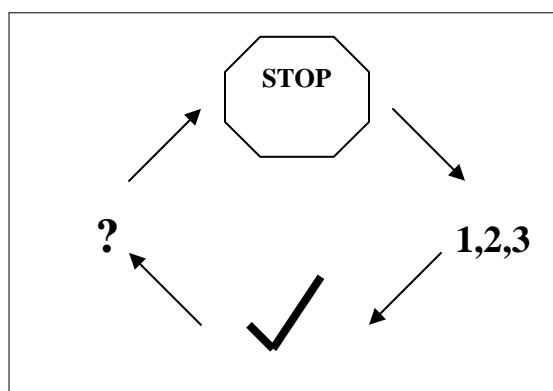
Tracy explained:

Stop because you're not OK. And you're not OK because your body is hurt

or because your feelings are hurt. There are two ways to be hurt. Then the

1,2,3 is you have to think of things to do, think of ideas to solve the

problem. And then the check is you have to check to see if you're OK. Is

everybody OK? And if you're not OK than I need to know about it. But if

everybody's OK then you can just stop there-you're done.

Tracy described how she taught the children to use the problem-solving chart

at the start of the school year:

I teach it as a lesson. We do a whole role-play thing where they have

beanbags and they toss them into buckets. One bucket is an adult and one

bucket is two children, and is it a problem that you can solve with just two

children or do you need a teacher or an adult?

I did not observe Tracy (or Jennifer) overtly refer to the chart at any point.

Rather, the content of the problem solving approach was embedded in their

conversations with the children. When two students had a conflict they would

ask questions, such as: Do you guys need to talk? Have you talked to her?

Are you OK?

3. Consistent language and phrases. Tracy taught her students a number of

phrases that she used consistently throughout the day. Each one served a

different purpose, but Tracy explained her rationale for the general practice:

I find that saying the same thing again and again brings calmness, brings

security. They know the full meaning of what is said and how to proceed.

The following are examples chosen for their frequent use: Tracy taught the children that when she calls their name it means **'look at me'** because something was going to happen. She explained that:

Sometimes it's just a game. Sometimes they just look at me and I give my thumbs up…for certain kids they automatically do it, but for other kids you need to teach them that's the expectation, that they just look at you.

Tracy taught her students that when a friend asked for a toy they were holding/playing with, they could answer in one of two possible ways: either **'yes'** or **'you can have it when I'm finished.'** She explained:

When the response is 'you can have it when I'm finished' that frustration is gone because they are secure in knowing that they will have a turn.

If a child accidentally hurt another child, Tracy asked **'Did you say sorry right away?'** as a reminder of the appropriate response and to diffuse the situation before it escalated. She frequently used the phrase **'let it go'**, which was accompanied by rolling her shoulders back. Tracy used it as a way of indicating that it was time to move on from a situation, or more frequently as a choice for a child who was upset with a friend: 'Do you want to ask Mary to say sorry or do you just want to let it go?' In general, Tracy did not tell her students to apologize but rather asked an upset child whether he wanted an apology and then encouraged him to ask for one. Tracy described the concept of personal space to her students by explaining that every person has a **'bubble'** around them and that they should not walk or sit close enough to pop another person's bubble. When a child tried to squeeze between two friends

at circle time, Tracy said 'I don't think there is enough room for a bubble in there.' Finally, while Tracy often entertained questions from the students, explained her behavior or what was occurring in the classroom, there were times when she told the children 'this is a **hear it, do it**.' Tracy explained:

It's not a conversation; I'm giving you directions. Sometimes when I say a direction I'll formulate it in a question like, 'Would you mind getting me a pencil?' and then they say 'No, I don't want to.' I've heard other people getting angry with a child who might answer that way, but I just need to inform them that it was a direction. I'll say 'I'm sorry I made that a question. I really meant to say that it was a direction'- just hear it, do it.

4. Social curriculum. Tracy read to the children from a series of three books: *What is a Feeling?* by David Krueger, *All My Feelings at Preschool: Nathan's Day* and *All my Feelings at Home: Ellie's* Day, both by Susan Conlin and Susan Levine Friedman. In the first book, the author discusses that people feel with their bodies (hot, cold, tired) but also with their hearts and minds. There are descriptions and examples of several emotions including shyness, excitement, jealousy and guilt. The second and third books are formatted identically as each follows a child through a day at preschool and home, respectively. As the day progresses the children feel a range of emotions. 'Nathan's' feelings include capable, mixed feelings, cooperative, happy, mad, concern, love, rejected, and proud. 'Ellie' feels excited, proud, sad, grumpy, sorry, scared, rejected, worried, and happy. The books divided naturally into 2-3 page sections that focus on one emotion at a time. Each part

concludes with questions to facilitate discussion: When have you felt rejected? Do you ever think of someone you love when you're at school? What did you do the last time you felt mad at someone? Tracy read a section at a time to her students during circle, 2-3 times a week over several months. She facilitated discussions about each feeling and children spoke about their own experiences with that emotion.

5. Beanbag chair and time-out chair. Tracy set up a beanbag chair in the back of the classroom near her desk and a time-out chair (the blue chair) in the opposite corner. She explained:

> I've got that blue chair there and the beanbag chair over here. And a child can go to the beanbag chair anytime they want…and we go over why you might want to go there. You might just be tired. It's a rainy day- I think I'll sit in the beanbag chair. You might be sad, you might be lonely, you might be whatever. You know whatever emotion you might be feeling right now that you just need time in the beanbag chair, that's fine. Come back whenever you're ready. And sometimes if somebody is starting to get upset, they're just having a day… I'll say 'Oh, you should go to the beanbag chair.' And the chair over there is basically your time-out chair. That's if you've hurt someone, if you've hurt another child or a teacher. Then you're in that chair until a teacher can come and we can have a conversation and you can have the opportunity to apologize.

Tracy expanded further on the difference between the two chairs:

I went to a workshop years ago where they were talking about social

convention versus moral imperative and that's basically how it strips down

between the two chairs. Like, if you can't sit during snack time you're not

hurting anybody but you're not following the directions, so I might ask you

to sit in the beanbag chair until you feel less squirmy. So sometimes a

teacher might send you there but it's only until you decide you're ready.

During the 40 hours I observed in Tracy and Jennifer's classroom, I watched

various children use the beanbag chair independently several times a day, but

never saw a child sent to the time-out chair.

6. Yoga. Tracy practiced deep breathing with her students before snack each

day and frequently did yoga poses with them at circle. She explained:

I do yoga with the children- it's just another tool I can pull out. They love

the physical movement and the challenge of it. And for the children who

tend toward hyperactivity and distractibility, the relaxation, the deep

breathing- I feel like it helps. I've learned that with ADHD using the quad

muscles can help calm children down. So sometimes I might do specific

poses that target those muscles…or sometimes there have been children that

I've used weighted bags with from my yoga class. I have brought them in at

times to put in a child's lap.

7. Jobs. As in many preschool classrooms, Tracy assigned jobs to her students,

such as helping with snack setup, telling the children it was time to clean up

(by walking through the classroom ringing a bell), and assisting with circle

time exercises (i.e. calendar, weather, and counting days of school). Since

there are not enough jobs for each child, Tracy appointed the remaining

students 'substitutes'. These children sat next to each other on a green line

during circle time and were called to do the job of a child who was absent.

Tracy also frequently called on a substitute to help with random tasks that

came up throughout the day (e.g. "That puzzle spilled on the floor. Sarah,

you're a substitute- please clean it up.").

"My job is to teach them the structure". Tracy welcomed naturally occurring

opportunities to teach her students all of the aforementioned classroom management

strategies. She explained:

At the beginning of the year when a problem comes up I just say: That's

wonderful this happened. This comes up all the time with children of your

age. We can find out how to solve this problem. This is the way we can fix it.

Tracey's varied classroom management practices connected with her perspective on

her role as a teacher:

My job is to teach them the structure and once the structure is in place then

it's just to remind them, 'Do you remember what to say when someone wants

your toy?' At the beginning of the year I feed them words, there are phrases

that I teach them. And then I use those same phrases over and over again.

They pick up on them and then it's just really checking that they followed

through on the process- it's not really much more than that.

I regularly observed Tracy guiding children to try problem solving without a teacher.

When one child messed up another's pattern Tracy said, 'Do you guys need to talk?'

When a student came to tell Tracy that a child was standing on a chair Tracy said,

'Did you say anything to him?' When two children were talking with each other after a conflict Tracy would often say, 'Are you both OK- I am just checking to see if you're OK.' Tracy described how her classroom management structure promoted independence:

> I am definitely the last one in charge and there is a time that you come to the teacher, but with our problem solving steps…their job is to talk to their friends and their friends' job is to listen to them. If that breaks down then you come to a teacher, but there is already a structure in place for them to take care of a lot of the issues by themselves.

Finally, Tracy shared her belief that with increased independence comes confidence and ultimately a sense of security:

> What I'm attempting to do is build their independence and therefore their confidence because they know that whatever problem might come up, it will be solved. It will and everybody will be OK. Whether they do it by themselves or they need to have a teacher help them through it, everybody will be OK.

"They are part of a group and…their voice is heard". Tracy's ultimate goal was to teach her students that being part of a group, a community, involves responsibility but also provides validation and security:

> It's not the academic skills I really want to emphasize. I want to emphasize the confidence they feel, their sense of community- that they are part of a group and that their voice is heard. I'm asking them to reflect, to come up with answers or questions. I'm trying to build their curiosity and interests,

their energy, their attention, their eagerness for school. It's not really about

whether they can name all the letters because I guarantee that will come. To

me, the other piece is much more important.

I asked Tracy what she wanted her students to walk away from the school year with.

She responded:

I want them to feel connected to a community- that they can support other

people in the community and that they are supported within the community.

They can celebrate other people's achievements and that theirs is celebrated. I

want them to feel it deeply, that it's not just an occasional thing that happens-

it's a constant thing that happens. They can participate, have their voice

heard, have their needs met. It's just that they are solidly in place.

Jennifer's story. Jennifer is a Caucasian female in her late-20s who has been

an associate teacher at Hawthorne Academy for four years. This was her first year

working in the prekindergarten; prior to that she was in one of the three-year old

classes. Jennifer described her path to teaching as a natural progression starting from

her early experiences with children:

I always loved kids- growing up I did a lot of babysitting. Then I went to

[college]. When I applied to [college], I applied for the child and family

studies program. So I was there for four years and then I was a nanny for a

year after I graduated. Then I moved here and got a job and this is my fourth

year here. Now I'm going to [local] University for graduate school. It was

kind of just natural for me. I just love children and then I went to college for

that and then just kept going.

Jennifer described multiple sources of knowledge for and influences on her teaching

and classroom management practices including the parenting she received as a child,

her undergraduate program (particularly the mentor teachers she interned with), and

the teachers she has worked with at Hawthorne:

> The real base is my parents and their parenting and how I was brought
>
> up…the way my parents talked with me and respected my independence…I
>
> go back to my parents and how they would talk with me about the way that I
>
> felt about a situation and allow me to feel certain things. If you're angry
>
> that's OK but you're in this world, you're in this classroom- you're allowed to
>
> feel these things but you need to get along where you are.
>
> What I learned in undergrad was very hands-on. I was in classrooms. We
>
> would do internships at a lab school that was on campus, so I learned a lot
>
> through that. I had some great mentor teachers when I was an
>
> undergrad…and being here obviously. I've learned a lot from [Tracy]. She's
>
> been here over 25 years and the teacher before that I worked with here, it was
>
> her 13th year when she just left, so they were really experienced teachers and I
>
> learned a lot from watching them.

During data collection, Jennifer was in her final year of a Masters program in early

childhood education at a local university. She had attended several professional

development workshops during her years at Hawthorne, but did not cite that as

influencing her approach to teaching or classroom management as much as the daily

experiences of the classroom. Jennifer described her growth as a teacher thus far:

I think I'm still in the beginning stages because with each year I have more experiences and I'm learning more. When I came right out of my undergrad, you feel like you got pumped up. When I got this job I was like 'OK- I'm ready to use my degree and everything that I learned in school.' I was really confident and excited about that. In the beginning I thought I knew it all, but then as you go it's kind of like 'oh, I didn't know that' and you're learning more. I just think the experience is what you learn the most from. Schooling gave me kind of the general base knowledge of [childhood] growth and development but then when you're actually in the classroom you learn more concrete ideas of what to do.

Jennifer expressed a commitment to ongoing learning and professional development that she anticipated would extend throughout her career:

I think with teaching you can always keep learning and expanding on what your approach is and trying different things. And that's one of the draws, I think, to teaching- you can keep tweaking and expanding and going to a workshop and learning something new and trying that and then trying a different way…I want to have the thought that I can keep learning even like 30 years into it, that I'm open to expanding how I teach.

Jennifer's approach to classroom management.

"Deserving of their place in the classroom". Jennifer described her perspective on classroom management and what she wanted the children to understand from it:

I think number one for management would be for the children to be safe and feel included and important and deserving of their place in the classroom. And then to be kind and understanding even if they don't agree with what someone else is saying to respect another child's opinion on something. So I think respect and safety are the two things that make the classroom kind of flow for management…I guess the safety and respect are the top things and that everything kind of trickles down from there.

When Jennifer facilitated a conversation between children engaged in a conflict she wanted to reinforce the message that each student was a respected member of the group:

I guess first to give it the respect that obviously they're- either one of them or both of them- feeling a certain way about what's going on and to give them the time and the respect to focus on what they're upset about and to talk it through with them, to find a solution for making them feel better or get through their emotion. And to have the other child understand, I guess, the expectations of how to get along with other children in the class.

When Jennifer interacted with one or two children, she frequently knelt to speak with them at eye level. I watched Jennifer encourage the children to problem solve on multiple occasions, but she would help when the students were unable to follow through independently. For example, a child came to Jennifer to complain that a friend had said something to make her upset:

Jennifer: Did you talk with him? Child: yes

Jennifer: Did it work? Child: no

Jennifer: Did you ask him to say sorry? Child: Yes, but he didn't do it.

Jennifer: Would you like me to talk to him for you? Child: yes

Jennifer called over the boy and said, "(name) would like you to say sorry." Boy responded by apologizing. Jennifer asked child if she felt better and the response was 'yes'.

"They always have a reason". An extension of Jennifer's conviction that children's feelings should be treated with respect was the belief that there is always a reason for a child's misbehavior and that adults should take the time to ask about and listen to those explanations:

> The first time [a child misbehaves] I get down to their level so we're talking
> as we're equal and it's not like I'm down on them like 'this is what you should
> be doing'…the first time I talk with them about what happened, why they
> were doing that, try to understand where they're coming from and talking with
> them about what is a different way that we can handle the situation that
> everyone can be happy with. So they're feeling some peace and I'm feeling
> some peace. Because they always have a reason, so I try to understand that
> reason well and explain what needs to happen.

Jennifer explained how this perspective has evolved for her:

> Now I see that sometimes the situation can be bigger that you first see it as.
> Before, if I just saw someone hit another kid, I would just look at it more as an
> isolated situation. But when I talk with them more about why did you do that,
> what did he say, what did she say- I've learned to see the bigger picture.

As mentioned previously, when two children had a conflict Jennifer frequently spoke with them at eye level, always listened to their descriptions of what occurred, and would ask multiple questions culminating with 'are you OK?' directed at one or both students. While she listened to the children's descriptions of what happened, she focused more on solving the conflict and moving on. This was consistent with the approach outlined in Tracy's problem solving chart.

"You don't really have a few seconds". Jennifer shared her perspective that teachers need to be able to respond to children's behaviors immediately and learning to do that has been a process for her over the past four years:

> I feel that I am understanding and nurturing of the kids and caring and listening and kind of calming to them. I guess that's how my personality is…but when two kids are having an issue in that split second I'm like 'OK, how do I do this in the best way for them to learn from the experience?' It takes me a couple of seconds to think about how to handle it, but you don't really have a few seconds because you need to handle it right away, so I think that's something I'm still learning.

I asked Jennifer what she wanted her students to walk away from the school year with. She responded:

> The social piece of being in a group- getting along in a group, working together, taking turns, and following directions.

A Day in Tracy and Jennifer's Room

Physical space. Tracy and Jennifer's classroom is a large open space divided into different areas. The entrance to the room is in one corner and following the left

side wall around the perimeter are cabinets, a countertop, sink, teacher desk, file cabinet, small work table, easel, beanbag chair, block area, science table, rice table, housekeeping area, cubbies and the rug space for circle time. In the center of the room are two rectangular tables, each with eight chairs. Shelving units sectioned off or separated one area from the next and contained items relevant to that space such as math manipulatives, books, and puzzles. Figure 3 provides a visual display of the room layout (not drawn to scale).

Figure 3

Tracey and Jennifer's classroom
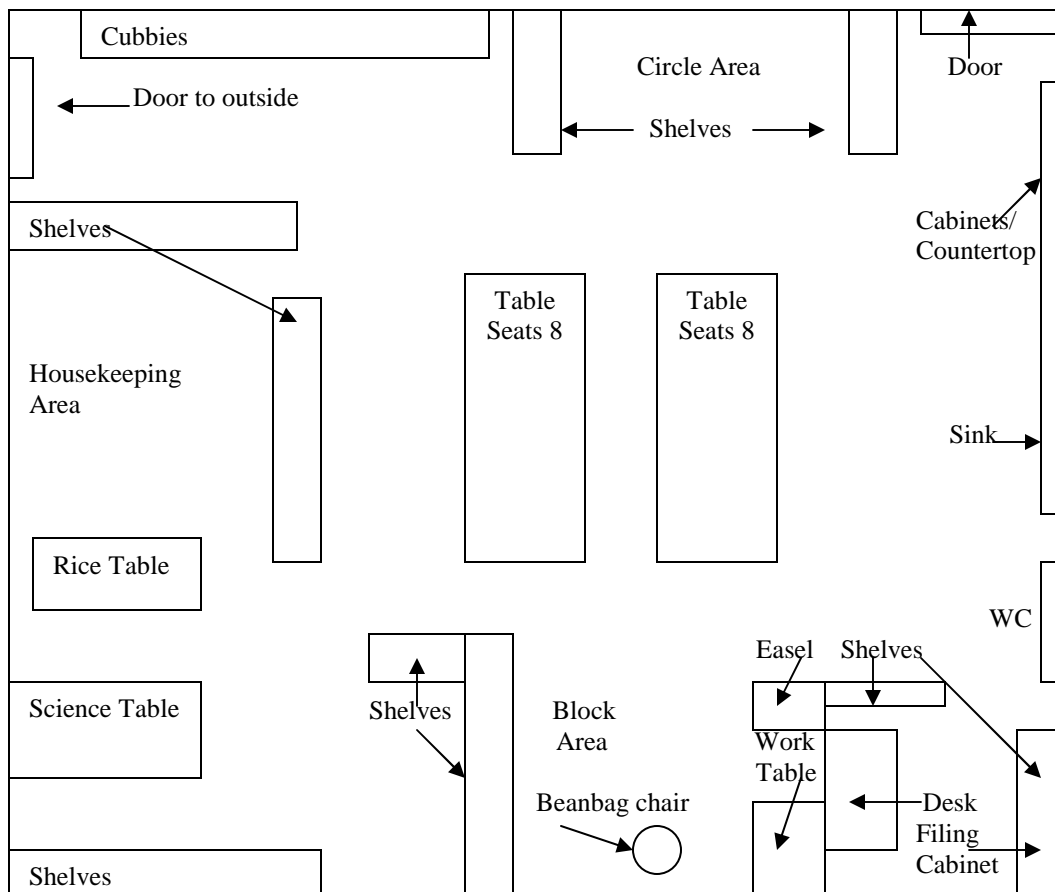
Tracy shared her conception of the space:

> The carpet area is our formal teaching area. It has the teacher chair and it's
> instruction time and that's where we do our daily jobs…so that's a more
> teacher-driven part of the room. The other areas: Housekeeping, rice table,
> blocks, science table- those areas are much more child-driven.
> The organization of the space definitely contributes to the flow of classroom
> activities.

> **Students.** There were 16 students in the class, 12 girls and 4 boys. Tracy

explained the disproportionate number of girls:

> Well, when I first started years ago we kept them equal, genders were equal.
> But then other private schools started having preschool programs, so then we
> weren't getting as many boys because they knew they couldn't stay, so they
> may as well start elsewhere and go straight through.

Tracy felt this group of children was comparable to the previous classes she taught:

> The classes are more or less similar from year to year with regard to
> classroom management. Some years are slightly more challenging and others
> slightly more harmonious but it's all within a very narrow range.

> **Weekly schedule.** Tracy and Jennifer's class met five days a week from

8:00am-12:00pm. In the afternoon many of the children stayed for extended daycare,
but students and teachers divided differently for this part of the day. There was a
weekly schedule posted in the classroom by the door. Each day began with free play
and circle time. Three days a week this was followed by 'split groups': half the class
went to gym or library (along with half the students from the other prekindergarten

class), while the rest stayed in the classroom for small group instruction, and then

they switched. The children attended music and gym twice a week as a full group,

while art and science each met once. The middle of each morning featured snack and

story time, while the remainder was generally divided between specials (science,

gym, and art), free play (often outdoors), and a closing circle time. See Table 6 for

the weekly schedule as posted in the classroom:

Table 6

Weekly schedule: Tracy and Jennifer's class

Class Schedule
2010-2011

Teachers: Miss Tracy and Miss Jennifer   Class: Pre-Kindergarten

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	←		Opening Activities		→
9:00-9:30	Music	Gym / Math/ Language Arts	Library / Language Arts	Gym / Math/ Language Arts	Math Manipulatives
9:30-10:00	Gym	Gym / Math/ Language Arts	Library / Language Arts	Gym / Math/ Language Arts	Music
10:00-10:30	Snack and Story	Snack and Story	Snack and Story	Snack and Story	Snack and Story
10:30-11:00	Free Play	Science	Free Play	Free Play	Show and Tell
11:00-11:30	Theme based Activity	Free Play	Gym (11:15-11:45)	Art (10:45-11:30)	Free Play
11:30-12:00	←		Closing Activities		→

The Pre-kindergarten schedule is a flexible one that provides an opportunity for spontaneous learning through play, discovery, and exploration.

Daily routine. The following section describes the daily routine and is structured around the activities listed in the weekly schedule. There are various classroom management strategies and other teacher actions mentioned. Tracy used

sign language, consistent phrases, verbal directions, redirection, yoga, and social curriculum books. She facilitated problem-solving conversations between children, assigned classroom jobs and created a space where students could take a break (beanbag chair). Jennifer spoke with students on eye level, gave verbal directions, verbally reinforced expectations, facilitated problem-solving conversations, and implemented the classroom jobs. Over the course of my observations, she used sign language with the students increasingly more often. I explain each strategy and teacher action in the framework of one activity to provide an example of how it was used, but in fact Tracy and Jennifer demonstrated their respective behaviors throughout the day in multiple contexts.

Arrival. Although the school day officially began at 8:30am, parents were permitted to drop their children off beginning at 8:00am, so arrival was staggered. Tracy established a three-step routine for the children to complete upon entering the classroom. First, they removed jackets and backpacks and placed them in their cubbies. Each student then identified their nametag from among a group of tags displayed on the table and placed it in an envelope. Finally, each child took a 'pump' of hand sanitizer. Tracy's goal was for the children to complete this routine independently. Occasionally she or Jennifer reminded a child who seemed distracted to follow through, but otherwise the students completed all three steps on their own.

Opening activities. This part of the day was comprised of free play and circle time. During free play the children chose activities from any area of the room. Sometimes Tracy set up a more structured activity at the table (e.g. cutting), which

she described as "extra practice work", and would call over one child at a time to participate. Jennifer explained the purpose of free play:

> For them to explore the classroom and make a choice for what activity they want to initiate and play…and to play with one another and have that social time too.

The housekeeping area was a popular choice among the students and Tracy frequently changed this space to reflect the curriculum unit (e.g. it was a haunted house leading up to Halloween). A boy came over to Tracy and complained that a child threw a toy at him:

> Tracy: Well, what can you do?
>
> Boy: I don't know
>
> Tracy: Well, I think you could ask her to say sorry, take a break in the beanbag chair, or let it go [rolls back shoulders].
>
> Boy: I want her to say sorry.
>
> Tracy: OK, well go ask her then.

The boy said to the child, 'Can you say sorry to me?' and she did. He ran back to Tracy to tell her. She asked, 'Do you feel better now?' and he responded 'yes'.

Once all the children had arrived at school (approximately 8:40am), Tracy instructed a designated student to ring a bell for clean up. While that child walked around the classroom ringing the bell, one or both teachers announced that it was time to clean up. Tracy and Jennifer rotated among the students directing them to specific tasks (e.g. "Jack, please put away the cars"). As the children finished they sat on the

rug in the circle time area. If there was still something left to clean up, Tracy said "I need a substitute to pick up _____" and one of them would come over and do it.

During circle time, Tracy engaged the children in an activity related to the curriculum unit or read an excerpt from a social curriculum book. Typical activities included reading books, singing songs with props/fingerplays, and playing games. For example, Tracy told the children she had a secret recipe for 'witches brew'. As each child took a turn picking a picture card, Tracy used sign language ('yes' or 'no') to indicate if it was an ingredient. By the end, the children had deduced the recipe. Tracy explained her expectations for circle time:

> I'm looking for engagement basically and in order to have the engagement,
> I've told them that they need to sit. They need to be sitting with their bottoms
> touching the carpet…and that they are in their own bubbles, which is their
> own personal space. Those are the two things I ask of them on the carpet.

Throughout circle time, Tracy and the children used sign language with one another (e.g. child requested to use the bathroom and Tracy responded yes), but this never interrupted the activity or conversation, to the point that it was barely noticeable. During circle time, a student would often initiate going to the beanbag chair. Jennifer typically checked the children's backpacks during this time to see if they had notes from home. She also prepared for upcoming activities.

Split groups. At the end of circle time, Tracy called half of the children by name to line up at the door with Jennifer, while the rest stayed with her. Jennifer gave verbal directions to line up and said 'let me see your bubbles', which meant to be quiet (the children closed their mouths and filled their cheeks with air). Jennifer

left to walk her group to gym or library and returned 5-10 minutes later. Meanwhile, Tracy gave directions for and/or demonstrated the activity. She always had a second activity set up, often on the rug, and told the children 'After you finish ____, go to the rug to do ____'. Tracy described split groups as "the instructional time…it can really be anything". Examples of activities included making math sentences with red and white beans and painting a picture related to the curriculum unit. Tracy and Jennifer each sat at a table with four children: commenting on their work, answering questions, and repeating directions. A child finished and Tracy asked "what comes next?' and he went to sit on the rug. When two or more children were on the rug, a teacher joined them. Jennifer left to pick up the other half of the class from library or gym. When she returned with them the groups switched activities.

Specials. Specials for prekindergarten included gym, music, library, science, and art. Tracy did not accompany the children to these activities, but Jennifer walked and stayed with them, unless it was a split groups period. She gave the children ongoing verbal directions and reminders on the way to a special. Jennifer explained her management goals during this time:

> For me it's OK if they talk to their friends, but just to stay in the line and get
> to where we're going…and they can talk as long as they're focusing and
> watching where they're going because one will turn around and someone in
> front of them will stop and they'll bump into them…there's just kind of the
> guidelines to get where we're going in a timely fashion. I don't view it as a
> 'no talking, hands by your side' thing.

In each special, the respective teacher had a planned activity. Jennifer modeled expected behavior by participating alongside the children, but also verbally and physically redirected them to stay focused and involved.

Snack and story. The children were directed to 'get a pump' of hand sanitizer before snack. One designated child put a napkin by each place at the table, while another put out place cards with the children's names. Once everyone was seated, a teacher led them in counting backwards from 10, putting their hands together, taking three deep breaths and singing a song. Tracy instructed the children:

> We are going to be giving out [apple slices] and [pretzels]. Say 'yes please' or 'no thank you'.

After serving food and drinks, each teacher sat at one of the tables. Tracy explained:

> I want them to feel that it's conversation time- it's not just stuffing your face. It's a time where you really notice who is at your table and you talk to the people at your table. I like for each teacher to take a seat at the table and to model that behavior…like a conversation at your coffee break. And that is something I have not always done. I started because I saw it wasn't coming together. And then I found that it just went more smoothly with the modeling. I enjoyed it more and the children enjoy having a teacher come and sit with them…it changes the tone.

When the children finished eating they discarded their trash and put their place cards in a small basket. Occasionally, Tracy or Jennifer reminded a child to clean up, but they typically did it independently. After snack, Jennifer directed the children to sit on the rug using sign language. Tracy demonstrated a yoga pose that the children

imitated and then read them a book. The management needs and behaviors were the same for story time as for circle time.

Free play. This part of the day took place in the classroom or outdoors. When indoors, it was identical to the free play that took place earlier in the morning during opening activities. Tracy described outdoor play as a time for physical activity, observation of nature, imaginative play, and socialization. Jennifer explained:

> It's a time for them to use their imaginations and explore and socialize and come up with their own games

A child came over to Jennifer and complained that a group of friends were not including her in their game:

> Jennifer: Did you ask 'can I play'?
>
> Child: Yes, they said no.
>
> Jennifer: Would you like me to talk to them with you?
>
> Child: Yes.

Jennifer facilitated a conversation between the children that ended with them all playing together. Meanwhile, a girl filled a bucket with sand and began to walk away from the sandbox with it. Tracy said to her:

> Sand stays in the sandbox, but if you want to collect something and walk around with it you can collect leaves or pinecones.

Theme based activity. This was typically a project, coloring, or worksheet activity related to the curriculum unit. Tracy always gave the children directions or demonstrated the activity first. Both teachers sat with the children while they

completed the task, commenting on their work, answering questions and repeating

directions. Tracy explained her perspective on a child who does not want to

participate in a project:

> I would give them the option…if they really didn't want to do it I would come
>
> back and double check- 'are you sure? I'm going to be putting it away.' If it
>
> were a project that's just a concrete form of a concept I'll have a discussion
>
> just to make sure they understood what we're doing. If they did but just didn't
>
> want to do the project that would be fine…I also might have a conversation to
>
> find out what it was: Is a part of the project hard? Is there a different color
>
> you might want to use?

I never observed a child unwilling to participate in a project, but occasionally a

student did not want to help clean up. Tracy explained that this was different from a

project:

> With clean up it's different…then you are part of a group and this is what you
>
> have to do.

> *Closing activities.* This activity was usually a circle time that Jennifer ran.

The primary purpose was to complete classroom jobs including calendar, weather,

counting the days of school and the number of children in class that day. Jobs were

reassigned once a week. Jennifer used verbal redirection and sign language to keep

the children focused.

Case Summary: Becca and Michelle's Class

> **Becca's story.** Becca is a Caucasian female in her early-30s who has been

teaching at Hawthorne Academy for ten years. She has been a lead teacher of four-

year olds for five years, and was an associate teacher in both prekindergarten and kindergarten prior to that. Becca described how she knew in high school that working with children was in her future:

> I had worked in camp as a counselor, babysat- had a really nice time doing that. I enjoyed the camaraderie with my peers, with the children, and it just seemed sort of a natural fit for me. I've always kind of felt that I had that maternal instinct, I guess, so I thought I would end up doing something in this line.

During college Becca thought she would become a social studies teacher for older children based on her subject area interests. She majored in sociology and history and began looking for a teaching position during her senior year:

> I sent my resume around to a bunch of different schools, went on some interviews. The position here kind of came up by chance. A family friend who worked here at the time told me about it and said 'I know it's a different subject area than you were thinking but go in, see what you think'. So I came in and spent the day here, interviewed, and they offered me the position. I thought, you know what, I'll give it a try. If I don't love it after the first year I can try for something else. But I came in, took the job, and enjoyed it.

Becca described multiple sources of knowledge for and influences on her teaching and classroom management practices including the parenting she received as a child, colleagues, and feedback from her students:

> I think a large part for me is how I was raised and the influence my parents had on me as far as having expectations from me, encouraging my

independence, and promoting that love of learning and enjoyment of the
school atmosphere…the way my parents managed the discipline in our
household growing up was definitely a big influence.

The women I have taught with here have been great resources for me over the
years…learning about what they do, asking questions maybe about what to do
with a specific child. But for me, a large part of what I draw on is just
experience, trying something and seeing what's successful, how the students
respond.

Becca has completed five classes toward a Masters degree in early childhood
education at a local university. While she has taken several professional development
workshops on teaching reading and math in preschool, Becca has participated in just a
few workshops related to classroom management. She explained:

I've gotten some strategies [from the workshops] which I did implement in the
classroom, but it's actually been a few years since I've been to one on
classroom management.

Becca's approach to classroom management.

"I am a role model first and foremost". Becca shared her belief that teaching
students the expectations of classroom life required ongoing modeling of appropriate
behavior by the teacher:

I think I am a role model first and foremost for how we live and act socially
within our little world here…I want to model for them what the appropriate
behaviors are.

Becca regularly modeled dialogue/facilitated conversations between children and explained the circumstances and consequences of various situations to her students. Examples of statements that demonstrated these behaviors include, 'Say can I play with you', 'Say sorry, it was an accident', 'That hurts a friend's feelings', 'Not everyone gets a turn all the time', and 'Remember, we are inside so I should only hear inside voices'. Becca explained:

> We know children this age learn through routine and repetition so for me I just want to give them the consistent modeling of 'this is what we're supposed to do'. And you know, over time they get it and they can take all those things with them as they move up in school.

"Sometimes disciplinarian and sometimes mother figure". Becca described that teaching four-year olds involved balancing the expectations she has of the children with an understanding that they are only first learning to be part of a group in a classroom:

> I think I walk a fine line between, I don't know how to say it, sometimes disciplinarian and sometimes mother figure? I don't raise my voice to them or anything, but I want to be firm so that they understand that there are guidelines that they have to follow. At the same time, we certainly understand that they are growing and learning and experiencing new things.

Becca continuously gave verbal directions to the children and verbal reminders of the expectations. For example during circle time she stated and repeated, 'Sit criss-cross applesauce', 'I want to see listening ears', 'Raise your hand if you would like to share something', and 'When we are in circle time only the teacher or the student she is

talking with should be talking'. Becca believed it was important for the children to participate in all activities because that indicated they were learning and adapting to the expectations of school:

> We ask them to do all the projects. We've certainly had children who, you know, maybe they're having a bad day or something along those lines and then they'll refuse. Typically, if it's a child who is usually interested and willing and happy to do things, there's always an exception made for that kind of situation, if they're having a bad day. But we do ask that when it's work time that they do come to the table to work because as they move on in school there are going to be more expectations put on them. So part of it is just getting used to that. You know, that it's time to leave play and transition to something else.

On one occasion, I observed Becca sitting with a child who did not want to participate in a project and giving him step-by-step verbal directions and physical prompting until he completed it. Along with Becca's expectations of her students came an understanding that following school rules was new for them:

> A big piece of this year in their lives is learning the social dynamic of the classroom and growing as person apart from their families a little bit.

As many times as Becca repeated directions or expectations, she always demonstrated a calm demeanor and gave children ongoing positive feedback for their appropriate behavior. She also wanted the children to view her as a source of support:

> We always talk to the kids about that, that teachers are here to help you. If you need to find the words to deal with a problem you are having with a

friend, we could help you with that. If you feel scared, if you're hurt or upset, what have you…your teachers are here to help you.

"Part of it is judging the situation". Another balance Becca tried to achieve in the classroom was between allowing children opportunities to problem solve and teacher involvement. She explained:

> Part of it [classroom management] too is judging what situations need
> intervention and what situations we need to let them learn themselves how to
> handle.

On several occasions I observed a student approach Becca to say that two children were having a disagreement, to which she replied 'Well, let's see, maybe they'll work it out'. However, more often than not Becca did become involved, modeling language and facilitating conversations between children. She explained that stepping back from immediately intervening is something she has worked on:

> Over the years I do tend to pull back and be a little more hands off than I used
> to be in the hopes that I can get them to deal with the situation on their own.

I asked Becca what she wanted her students to walk away from the school year with. She responded:

> The greatest thing I think that they can walk away with is to be excited about
> school, to have that love of learning. Also, if they can walk away with a little
> more independence…they can walk into a new classroom next year that is
> more academic and have the ability to go through a more academic day.

Document review. Becca identified one publication that has influenced her beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices related to classroom management: *Practical*

Discipline Strategies for the Difficult Young Child (Preschool- Second Grade) by Gene Bedley. The book is divided between general principles of child development, reflective questions, guidelines, and practical strategies related to classroom management. The author discusses teaching ethical principles such as respect and responsibility. He states that in order for children to learn they need routines that are introduced, modeled, practiced, and reinforced. The various routines of the day are listed and questions posed such as: In what ways do your classroom routines help students be responsible and accountable? How do you transition students to minimize downtime? Finally, there are numerous practical classroom management strategies suggested in the book such as putting a button on a string around each child's neck as a reminder to "button up", that is sit quietly. There were many of the general principles of child development, reflective questions, and guidelines that related to Becca's approach to classroom management including promoting independence/responsibility, modeling appropriate behavior, establishing routines, and addressing downtime. However, she did not use any of the practical strategies described in this book.

Michelle's story. Michelle is a Caucasian female in her late-20s who has been an associate teacher at Hawthorne Academy for four years, the first two in kindergarten and since in the prekindergarten. She received a Bachelors degree in human development and family studies, but was unsure of a specific career path to pursue:

> My major was pretty broad. I enjoyed it and I knew I was interested in
>
> children. I just didn't know that I wanted to go into teaching necessarily…I

thought maybe psychology or something like that. But out of college I

happened to just take a job as a teacher's assistant at a church preschool, pre-

K four-year olds, and that was my first experience in the classroom and it was

fantastic.

Michelle described the teacher she worked with:

I loved the teacher…she was just great with the kids and it was just a really

positive learning experience. That's how I got interested in teaching kids this

age…I just really admired the teacher and she was always giving me positive

feedback and thought I did a great job, so I thought I might as well try

[teaching], I enjoy it.

Michelle worked at the church preschool for one year and then moved from the

northeast United States to her current mid-Atlantic location. She taught for three

years in a private daycare facility:

That school was not the best situation for me…it wasn't a good fit as far as the

school. The classes had over 20 kids and it wasn't structured at all. I tried

organizing things, setting out activities in the morning like the teacher I

worked for [at the church school] did, but I don't know, it just didn't seem to

work. And then I took a job here [at Hawthorne] and it's just been a great

experience.

Michelle credited that first teacher she worked for as the primary source of

knowledge for and influence on her teaching and classroom management practices.

She described what impressed her most:

I was amazed at how structured it was. She had the routine of the day down

pat and the kids just knew what they were expected to do. But she was also

just very gentle natured…she was very gentle with the kids. There was this

great atmosphere in the classroom and you just knew the kids felt loved and

safe.

In addition to a Bachelors degree, Michelle holds a 90-hour teacher certificate from a

local community college and is currently pursuing a Masters degree in early

childhood education from a nearby university. She has not participated in

professional development workshops on topics related to classroom management and

described learning "just the basics about child development" from her teacher

education courses. Michelle did not identify any written materials that inform her

beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices related to classroom management for the purpose

of the document review in this study.

Michelle's approach to classroom management.

"It's all setting the tone". Michelle expressed her belief that an important

component of classroom management is creating a routine and set of expectations for

the children at the beginning of the school year and reinforcing that consistently over

time:

I think it's all setting the tone, you know, in the beginning of the year and

sticking with that routine and that set of standards…I think it's just modeling,

consistency, going over the rules, and just reinforcing their positive behavior

and stuff.

Michelle led the first morning circle time and followed the same routine every day. She gave the children ongoing verbal directions and repeated verbal reminders of behavioral expectations. Michelle explained how establishing clear routines and expectations helps prevent problematic behaviors from occurring in the classroom:

> I think if you set the tone early and you set your expectations you avoid conflict to begin with. The kids are better able to keep control over themselves.

While Michelle believed that effective classroom management involved setting the tone in a broad sense through structure and rules, she also described daily planning and preparation as important aspects of a calm and orderly classroom atmosphere:

> I think it's important to have your materials ready to go so you can focus on the kids and so they don't sense that you're distracted. It sets the tone for the day that it will run smoothly.

Michelle explained that she and Becca often do prepare materials for upcoming activities during free play and circle time. Although that is not her preference, Michelle viewed it as a circumstance of her position and did not appear bothered by it at all:

> When you're working as an associate [teacher] you need to kind of adjust your ways to help the lead teacher and that's fine.

Another aspect of teacher preparation for Michelle was engaging the students during downtime and transitions. She explained:

> You should always have a backup plan, you know, songs or stories ready to
> go…you should always have a backup plan in case you get that awkward time
> before transitions.

I frequently observed Michelle using songs and stories to keep the children engaged during downtime and transitions. For example, on one occasion when activities in the library were completed before it was time to return to the classroom, Michelle took a book off the shelf, called the children over to sit down, and read to them. She sang songs or asked them questions to start a conversation when waiting for the full group to be seated for snack and circle.

"A solid in their life". Michelle frequently discussed structure and routine as positive forces in the lives of children, above and beyond their contribution to classroom management:

> I just think it's important for kids to have, you know, a solid in their life…a
> routine, something to come to where they can feel comfortable. I think that's
> really important because, you know, there's a lot going on with kids
> nowadays, they rush to this and that.

As mentioned previously, Michelle used a regular circle time routine and consistently gave children verbal directions and reminders. She also told the children in advance what they could expect that morning ("Today we are going to library and then to…") or during an activity ("OK, let me tell you what we're about to do…"). Michelle described how this created a predictable atmosphere for her students:

> I want them to know what to expect, what's going to happen. I think that
> solid, consistent message helps them feel comfortable…and at ease.

"Teach them fundamental problem-solving skills". Michelle described

teaching children problem-solving skills as an important aspect of classroom

management:

> I think I'm here to nurture the kids and support their growth and, you know,
>
> teach them fundamental problem-solving skills. We try to give them a lot of
>
> independence and I think that's important, but we're always there to intervene
>
> and help them work out any issues that come up.

Opportunities to teach problem-solving skills presented when two children had a

conflict. Michelle explained what she did when this happened:

> I think it's important to call them both over, kind of get the story from each
>
> child because sometimes you don't even see what goes on. So it's just talking
>
> about the problem with them together and talking about possible solutions.
>
> Ideally we want them to know how to deal with them on their own. I mean
>
> sometimes we have them just talk it out on their own and see if they can work
>
> it out…sometimes they can but most of the time they need more guidance.

On several occasions I observed a student approach Michelle to say that two children

were having a disagreement, to which she replied 'Well, maybe they'll work it out'.

However, more often than not Michelle did become involved, modeling language and

facilitating conversations between children. I asked Michelle what she wanted her

students to walk away from the school year with. She responded:

> I want them to love coming to school…to feel that it's just a great place…and
>
> to learn to be a little more independent, maybe expand their peer relationships
>
> a little bit.

A Day in Becca and Michelle's Room

Physical space. Becca and Michelle's classroom is noticeably smaller than other rooms in the preschool. It is an open space with the different areas situated around the perimeter of the classroom, but there were not shelves separating one section from the other. Following the right wall around the classroom are cabinets, a countertop, sink, cubbies, housekeeping area with loft, easel, teacher desk, cabinets, shelves containing blocks/ cars/ related toys, circle time area, and additional shelves containing puzzles/ manipulatives/ art supplies. In the center of the room were two round tables that each seated five, one rectangular table for six, and an additional cubby unit. Figure 4 provides a visual display of the room layout (not drawn to scale).

Figure 4

Becca and Michelle's classroom
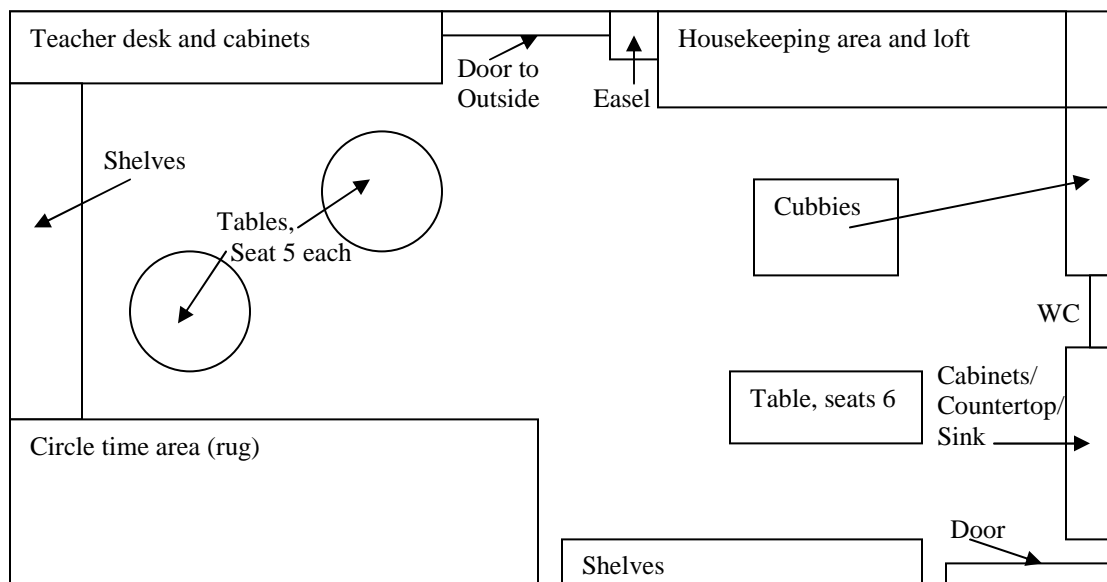
Becca shared her thoughts about the space:

> It's not a very big room…I'd love to have about 10 more square feet so that
> we'd have a much bigger play area for the kids. Personally, I like it to be a
> bright and colorful space but I don't like it to be very cluttered. I like for there
> to be a sense of calm. The children should feel engaged and welcomed in the
> space but not overwhelmed by it.

Students. There were 16 students in the class, 11 girls and 5 boys. Becca
gave the same explanation as Tracy for the disproportionate gender ratio: As other
area private schools began offering preschool, parents became less inclined to send
their boys to Hawthorne, where they would be unable to continue into elementary
school. Becca described her students this year as largely similar to groups she taught
in the past:

> The classes are more or less the same from year to year, but the ones that have
> a couple of more kids are always a bit more challenging as far as classroom
> management goes. There are some years that I'll have 13 or 14 kids [in the
> class]. At this age, even two extra can make a big difference.

Weekly schedule. Becca and Michelle's class met five days a week from
8:00am-12:00pm. In the afternoon many of the children stayed for extended daycare,
but students and teachers divided differently for this part of the day. There was a
weekly schedule posted in the classroom by the door. Each day began with free play
and circle time. Three days a week this was followed by 'split groups': half the class
went to gym or library (along with half the students from the other prekindergarten
class), while the rest stayed in the classroom for small group instruction, and then

they switched. The children attended music and gym twice a week as a full group,

while art and science each met once. The middle of each morning featured snack,

while the remainder was generally divided between specials (science, gym, and art),

free play (often outdoors), structured projects/activities and a closing circle time. See

Table 7 for the weekly schedule as posted in the classroom:

Table 7

Weekly schedule: Becca and Michelle's class

Class Schedule
2010-2011

Teachers: Miss Becca and Miss Michelle   Class: Pre-Kindergarten

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
9:00-9:30	Language Arts	Math & P.E.	Language Arts & Library	Language Arts & P.E.	P.E.
9:30-10:00	Music	Math & P.E	Language Arts & Library	Language Arts & P.E.	Snack
10:00-10:30	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Art (10:15-11:00)
10:30-11:00	Math	Language Arts Theme/ Project time	Science (In class activities)	Science	↓
11:00-11:30	P.E. (11:15-11:45)	↓	Music (11:15-11:45)	Free play	Math
11:30-12:00	Closing	Show & Tell Closing	Closing	Closing	Closing

Daily routine. The following section describes the daily routine and is structured around the activities listed in the weekly schedule. There are various classroom management strategies and other teacher actions mentioned: The teachers gave verbal directions, reminders of expectations, redirection, and physical prompting. They explained circumstances and consequences of behavior, issued warnings before transitions, and verbally prepared the children for upcoming events/activities. Becca and Michelle modeled and facilitated conversations between students for conflict resolution. They also used songs and physical movements during downtime and transitions. I explain each strategy and teacher action in the framework of one activity to provide an example of how it was used, but in fact Becca and Michelle demonstrated these behaviors throughout the day in multiple contexts. Furthermore, these practices were observed interchangeably between both teachers.

Arrival. Although the school day officially began at 8:30am, parents were permitted to drop off their children beginning at 8:00am so arrival was staggered. When the children arrived they removed backpacks and jackets and hung them in their cubbies. Becca's goal was for the students to do this independently. Occasionally she or Michelle reminded children who seemed distracted to follow through, but otherwise they did it on their own.

Opening. This part of the day was comprised of free play and circle time. During free play the children chose activities from any area of the room. Becca set up a more structured activity at the table (e.g. tracing names) and called over 1-3 children at a time to participate. She explained:

Setting something out certainly helps maintain some sort of order in the

classroom. It's a limited space so we'd like to keep them, you know, guided

through the activities so it doesn't get totally chaotic. But I would also like

them to have some time to choose an activity that suits them.

Both teachers continuously spoke with the children during free play: commenting,

asking and answering questions. They also regularly prepared materials for

upcoming activities during this time. Becca put together parts of a project that the

children had created and called them over to view their finished products. One girl

came over to Becca and complained that a friend was not giving her a turn with a toy.

Becca responded, "Say can I have a turn please?" and then turned to the other child

and said, "Your friend wants to say something to you".

Once all the children had arrived at school (about 8:40am) Becca announced

"One more minute until clean up" and then "OK friends, let's clean up our

classroom". Michelle and Becca rotated among the students, directing them to

specific tasks ("Molly, please clean up in housekeeping"). One child told Michelle,

"But I didn't play with that". She responded, "Well why don't you be a good friend

and help".

Michelle directed the children to go sit on their 'apples'- cutouts with their

names that had been taped onto the rug. She told them what the schedule of activities

was for the remainder of the morning and sometimes asked questions about a prior

day's activity (e.g. a class trip to the farm). Michelle regularly interrupted circle time

to say "Shhh", "Please raise your hand", or "This is not a time to talk to friends".

Becca typically continued to prepare materials for upcoming activities during this

time. Michelle called up designated children to complete jobs including calendar, counting days of school, weather, and attendance. She explained:

> I think they enjoy having their jobs…it gives them some independence and they also work on things like number recognition, things like that. Our hope is for them to learn how to wait their turn, raise their hand, be polite while a friend is up there doing their job…and it's also a time for them to learn how to speak in front of a group and kind of build their confidence by presenting what they know.

Split groups. At the end of circle time, Michelle called half of the children to line up at the door by saying "if you are wearing ___ please line up at the door", while the rest stayed with Becca. Michelle stood by the door and said 'let me see your bubbles', which meant to be quiet (the children closed their mouths and filled their cheeks with air). Michelle left to walk her group to gym or library and returned 5-10 minutes later. Becca sat with the remaining children and introduced that day's activity. For example, stacking colored cube blocks in various combinations of five (e.g. three red, two blue). Becca explained some of the goals of split groups:

> Learning how to follow directions, cooperating with the teacher and with their peers. It's a smaller ratio so it's easier for them to build those skills…and we can focus on them individually a little more.

During split groups, both teachers repeated directions and redirected children to stay focused. Becca explained some of the management needs:

> Some children have a difficult time getting focused. They have so much energy that they need to be moving. There's typically one or two that we will

try to sit with in close proximity to us so we can, you know, put a hand on

their shoulder or tap them to remind them, OK let's bring our attention back.

Specials. Specials for prekindergarten included gym, music, library, science,

and art. Becca did not accompany the children to these activities, but Michelle

walked and stayed with them, unless it was a split group period. She gave the

children ongoing verbal directions and reminders on the way to a special. Michelle

explained her management goals during this time:

> Well it's hard at this age because they are so interested in each other and
>
> everyone around them. I mean our goal is to keep them in a line and for them
>
> to know that they each have their own space. We have a line leader and a line
>
> ender…but it's just really to keep them in an organized group, not running
>
> around…as long as they all stay together reasonably.

In each special, the respective teacher had a planned activity. Michele modeled

expected behavior by participating alongside the children, but also verbally and

physically redirected them to stay focused and involved. If there was ever any wait or

down time, she sang a song, read a book, or asked the children questions about a

particular topic.

Snack. One of the teachers set out napkins with food and cups of water

during the activity preceding snack. The children were directed to 'get a pump' of

hand sanitizer and sit at a table. Becca or Michelle led them in a song before eating.

The students discarded their empty napkins and cups with minimal need for verbal

reminders. Becca said, "If you are finished with you snack you can show us your best

manners. Show me you're ready by sitting quietly." She then called the children

over by name to sit on the rug, where she read a book, sang a song, or taught a lesson related to the curriculum unit. Becca regularly interrupted this circle time to redirect the children, reminding them to stay focused and quiet. She explained:

> We are trying to get them to be able to focus, to follow directions within the group. You know, everything from the basic sitting quietly in a 'criss-cross applesauce' position to being focused enough to volunteer to answer questions. There are always a few it's more difficult for than others…we just do a lot of the gentle reminders and some modeling from other children, pointing out when they are focusing and following directions.

Free play. This part of the day took place in the classroom or outdoors. When indoors, it was identical to the free play that occurred earlier in the morning during opening activities. Becca explained some of the goals of outdoor play:

> At this age it's really important for them to explore the social dynamic, learn cooperation skills with their friends, and you know, problem-solving skills as well. And when there's an opportunity for more freedom of choice and more physical movement there are going to be more issues…so the kids get plenty of opportunities to try and work things out.

Both teachers regularly modeled and facilitated conversations between children for conflict resolution during free play.

Math, language arts, and theme/project time. Becca instructed the children to sit on the rug, put hands in their laps, count, and sing a song. She then divided the children between three activities, two at the tables and one on the rug (e.g. project related to curriculum unit, coloring patterns, and pattern blocks). Both teachers gave

verbal redirection, reminders of expectations, and repeated instructions. A child cried

and told Michelle that a friend messed up her pattern blocks. Michelle moved the

friend to the other side of the rug and said, "You may mess up your blocks but not

anyone else's". A boy sitting at one of the table activities said to Becca, "Jason said

I'm not strong". Becca replied, "Everyone at this table is strong. Let's remember to

use kind words when we talk to our friends. We don't want to make our friends feel

sad". When she returns to the table a few moments later the children are discussing

who is friends with whom. Becca says, "Right now at this table you should be talking

about your project. You should not be talking about friends because it sounds like the

things you are talking about might make people feel left out".

    Closing activities. Closing activities varied between circle time, show and

tell, and structured play. During structured play Becca gave the children a choice of

four activities, for example building with Lego, coloring, assembling a puzzle, or

reading a book. During show and tell the students had an opportunity to ask

questions to the child presenting. One girl said, "I didn't have a turn to ask a

question". Brooke responded, "That happens sometimes. We don't all always get a

turn to do everything".

Hawthorne Academy

    Hawthorne Academy preschool was founded in 1975. There are four classes

divided between three- and four-year olds, as well as a parent-toddler program that

met weekly. The preschool is described on the school's website:

    The Hawthorne Academy preschool program provides young boys and girls

    with an introduction to school that nurtures their innate curiosity and

stimulates their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Our teachers

share the important goal of instilling a love of learning in each child at an

early age. By guiding our students through both planned and spontaneous

adventures, we challenge them to grow and develop in ways that are

astonishing. We believe that education should be challenging and joyful; that

a caring, family atmosphere is crucial to the learning process; and that

children learn best when they are actively involved. The program provides

outstanding learning opportunities where our students experience success in a

community of warmth and nurture.

A number of terms from this passage were also found in the transcripts from the

teachers' interviews including love of learning, guiding, planned and spontaneous,

challenging and joyful, caring…atmosphere, and community.

Administration. The preschool is a part of Hawthorne Academy's Lower

Division, which extends through fifth grade. Peggy is the Head of Lower Division.

She described her responsibilities in relation to the preschool:

I do faculty hiring and evaluations. I run the faculty meetings. I oversee

admissions. I am in charge of any policy changes, but I do it in concert with

the teachers. There is almost nothing I would decide unilaterally, but I'm

pretty much where the buck stops for everything to do with the preschool.

Jane is the Assistant head of Lower Division and her chief responsibilities are to the

preschool:

My primary role here is to support the [preschool] building because the head

of the division cannot be here all the time. It's really about the daily running

of the program: Answering parents' questions, helping teachers with issues

that occur in their classrooms…and admissions is a big part of my job, so I do

the tours. I am also supportive to the head of the division in all aspects of

what she does, particularly with communication and scheduling.

Admissions. Parents who are interested in enrolling their children in

Hawthorne Academy preschool call and schedule an appointment with Jane to tour

and learn about the program. After submitting an application, the parents bring the

child in for an assessment. Jane explained:

People say to me, what do you test the three-year olds on? But those of us

who have done this for years and years and who are pretty knowledgeable

about child development and milestones, we know if a child's progressing

developmentally. But there is a huge range at two, when we are evaluating

them for the three-year old classes and we understand that. So basically for

the threes the assessment is purely observational…it's during social time in

the classroom. We look at language and play skills, but it can be

overwhelming for a child, so if they aren't demonstrating language skills we

will consult with the parents and ask them if the child speaks at home.

Twice during my observations of Janet and Debbie's class a prospective student came

to visit for about 15-20 minutes, accompanied by his/her mother and Jane. The child

played amongst the students while the adults sat nearby. One or both teachers

introduced themselves and interacted with the child and parent. Jane watched the

child while conversing with the other adults. She did not write anything down nor

give any overt indications that she was conducting an evaluation. Although I never

observed this scenario in the prekindergarten, Jane shared that it was identical with

one additional component:

> When we assess children for the four-year old program, we also have an
>
> assessment tool we've created by taking bits and pieces from a couple of
>
> standardized tests. We obviously can't score it, but that's not what we're
>
> looking for. We just want to get a bit of a sense of where the kids are with
>
> their early academic skills. But again, the social pieces are always a big part
>
> of our assessment.

Classroom management. Hawthorne Academy did not have any written

policies or procedures related to classroom management. However, Peggy and Jane

shared their perspectives on classroom management in general and on preschool

children who demonstrate problematic behavior in particular.

"Setting the stage". Peggy shared her belief that a primary component of

classroom management in preschool is teaching children the necessary social skills to

become successful students:

> I think that the three- and four- year old teachers are definitely setting the
>
> stage. They are setting the stage for academics in a way that is fun and age-
>
> appropriate, but what they teach the children in terms of social skills is just as
>
> important as what they teach them in terms of the foundations for more
>
> academic areas, because you are not going to be a good learner if you don't
>
> have the skills to cooperate and collaborate.

Jane described how clear, consistent routines and expectations also foster the

children's academic success:

I think even as adults most of us would agree that we thrive when we have routine. We are more productive, we are more receptive to new information and problem solving if we kind of have a sense of what comes next. The children need to know clear lines, they need to know expectations and I think our teachers have expectations that they expect the children to live up to.

While effective classroom management optimizes learning, Jane explained how teachers impart important social lessons too:

I think that the appropriate conversation goes on here with the children, helping them try to understand conflict and respect. I see that throughout all of our students that we focus on respecting each other even as young as our three-year olds. I think it's important for kids to understand what to do when you hurt someone's feelings, that we need to share, and not just at the moment of crisis but throughout the entire day…learning how to cooperate and learning that it's OK not to like someone, but you need to be respectful and you need to be considerate.

"The social-emotional needs make themselves known". I spoke with Peggy and Jane about children who demonstrate problematic behaviors in the preschool classroom. Peggy explained how that differs from children who may show signs of academic challenges:

The academic needs at three and pre-k, it's harder to evaluate at that point. The social-emotional needs make themselves known very quickly. That can upset the other kids more. So if somebody really has social problems and disrupts the whole class, that's very different than somebody at three or four

who needs speech therapy or who is not grasping concepts at the same pace as

the other children.

Jane described how the schedule and format of the preschool's regular faculty

meetings helps support teachers, and in turn students, dealing with any behavioral

issues:

We have meetings every other week, grade level meetings, so that we have an

opportunity to go through students. There are those students who we talk

about on a regular basis and other students who you really just go through the

list and say everything is OK. But when we have students who are concerns

of ours we always talk as a team with Peggy and myself and the

teachers…and we also bring in the teachers from our specials who might give

us a different perspective on that child. We also talk about the kids

informally. A teacher can appear at my door and say 'You know X, Y, Z

person is having a really hard time'. We also try to get parents to be open

with us about things that might be going on at home. We want to follow

patterns of things. Is it just that maybe a child is coming down with a cold or

is there a change in the child's demeanor for a more significant reason?

Hawthorne Academy employs a guidance counselor for the Lower Division who is

available to consult with the teachers as needed. Speech-language therapy and

occupational therapy are the most common support services received by Hawthorne's

preschool students. Jane remarked that she attends IEP meetings on a regular basis,

but these services are paid for privately by the parents:

> We allow outside resources to use our facility…primarily for speech-language therapy, also for OT [occupational therapy]. They come to the school but are contracted by the family. It's not a service that the public school will provide. We just offer the opportunity for it to occur during the school day.

Interestingly, while the teachers clearly knew which of their students received speech-language or occupational therapy, they all reported never having taught a student with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) and some seemed unsure of what that term referred to. It appeared that any Child Find/IEP related issues were dealt with on an administrative level at Hawthorne.

Peggy and Jane both shared a strong commitment to maximizing the success of each preschool student at Hawthorne regardless of the issues they present with, but agreed that their priority is always the child's best interests. Peggy explained:

> We're going to do whatever we need to do to keep them here. We will work hard to keep them, and when I say we I mean the teachers…as long as we are doing the right thing for the child. If the child is not progressing then there are times when we say that there is a better place for them.

Neither administrator could remember a situation where parents were told that their child could not continue at Hawthorne midyear. Peggy explained that even declining to accept a student back for the following school year was "extremely unusual". Jane could recall two such instances:

> I think in my seven years we've had two times, and they were both in the three-year old program, twice where we counseled the family out and helped them find the resources…a better school for them where they had support.

Themes

In the following section, I delineate the themes that emerged from the cross-case data analysis and present them in the framework of the six research questions.

Research Questions 1 and 2: Components of Classroom Management and the Role of the Preschool Teacher

What are the components of classroom management in preschool? What is the role of the preschool teacher in classroom management?

I combined the first two research questions, since the themes that emerged as components of classroom management were directly related to the participants' understanding of their role as classroom managers. Components are presented as themes and roles as subthemes.

Teaching children the expectations of school. The participants described teaching children the social and behavioral expectations of school as a prime component of classroom management in preschool. The teachers repeatedly expressed their perspective that preschool is a separate and distinct setting from home with its own unique expectations:

> Janet: When they come in they're used to every need being answered right when they want it. And in here we're all of a sudden, we're in a group situation…In school we're sharing that attention now and we're learning to cooperate and work within a group, and be functional in that group, and wait and be patient…I will sometimes say to a child, I know your rules at home might be different…but in Miss Janet's classroom these are my expectations.

Debbie: With the threes what you're working on is how to come to school, how to separate from Mom and Dad and feel safe, know that our teachers take care of us…and how to follow directions in a group because most of them are not used to it. They're at home and they don't have to share- they can get what they want.

Jennifer: When they're at home with their parent they're the only one or maybe they have a sibling and now they are in a group of 16…learning to share and take turns and get along…and that conflict resolution, how they interact with the other kids in the classroom.

Becca: A big piece of this year in their lives is really learning the social dynamic and growing as a person apart from their families a little bit.

Peggy, the Head of Lower Division at Hawthorne described classroom management in preschool as preparing the children for subsequent years of school:

I think that the three- and four- year old teachers are definitely setting the stage. They are setting the stage for academics…but what they teach the children in terms of social skills is just as important…because you are not going to be a good learner if you don't have the skills to cooperate and collaborate.

Teaching children the expectations of school divided across three aspects of a teacher's role: to facilitate increased independence, model appropriate social behavior, and demonstrate recognition and patience for the process. While Tracy did not overtly discuss the difference between school and home, these three elements were manifested throughout her approach to classroom management.

Facilitate increased independence. The participants viewed facilitating increased independence in the children as a part of their role in classroom management. The teachers encouraged independence in several areas: self-care routines (hanging up belongings, bathroom), classroom routines (clean up, jobs), and conflict resolution between peers. Janet and Debbie frequently talked the children through the steps of using the bathroom, cleaning up from playtime/snack, putting on/removing jackets, and hanging up their belongings. They explained:

> Janet: I think we're here to foster independence, to help them grow…I expect you'll eventually come in and hang your coat up in your cubby and I won't have to tell you each time…it will just become a habit.

> Debbie: We do hold them accountable for a lot of things, probably more than they have to do at home…They are potty trained when they come to us, but a lot of times Mom and Dad are right there to help them manage their clothing and we tell them [the parents], 'If you could send them in easy to manage clothing because we're going to be teaching them and encouraging them to do that themselves.'

Over the course of my observations in their classroom, I witnessed students completing the self-care and classroom routine tasks on their own increasingly more often. Debbie explained:

> Promoting independence and self-management is very good for the overall discipline of the classroom because they [the children] know- I'm in charge of my own behavior.

Janet and Debbie also facilitated and modeled conversations between children for conflict resolution on a regular and ongoing basis, but the students did not appear to increase their independence in this area. Debbie explained:

> You try not to, as much as you can, you try not to solve their problems for them. That's what parents are for and parents do that a lot. But we at school, we try to give them the tools to do it themselves.

Tracy and Jennifer's students completed the arrival routine independently, including removing jackets, hanging up belongings, placing their nametags in an envelope, and getting 'a pump' of hand sanitizer, with only occasional need for verbal reminders. Both teachers assigned specific items and areas to children during clean up and directed designated students to their classroom jobs, but these tasks were completed independently. Many aspects of Tracy's approach to classroom management facilitated independence, including classroom jobs, the beanbag chair, sign language, and the problem solving chart. Students regularly used sign language with one another, particularly 'stop fooling around'. The problem solving chart approach to peer conflict resolution encouraged children to work things out on their own, and they did to a noticeable extent. Tracy explained:

> What I'm attempting to do is build their independence and therefore their confidence because they know that whatever problem might come up, it will be solved. It will and everybody will be OK. Whether they do it by themselves or they need to have a teacher help them through it, everybody will be OK.

Becca and Michelle's students also completed the arrival routine independently, removing jackets and hanging up their belongings, with only occasional need for verbal reminders. Both teachers assigned specific items and areas to children during clean up and directed designated students to their classroom jobs, but these tasks were completed independently. Becca and Michelle often encouraged students to try and problem solve issues with peers on their own, which Becca described as something she has worked on:

Over the years I do tend to pull back and be a little more hands off than I used to be in the hopes that I can get them to deal with the situation on their own.

However, both she and Michelle still modeled and facilitated conversations between children for conflict resolution on a regular and ongoing basis.

Model appropriate social behavior. The participants viewed modeling appropriate social behavior as part of their role in classroom management:

Becca: I think I am a role model first and foremost for how we live and act socially within our little world here…I want to model for them what the appropriate behaviors are.

This modeling took on several forms. As mentioned previously, Janet, Debbie, Becca, and Michelle regularly modeled and facilitated conversations between children for conflict resolution:

Debbie: If someone grabs a toy from me and I had it first, well, the first step that we try to teach them is use your words and say to the other child 'I had that first.' That's really hard for them…they need us to model a lot…you give them the tools. You're sort of doing the conversation for them but you are not

asking them to parrot it back. After a while they, you hope anyway, by the
end of the year they're learning to do that kind of stuff.

Tracy and Jennifer implemented the problem-solving chart to model peer conflict
resolution for the children. Tracy used her consistent phrases as well, for example
teaching students that when a friend asked for a toy they were holding/playing with,
they could answer in one of two possible ways: either 'yes' or 'you can have it when
I'm finished.' Tracy explained:

At the beginning of the year I feed them words, there are phrases that I teach
them. And then I use those same phrases over and over again. They pick up
on them and then it's just really checking that they followed through on the
process.

Jane, the Assistant Head of Lower Division at Hawthorne, shared her perspective on
the teachers modeling appropriate social behavior:

I think that the appropriate conversation goes on here with the children,
helping them try to understand conflict and respect.

Modeling appropriate social behavior was also observed for functions other
than peer conflict resolution. Janet frequently used broad language to explain
behaviors she wanted to encourage. For example, when two children did something
together she said 'This is called working with a partner'. Janet, Debbie, Tracy, and
Jennifer modeled 'yes please' and 'no thank you' for the children as appropriate
responses when offered food at snack time. Janet, Debbie, Jennifer, and Michelle
demonstrated modeling through their own behavior during specials by participating

alongside the children. Debbie explained how this was her general approach throughout the day:

> You always have to model as much as you can the behavior that you want. In other words, it's circle time and Miss Janet has said we're listening now. Well, I'm certainly not going to be on my cellphone or talking to another teacher. Most of the time I'll be sitting in the circle with them.

Tracy used a similar approach during snack time, when she and Jennifer sat with the children. She explained:

> I want them to feel that it's conversation time…it's a time where you really notice who is at your table and you talk to the people at your table. I like for each teacher to take a seat at the table and to model that behavior…like a conversation at your coffee break.

> ***Demonstrate recognition and patience for the process.*** As much as the teachers worked to facilitate independence and model appropriate social behavior, they also demonstrated recognition and patience for the process as part of their role in classroom management. The students were perceived as in the process of learning the expectations of school:

> Janet: I'm here to support them, to encourage them, to take them, you know, that one step beyond…I think it's just their first experience.

> Becca: We certainly understand that they are growing and learning and experiencing new things.

Janet, Debbie, Jennifer, and Michelle all shared a similar perspective on the expectations of the children when walking to specials: They needed to stay together

as a group and focus on the destination, but they were not expected to stay in a straight line and remain quiet, as older children who were fully adjusted to the expectations of school might be required to. Tracy's approach to classroom management was focused entirely on recognizing that learning the rules of school is a process that children need to be guided through. She explained:

> At the beginning of the year when a problem comes up I just say: That's wonderful this happened. This comes up all the time with children of your age. We can find out how to solve this problem. This is the way we can fix it.

Establishing structure and routines. The participants described establishing structure and routine as a second component of classroom management in preschool and also part of their role as classroom managers. Although each lead teacher set up an organized physical space in her classroom with clearly defined areas and created a weekly schedule/daily routine, they did not cite these factors as components of classroom management. Instead, they each understood establishing structure and routine as important, but articulated their perspectives somewhat differently from one another. Janet described the security that children feel from knowing what is expected of them:

> I truly feel that children need discipline and guidelines just like we as teachers and parents. I know I need to be in school at a certain time. That's a secure thing for me. That's what I have to do…that's what I need to do to function in this world.

In my interview with Jane, the Assistant Head of Lower Division, she expressed the need for structure and routine to create an optimal learning environment that supports academic growth:

> I think even as adults most of us would agree that we thrive when we have routine. We are more productive, we are more receptive to new information and problem solving if we kind of have a sense of what comes next.

Debbie described the security that children feel when teacher behavior is consistent and predictable:

> I think consistency is so important to the children. They always know just how I'm going to be…and they always know 'Miss Debbie likes us to do it this way.' It doesn't change from day to day. We all do it the same way…it is how we like our classroom to run. I think this is something a teacher brings to the classroom that really helps the children.

Tracy viewed the structure and routine in her classroom as the various strategies she used for classroom management:

> My job is to teach them the structure and once the structure is in place then it's just to remind them, 'Do you remember what to say when someone wants your toy?'

Michelle described school in general as providing children with structure and routine that they may not have elsewhere:

> I just think it's important for kids to have, you know, a solid in their life…a routine, something to come to where they can feel comfortable. I think that's

really important because, you know, there's a lot going on with kids

nowadays, they rush to this and that.

Fostering emotional development. The participants described fostering

children's emotional development as a third component of classroom management in

preschool. This component divided into two teacher roles: to provide emotional

security and respect children's feelings.

Provide emotional security. The participants viewed providing emotional

security as part of their role in classroom management. One way Debbie tried to

achieve this was by creating an immediate connection for the children between home

and school:

> With the little ones, first and foremost I think they need to feel safe in the
>
> classroom. They need to feel safe and loved, and so the second they walk in
>
> the door we always greet them: 'hi, how are you Debra? Good to see you
>
> today'. We try to get to know the parents or grandparents who are dropping
>
> them off…maybe their dog at home and what the name of their dog is…so
>
> you have that comfort level with them and it helps them feel safe.

Tracy described her aspiration to create a sense of community in the classroom

through her management practices that resulted in the children feeling secure. She

explained:

> It's not the academic skills I really want to emphasize. I want to emphasize
>
> the confidence they feel, their sense of community- that they are part of a
>
> group and that their voice is heard… I want them to feel it deeply, that it's not

just an occasional thing that happens- it's a constant thing that happens. They

can participate, have their voice heard, have their needs met.

Jennifer described providing the children with emotional security as a prerequisite to

the other aspects of classroom management:

I think number one for management would be for the children to be safe and

feel included and important and deserving of their place in the classroom…I

guess the safety and respect are the top things and that everything kind of

trickles down from there.

Demonstrate respect for children's feelings. The participants viewed

demonstrating respect for children's feelings as part of their role in classroom

management. Becca wanted her students to understand that she and Michelle were a

place they could come to express their emotions:

We always talk to the kids about that, that teachers are here to help you. If

you need to find the words to deal with a problem you are having with a

friend, we could help you with that. If you feel scared, if you're hurt or upset,

what have you…your teachers are here to help you.

Jennifer and Michelle spoke about validating children's feelings as genuine and

authentic by paying attention and listening when they are upset or engaged in a

conflict with a peer:

Jennifer: I guess first to give it the respect that obviously they're- either one

of them or both of them- feeling a certain way about what's going on and to

give them the time and the respect to focus on what they're upset about and to

talk it through with them, to find a solution for making them feel better or get

through their emotion. The first time [a child misbehaves] I get down to their

level so we're talking as we're equal and it's not like I'm down on them like

'this is what you should be doing'…the first time I talk with them about what

happened, why they were doing that, try to understand where they're coming

from and talking with them about what is a different way that we can handle

the situation that everyone can be happy with

Michelle: I think it's important to call them both over, kind of get the story

from each child because sometimes you don't even see what goes on. So it's

just talking about the problem with them together and talking about possible

solutions.

Tracy regularly read to the children from a series of three social curriculum books

that discussed children's emotions in general, as well as in the context of school and

home. The books cover a broad range of emotions, some fairly complex, such as

mixed feelings, rejection, and concern. Tracy used the questions provided to

facilitate discussions and her students had the opportunity to reflect on and share their

experiences with various feelings.

Research Question 3: Sources of Knowledge

What are the sources of preschool teachers' knowledge about classroom

management?

      Teachers: role models, mentors, and colleagues. Each of the participants

credited other teachers as a source of knowledge for or influence on their classroom

management beliefs and practices, as well as informing their perspectives on the role

of a teacher. Some of these influences were *indirect*, such as childhood role models,

while others had a more *direct* effect on the participants' outlooks and actions.

Debbie and Becca both described childhood teachers that impacted their perspectives

on the classroom environment:

> Debbie: There were some teachers that I had in high school…I remember that
>
> I loved going to the class because of the teacher.
>
> Becca: I think there are probably four or five teachers that really stand out in
>
> my mind. Their passion for what they were doing was so evident…I think
>
> that really stuck with me.

Jennifer identified mentor teachers from her undergraduate program as a source of

knowledge about classroom management:

> What I learned in undergrad was very hands-on. I was in classrooms. We
>
> would do internships at a lab school that was on campus, so I learned a lot
>
> through that. I had some great mentor teachers when I was an undergrad.

Michelle's knowledge about classroom management was informed by her first job as

an assistant teacher at a church preschool:

> I loved the teacher…she was just great with the kids and it was just a really
>
> positive learning experience… She had the routine of the day down pat and
>
> the kids just knew what they were expected to do. But she was also just very
>
> gentle natured…she was very gentle with the kids.

Finally, the participants consistently cited teachers at Hawthorne Academy as sources

of knowledge about classroom management, be it as mentors for the associate

teachers or colleagues for the lead teachers:

Jennifer: I've learned a lot from [Tracy]…and the teacher before that I

worked with here…I've learned a lot [about classroom management] from

watching them.

Becca: The women I have taught with here have been great resources for me

over the years. [When she needed advice on classroom management]

Tracy's classroom management practices were directly influenced by other

teachers, but in a slightly different way than her colleagues. She was unique among

the participants in her targeted, deliberate approach to professional development.

Throughout her career she identified particular classroom practices as needing

improvement and explored strategies toward that end. Tracy attributed her use of

sign language to a preschool teacher from another school that introduced her to the

practice, and her perspective on and use of the beanbag and time-out chairs came

from professional development workshops presented by fellow educators.

Jane, the Assistant Head of Lower Division at Hawthorne described the

format for regularly scheduled grade-level faculty meetings, where teachers would

have the opportunity to discuss students and collaborate with fellow teachers,

including the specials teachers, on how to best meet the needs of each child. The

participants did not acknowledge that these meetings contributed to their beliefs or

practices related to classroom management, but the process does demonstrate a

programmatic commitment to teachers learning from their colleagues.

Personal and informal. There was considerable evidence to indicate that

some of the participants' knowledge about classroom management came from

personal and informal sources. Three of the teachers mentioned their parents as

influences on their perceptions of positive teacher qualities, how to relate to children, and discipline:

> Debbie: My dad…he was just a constant factor. He never seemed to get too ruffled about anything- the calm in the storm, so to speak. I think that you need to have a lot of that as a teacher…my dad was a good problem solver. He was always a good listener. You need those qualities to be a good teacher, so I kind of go back to a lot of the things that I learned as a kid.
>
> Jennifer: The real base is my parents and their parenting and how I was brought up…I go back to my parents and how they would talk with me about the way that I felt about a situation and allow me to feel certain things.
>
> Becca: I think a large part for me is how I was raised and the influence my parents had on me as far as having expectations from me, encouraging my independence, and promoting that love of learning and enjoyment of the school atmosphere…the way my parents managed the discipline in our household growing up was definitely a big influence.

As noted previously, both Debbie and Becca also credited their own childhood teachers as contributing factors. Janet discussed the influence of growing up with five siblings, and both she and Debbie related that motherhood informed their knowledge of classroom management. Debbie explained:

> When I first came into the [preschool] classroom I was already a mother, so I already knew how to talk to children. I already knew how to engage them, how to play with them…I knew what worked with my own children.

Janet also described personal instinct and ongoing, informal feedback from students as sources of knowledge about classroom management:

> Instinct is a lot of it for me. Following the spontaneity of the children, seeing what works and what doesn't.

While Tracy developed a comprehensive and calculated approach to classroom management, she described it as emerging organically through her unique, personal interests, explorations, and experiences:

> It's everything. It's what I do during the summertime, you know, learning about dyslexia and teaching in a one-to-one environment…Anytime I've learned something, I feel what it's like to learn something and then I apply it to how children are responding to my instruction. You know, I teach yoga in the classroom because I take yoga and so it's anything and everything. It's very organic.

At the end of my final interview with Tracy, I asked if she had ever considered sharing her approach to classroom management with other preschool teachers. She replied:

> I don't know…you know what I do is personal to me. It's just how I've developed as a teacher. It's what works for me…I'm not sure someone else would find it useful.

Overall, the approach toward classroom management at Hawthorne Academy was informal. The preschool did not have any written policies or procedures related to classroom management. Tracy read a series of books to her students on feelings and facilitated discussions about ways to manage them, but otherwise there was no social

curriculum in the preschool. Becca focused on some of the principles behind a classroom management program, but did not implement any of the practical strategies. Other formal sources of knowledge were also not the norm among participants. Janet expressed ambivalence toward professional development workshops related to classroom management, and while Becca found them helpful she had not attended one in several years. Debbie, Jennifer, and Michelle did not go to workshops on topics related to classroom management, and none of the teachers credited teacher education programs as contributing their knowledge.

Feedback from accumulated experience. All of the participants acknowledged that the greatest influence on their knowledge about classroom management came from the experience of spending time in the classroom interacting with children and the feedback that provided about the effectiveness of management practices. As mentioned previously, Janet followed "the spontaneity of the children, seeing what works and what doesn't". Debbie taught English to middle-school-age students and older prior to teaching at Hawthorne, so her early childhood classroom management knowledge has been largely informed by her years of preschool teaching experience. Tracy's entire approach to seeking out better classroom management practices has accumulated over the years based on feedback from students during various activities:

> It's just built over the years. Basically, when something is bothering me I go 'OK, this isn't working for me. I need to address this. What's the solution to this?'…So I guess starting with whatever's bothering me the most that's

> where I'm moving from, and then I'm building on it so it's an accumulation of
>
> things over the years.

Jennifer described how experience in the classroom has influenced her approach to classroom management more than her teacher education program:

> I just think the experience is what you learn the most from. Schooling gave
>
> me kind of the general base knowledge of [childhood] growth and
>
> development but then when you're actually in the classroom you learn more
>
> concrete ideas of what to do.

Finally, Becca credited classroom experience as informing her knowledge about classroom management:

> But for me, a large part of what I draw on is just experience, trying something
>
> and seeing what's successful, how the students respond.

Research Question 4: Development as Classroom Managers

How have preschool teachers developed as classroom managers over the course of their careers?

The participants did not discuss their development as classroom managers or reference anything related to self-efficacy during the course of our conversations about professional backgrounds, sources of knowledge, classroom management beliefs and practices, with one exception. Jennifer explained:

> When I came right out of my undergrad, you feel like you got pumped up.
>
> When I got this job I was like 'OK- I'm ready to use my degree and
>
> everything that I learned in school.' I was really confident and excited about

that. In the beginning I thought I knew it all, but then as you go it's kind of

like 'oh, I didn't know that' and you're learning more.

Although she acknowledged developing increasing expertise as a teacher through her

work at Hawthorne, she still sometimes felt moments of uncertainty:

[W]hen two kids are having an issue in that split second I'm like 'OK, how do

I do this in the best way for them to learn from the experience?' It takes me a

couple of seconds to think about how to handle it, but you don't really have a

few seconds because you need to handle it right away, so I think that's

something I'm still learning.

Enhanced initial management efficacy from prior experience with

children. When I asked the other teachers directly about their development as

classroom managers, they initially expressed some difficulty reflecting on the mindset

they were in during the early stages of their careers (this was particularly true for

veteran teachers like Janet and Tracy). In general Janet, Debbie, Tracy, and Becca

expressed high levels self-efficacy in classroom management:

Janet: I always felt I had the presence to pull them together.

They described starting their careers with a considerable baseline of management

efficacy because of prior experience with children, but their abilities still progressed

and improved over time:

Debbie: I have definitely always felt very confident with the children…I

think that what helped with that is that I was already a mother…What I

learned as I went along was just how to manage 12 versus just one or two of

your own.

Tracy: I have always had a leadership role in the different groups that I've

been in., so I had a lot of confidence moving into my teaching career…I felt I

could lead the class, so to speak. There were just things I had less knowledge

about and that I've just filled in over time.

Becca: I came in [to teaching] with a decent amount of experience working

with children so I've always felt comfortable.

The participants in this study did not discuss any fundamental shift in their

perspectives on classroom management over the course of their careers, and when

asked described their philosophical outlooks as remaining consistent throughout.

Research Question 5: Classroom Practices

How are preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge manifested in their classroom

practices?

Language is the tool. A pervasive theme that emerged through the cross-case

data analysis was that language is the tool teachers employ to manifest classroom

management beliefs and knowledge in their practices. There were two types of

language used: structured and unstructured.

Structured language. I use the term structured language to mean words that

contain one or more of the following features: they are selected intentionally, concise,

predictable, accompanied by visual support, used repeatedly for particular situations,

and/or embedded in songs, fingerplays, and movement activities. Examples from this

study include the use of consistent phrases, Tracy's problem solving chart, sign

language, songs, fingerplays, and movement activities. I observed Janet, Debbie,

Becca, and Michelle use consistent phrases such as 'everybody freeze', 'sit criss-

cross applesauce', and '1-2-3, eyes on me' to redirect a large group of children who were noisy or distracted. They did not develop these phrases or discuss them in relation to classroom management. Janet, Debbie, Becca, and Michelle did not use structured language when interacting with individual children or to facilitate peer conflict resolution. Furthermore, the language used by all four teachers, in any given situation, was not accompanied by visual support. On the other hand, Tracy taught phrases to her students that she created and described in the context of her approach to classroom management. Examples include 'hear it, do it', 'let it go', and 'you can have it when I'm finished'. Tracy's problem solving chart also falls into the category of structured language in that it includes visual support, consolidates the words used to facilitate peer conflict resolution, and involves consistent phrases such as 'did you talk to [child]?' and 'are you OK?' Although the sign language Tracy used was not accompanied by verbal language, it was intentional, concise, predictable, accompanied by visual support, and used repeatedly for particular situations. Finally, all the participants used specific songs for classroom routines such as clean up, circle time, and snack. They also used songs, fingerplays, and language-based movement activities for downtime and transitions.

  Unstructured language. I use the term unstructured language to mean words that contain one or more of the following features: they are selected spontaneously, verbose, unpredictable, and change continually from one situation to the next. Janet, Debbie, Becca, and Michelle demonstrated regular use of unstructured language in the form of repeated, ongoing verbal directions, reminders of expectations, and redirection, which they gave to their students throughout the day but particularly

during circle time, specials, projects, and while walking outside. They continually modeled and facilitated conversations between children for conflict resolution and Janet and Debbie talked children through self-care routines (clothing, belongings, and bathroom). Tracy and Jennifer employed noticeably less unstructured language during circle time and to facilitate interactions between children, but did demonstrate it during projects, specials, and while walking outside.

When language does not work. The one classroom management practice that was an exception to the categories of structured and unstructured language was physical prompting. This strategy was employed when language did not work. Teachers physically prompted students who were not responding to verbal directions, reminders, or redirection. Meanwhile, Tracy implemented sign language because she felt the use of language in her classroom was incessant and disruptive, although her solution falls under the theme of 'structured language'.

Research Question 6: Consistency Between Beliefs and Practices

Do preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that support or contradict their stated beliefs?

Consistency is a pattern over time. The participants in this study engaged in classroom management practices that were overwhelmingly consistent with their stated beliefs. These behaviors were observed regularly in multiple contexts. The following are examples for each teacher:

➢ Janet described the importance of advanced planning, structure, and limit setting for classroom management. At the start of a school day, her classroom was always set up with a choice of activities in different areas of the room and

materials put aside for any projects or activities scheduled for later that morning.

The physical space was organized into areas that were understood by the students. There was a daily schedule of planned activities. The children were constantly given verbal reminders of the behavioral expectations during an activity, as well as physical prompting to stay focused and involved. Janet gave warnings before transitions, told children about what they could expect at upcoming activities, and used songs, fingerplays, and physical exercises to assist with downtime and transitions.

➢ Debbie described the importance of modeling the appropriate behavioral expectations for children during classroom activities. She regularly sat and participated alongside them during circle time and specials. Debbie shared her belief that when children take ownership of their self-care (clothing, belongings, and bathroom) and of their membership in the classroom (play and snack clean up), it improves classroom behavior in general. She regularly directed and encouraged students to hang up their belongings, use the bathroom, clean up toys and snack independently. This sometimes involved talking them through each step and/or providing physical assistance.

➢ Tracy's approach to classroom management was developed through her ongoing pursuit of professional growth. Since she implemented strategies based on particular situations she wished to improve, her practices were deliberate and consistent with a particular belief and/or goal. For example, Tracy described the importance of her students taking ownership of their

behavior by trying to resolve peer conflicts without adult intervention. She
taught children the steps outlined in her problem-solving chart and continually
reinforced them in subsequent conversations with students. Tracy's belief that
children could be hurt physically or emotionally was reinforced in the social
curriculum books she read to the students on a regular basis, which described
getting hurt 'in you mind or your heart'.

➢ Jennifer described the importance of validating and respecting children's
feelings. When two students had a conflict she frequently spoke with them at
eye level, always listened to their descriptions of what occurred, and would
ask multiple questions culminating with 'are you OK?' directed at one or both
children.

➢ Becca shared her belief that teaching students the expectations of classroom
life required ongoing modeling of appropriate behavior by the teacher. She
regularly modeled dialogue/facilitated conversations between children and
explained the circumstances and consequences of various situations to her
students.

➢ Michelle expressed her belief that an important component of classroom
management is creating a routine and set of expectations for the children at
the beginning of the school year and reinforcing that consistently over time.
She led the first morning circle time and followed the same routine every day.
Michelle gave the children ongoing verbal directions and repeated verbal
reminders of behavioral expectations.

There were very few occasions when I observed a participant respond to a situation or act in a way that was inconsistent with their stated beliefs. For example, Janet cleaned up a child's napkin and cup after snack when she would typically promote independence by telling the child to do it. Debbie once spoke with a staff member by the classroom door while Janet taught a lesson during circle time, when she would otherwise have sat with the children to model appropriate behavior. These instances were rare and without any obvious pattern. When assessing the consistency between beliefs and practices over the entire course of my observations, consistency was the overwhelming pattern that emerged.

Some beliefs and practices require balance. Janet and Becca discussed balancing conflicting but equally important values as part of their classroom management beliefs and practices. Janet described her approach to classroom management in preschool as combining aspects of advanced planning, organization, structure, and limit setting on the one hand with flexibility, spontaneity, and freedom on the other. As mentioned previously, she demonstrated numerous practices that demonstrated her commitment to planning and structure but also improvised based on the particular circumstances that presented in the classroom at a given moment. For example, she extended the amount of time designated on the schedule for self-directed play because the children were interacting and playing with one another independently with minimal teacher involvement, which Janet wanted to encourage. Becca described that teaching four-year olds involved balancing the expectations she has of the children with an understanding that they are only first learning to be part of a group in a classroom. While she continuously gave verbal directions to the children

and verbal reminders of the expectations, she always demonstrated a calm demeanor and gave children ongoing positive feedback for their appropriate behavior. She also wanted the children to view her as a source of support and come to her when they felt sad or upset.

While other participants did not discuss striking a balance between conflicting values per se, they demonstrated some actions that fostered independence and others that provided support, some that set limits and others that promoted freedom. Tracy's problem-solving chart helped facilitate the children's independence in resolving peer conflicts, but she and Jennifer frequently guided the students through the steps, which they saw as part of their role. Becca and Michelle wanted the children to explore the room and make choices during playtime, but set up a more structured activity at the table to maintain a more controlled classroom atmosphere. During circle time, all the teachers seemed to strike a balance between having the children raise their hands/wait their turn to speak and allowing natural conversations to develop.

The participants did not discuss striking any balances as a struggle, nor were they concerned about inconsistency. Rather they simple noted the importance of both structure and flexibility, promoting independence and providing support. However, it is noteworthy to consider that behavior that perhaps appears inconsistent with a stated belief may in fact be a manifestation of another belief that the teacher considers equally important.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study explored preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management. In this chapter I summarize the findings, relate them to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and reflect on their potential relevance to preschool children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic classroom behavior. This is followed by a discussion of how the conclusions from this study connect to Bronfenbrenner's (2006) bioecological model of human development. Finally, I present limitations of the study, implications for practice, and directions for future research.

Beliefs: Components of Classroom Management and the Role of the Preschool Teacher

The participants in this study described teaching children the social and behavioral expectations of school as a prime component of classroom management in preschool. The teachers repeatedly expressed their perspective that preschool is a separate and distinct setting from home with its own unique expectations. These expectations divided across three aspects of a teacher's role: to facilitate increased independence and model appropriate social behavior, while also demonstrating recognition and patience for the learning process. The teachers encouraged independence in several areas: self-care routines, classroom routines, and conflict resolution between peers. Modeling appropriate social behavior took on various forms, from facilitating conversations between children to participating in activities alongside them. However, the participants also demonstrated recognition and patience for the learning process as part of their role in classroom management,

meaning the students were perceived as in the process of learning the expectations of school and the teachers were there to support them through it. The participants noted two additional components of classroom management: establishing structure and routines and fostering emotional development. Establishing structure and routines was also discussed as part of a teacher's role in classroom management. While each teacher understood establishing structure and routine as important, they articulated their perspectives somewhat differently from one another. The participants also viewed providing emotional security and demonstrating respect for children's feelings as additional aspects of their role in classroom management.

The findings summarized in this section indicate that the preschool teachers in this study do have a multidimensional perspective on classroom management that includes establishing the environment, teaching social skills, and discipline. This is consistent with the finding that Head Start teachers demonstrate a number of classroom management practices that reflect each of these functions, although they do not represent the full range of best practices identified in the research literature, such as posting a visual daily schedule and implementing a formal social curriculum (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Quesenberry, et al., 2011). Each lead teacher in this study set up an organized physical space in her classroom with clearly defined areas and created a weekly schedule/daily routine, but they did not cite these factors as components of classroom management. It is possible that setting up a classroom with clearly defined areas has become so much of a given in early childhood settings that the reasoning behind it is not typically reflected on or discussed. While Tracy regularly read to the children from a series of three social curriculum books and

facilitated discussions with her students about their experiences with various

emotions, there was otherwise no social curriculum in the preschool. The rest of the

participants focused on emotions, social and problem-solving skills when giving

children feedback about their behavior during classroom routines or when facilitating

a conversation to help resolve a peer conflict. This was consistent with Branson and

Demchak (2011) who found that Head Start teachers relied more on naturally

occurring "teachable" moments to reinforce social skills and problem solving

strategies, rather than using a more systematic approach such as a social curriculum.

Furthermore, Hawthorne Academy did not have any written policies or procedures

related to classroom management, which was also consistent with findings from Head

Start programs (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Quesenberry, et al., 2011).

The findings summarized in this section also relate to the studies on teachers'

orientations to management. The participants in this study definitely tended toward a

more humanistic orientation and demonstrated practices that were associated with that

perspective in the literature. They favored discussion with students as an intervention

strategy (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006), promoted

student autonomy in their reactions to misbehavior (Woolfolk et al., 1990), and

encouraged self-discipline (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). Although there were

rules and expectations in each classroom for every activity, a perspective sometimes

associated with a more custodial orientation, there were no punitive consequences for

misbehavior. This was likely because the participants in this study held a strong

conviction that preschool is a place for students to learn the expectations of school

and that it was their job to facilitate that process. The orientation to management that

perhaps suits the Hawthorne teachers best is the interactionalist approach described in the research on preservice teachers' orientations to management (Kaya, et al., 2010; Witcher, et al., 2008). It is rooted in social learning theory and strikes a balance between teacher-directed management strategies and providing students with opportunities for self-correction and problem solving.

There are aspects of the participants' perspectives on the components of classroom management and the role of the preschool teacher that have potential relevance for the successful inclusion of preschool children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior. Both the teachers and administrators at Hawthorne Academy discussed preschool as the first opportunity for children to learn the expectations of school and membership in a classroom. While they demonstrated notable understanding and patience for the learning process involved in adapting to this new environment, it was within the context of children who were demonstrating typical, age-appropriate social and emotional abilities. Children who are functioning below age-level in their social and emotional development may not be able to adapt to the expectations of school with regard to independence, appropriate group behavior, and conflict resolution to the same degree as their peers. Perceptions of acceptable behavior would likely need to be modified for such students. Furthermore, the participants in this study discussed expectations of students in terms of the whole group, rather than as individual considerations depending on the child, which could also potentially contribute to a conflict between teacher beliefs about classroom management and the inclusion of a child who requires a more individualized approach.

Sources of Knowledge

Participants in this study consistently cited other teachers as sources of knowledge about classroom management, including role models, mentors, and colleagues, but described feedback from accumulated classroom experience as their strongest influence. These findings are consistent with Garrahy et al. (2005), who found that trial and error/learning from children's reactions were the most frequently cited sources of knowledge, followed by the influence of colleagues and student teaching mentors. The participants from that study also credited professional development workshops with informing their understanding of classroom management while the Hawthorne teachers did not, with the exception of Tracy. Participants from both studies failed to endorse teacher education programs as sources of knowledge, which was inconsistent with findings from Martin (2004). These results suggest implications for practice related to preschool children with disabilities that are delineated later in this chapter.

There was considerable evidence to substantiate that participants' knowledge about classroom management came from personal and informal sources. Debbie, Jennifer, and Becca mentioned their parents as influences on their perceptions of positive teacher qualities, how to relate to children, and discipline. Debbie and Becca also credited their own childhood teachers as contributing factors. Janet discussed the influence of growing up with five siblings, and both she and Debbie related that motherhood informed their knowledge of classroom management. While Tracy developed a comprehensive and calculated approach to classroom management, she described it as emerging organically through her unique, personal interests,

exploration, and experiences. These findings do not relate directly to any of the research reviewed for this study, but are noteworthy in association with the findings on the consistency between beliefs and practices, which is discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Beliefs/Knowledge: Development as Managers

The participants in this study did not discuss their development as classroom managers or reference anything related to self-efficacy during the course of our conversations about professional backgrounds, sources of knowledge, classroom management beliefs and practices, with the exception of Jennifer. She described feeling confident in her abilities to manage a classroom after graduating from a teacher education program, only to realize that she still had a lot to learn once she started teaching. When I asked the other teachers directly about their development as classroom managers, they initially expressed some difficulty reflecting on the mindset they were in during the early stages of their careers (this was particularly true for veteran teachers like Janet and Tracy). In general Janet, Debbie, Tracy, and Becca expressed high levels self-efficacy in classroom management. They described starting their careers with a considerable baseline of management efficacy because of prior experience with children, but their abilities still progressed and improved over time. It was difficult to assess whether the participants' management efficacy developed separately from other areas of teaching efficacy as suggested by Emmer and Hickman (1991). Since the teachers did not conceptualize their professional growth trajectory using language or ideas related to efficacy, and it was only after I directly questioned them that we discussed it in those terms, data from conversations

with them about this topic seemed contrived and were difficult to interpret. The

participants in this study did not discuss any fundamental shift in their perspectives

on classroom management over the course of their careers, and when asked described

their philosophical outlooks as remaining the same throughout. This was inconsistent

with Garrahy et al. (2005), who found that teachers described a philosophical shift

over the course of their careers toward a more humanistic orientation to management.

Classroom Management Practices

A pervasive theme that emerged through the cross-case data analysis was

language as the tool teachers employ to manifest classroom management beliefs and

knowledge in their practices. Janet, Debbie, Becca, and Michelle used structured

language to quiet a large group of students, occupy the children during transitions,

and as part of standard classroom routines. However, they primarily used

unstructured language throughout the day in the form of repeated, ongoing verbal

directions, reminders of expectations, redirection, and as a means of facilitating

conversations between children for conflict resolution. Meanwhile, Tracy and

Jennifer used structured language as the others did but with the added components of

sign language, a problem-solving chart, and consistent phrases. This significantly

reduced the amount of unstructured language they used, particularly during circle and

center times, but they still employed repeated, ongoing verbal directions, reminders,

and redirection at other times. Tracy's structured language was sometimes

accompanied by visual support, which the other teachers did not use at all.

The use of language in classroom management is potentially relevant to

preschool children with disabilities included in general education settings.

Unstructured language typically presented as multiple sentences that changed constantly from one context to the next and from one time to the next, resulting in feedback that was both lengthy and unpredictable. Children who present with language delays, impaired processing abilities, and/or difficulty with impulse control may not have the ability to respond to unstructured language. The potential benefits of structured language should be explored in future research, as I discuss later in this chapter. The teachers in this study (with the exception of Tracy) were not aware of any distinction between structured and unstructured language, the reasons for incorporating visual supports in the classroom, or the idea that an abundance of unpredictable language can sometimes serve as a barrier for certain children. Just raising awareness of these issues among early childhood teachers may be useful in the conversation about strategies for successfully including children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior in general education settings.

Consistency Between Beliefs and Practices

The participants in this study engaged in classroom management practices that were consistent with their stated beliefs, on a regular basis across multiple contexts. This is similar to findings from Charlesworth et al. (1993), McMullen (1999), Stipek and Byler (1999) and Vartuli (1999), all of whom reported correlations between developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices. In the review of literature for this study, I proposed that developmentally appropriate practice might be a paradigm that influences preschool teachers' classroom management beliefs and/or practices. The Hawthorne teachers did not mention the term 'developmentally appropriate practice' in any of our conversations, however there was certainly evidence of DAP principles

in both their beliefs and practices. It is possible that developmentally appropriate practice has informed the field of early childhood education over such an extended period of time that its influence is pervasive but not always acknowledged.

There were very few occasions when I observed a participant respond to a situation or act in a way that was inconsistent with their stated beliefs. These instances were rare and without any obvious pattern. When assessing the consistency between beliefs and practices over the entire course of my observations, consistency was the overwhelming pattern that emerged. It is noteworthy to consider the strength of this finding along with the evidence that participants' knowledge about classroom management comes from personal and informal sources. If preschool teachers demonstrate classroom management practices that are consistent with their beliefs, and those beliefs are influenced by such varied, individualized experiences then the issue that emerges is the extent to which beliefs and practices are flexible or adaptable. I explore this question further in the directions for future research presented at the end of this chapter.

There is also evidence from this study to indicate that preschool teachers balance conflicting beliefs and practices related to classroom management, although they do not seem remotely conflicted about it. Rather, they believe in the importance of both structure and flexibility, promoting independence and providing support and demonstrate classroom management practices that address each of these values. It is interesting to consider this finding in light of the research on preservice teachers' orientations to management, which posits that they can develop dissonance between their stated beliefs and anticipated practices related to classroom management

(Kaufman & Moss, 2010). Perhaps behavior that appears inconsistent with a stated belief may in fact be a manifestation of another belief that the teacher considers equally important, or in the case of the preservice teachers evidence of early attempts at finding that balance. I explore this question further in the directions for future research presented at the end of this chapter.

Theoretical Analysis: The Bioecological Model of Human Development

As outlined in Chapter 1, my perspective on preschool teachers and classroom management is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development or the Process-Person-Context-Time model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This paradigm views the teacher, who presents with unique individualized characteristics, as developing beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management through ongoing multidirectional interactions with her students, within a context of systems over a cumulative period of time. Pianta (2006) uses this framework to understand the body of research on teacher-student relationships. The teacher and student are at the center of this model and each presents with unique individual characteristics as well as conceptions of their relationship with one another. These factors mitigate *informational exchange processes*, complex bi-directional interactions between the teacher and student that are not comprised of just discrete behaviors, but rather form a feedback loop that includes multiple components such as language, nonverbal communication, and level of engagement (Pianta, 2006). The teacher-student relationship is further moderated by outside influences such as the school setting and culture.

In this study I identified several unique individual characteristics of the participants. Each had a story that explained how she came to be a teacher at Hawthorne Academy. The background experiences were diverse: Janet had owned a restaurant, Debbie taught college-level English classes, and Tracy was a philosophy major. The participants described sources of knowledge about classroom management that were personal and informal, including the parenting they received as children, siblings, motherhood, instinct, and general interests. The teachers each had a Bachelors degree; Janet, Debbie, and Tracy had Masters degrees as well, while the others were in the process of pursuing theirs. The participants described other teachers who had influenced their perspectives and practices related to classroom management, such as role models, mentors or colleagues. Finally, each teacher had a set of beliefs about the components of classroom management and the role of the preschool teacher in classroom management.   The teacher-student interactions described by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) as proximal processes and by Pianta (2006) as informational exchange processes were ongoing. These were primarily mediated through structured and unstructured language. The multidirectional nature of these interactions or processes, described by Pianta as a feedback loop is actually alluded to by the participants in their descriptions of learning about classroom management via feedback from accumulated experience. The accumulation factor touches on the influence of time in this model. It was difficult for these participants to reflect on their development as classroom managers, so there were no insights into the effects of time, other than the accumulation of knowledge through experience.

Finally, the findings from this study highlight contextual factors, which Bronfenbrenner conceptualized as systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The microsystem is the classroom in which the teacher functions daily. Each classroom had an organized physical space, weekly schedule, and daily routine. The students also attended specials classes throughout the week led by other teachers in separate buildings. Janet and Debbie's class had seven students, while the other two classes had 16 each. The student population presented with minimal ethnic diversity and there were a disproportionately high number of girls. The administrators at Hawthorne believed that preschool teachers set the stage for school and conducted regular faculty meetings to discuss students' progress and teacher concerns. All of these factors functioned together to create the immediate context for the teachers. The relationships between these factors are described by Bronfenbrenner as the mesosystem. The exosystem involves the interaction between a setting that contains the individual and one that does not. An example for this study is the teachers' descriptions of school as a separate and distinct setting from home with expectations that are different from what students' parents require of them. The macrosystem in this study can be understood as any of the beliefs described by the teachers that are influenced by the broader culture. For example, facilitating independence and teaching children the expectations of a classroom at age three or four.

In this study, I used Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) as a conceptual tool to organize what might have otherwise seemed disparate strands of data into a framework for understanding the participating teachers as classroom managers. Through the lens of

this theoretical model, data on personal background, beliefs, sources of knowledge, practices, classroom environment, and school setting are interconnected and related. Pianta's (2006) interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's theory adds another dimension to the analysis of this study's findings, in considering their relevance to preschool children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior. A central feature of this model, *informational exchange processes* between teacher and student, can be viewed as centering on the teacher's use of structured or unstructured language and the child's response to that. The feedback loop this forms may impact the student's ability to be successful in the classroom, as well as the teacher's beliefs and feelings toward her own efficacy and the value of inclusion. Research on the potential benefits of using structured language in classroom management is necessary to develop this idea further.

Limitations of Study

  Methodology and study design. This study was exploratory and produced preliminary and descriptive findings. While the use of qualitative methodology allowed for a rich, detailed analysis of the participants and setting, the results cannot be applied too broadly. I did not intend to generate findings that could be generalized to other teachers and schools, as is the case with all qualitative inquiries. Rather, I sought to gain deeper insights into the topic of preschool teachers and classroom management that might contribute to the focus of future research projects.

  Another limitation of this study was the lack of peer or expert review. Although I utilized a number of reliability and validity measures such as triangulation, prolonged field engagement and member checks, the findings would

have been strengthened by feedback during data collection and analysis.

Furthermore, I anticipated that the document review would contribute more to the

findings than it actually did. Only Tracy and Becca identified written materials that

contributed to their beliefs, knowledge and/or practices related to classroom

management, and Hawthorne Academy did not have any written policies or

procedures. In a way, the lack of documentation highlights the informal approach of

this particular school and its teachers toward classroom management. However,

researchers should consider alternative forms of document review or sources of data

in future research on this topic.

   Characteristics of the setting and participants. There were several

characteristics of Hawthorne Academy and its teachers that restrict the findings from

this study. There was limited diversity in the population of students and none among

the participants. This homogeneity resulted in a context with minimal variance

between the cultural values of teachers, children, families, and program

administrators. Beliefs about classroom management and student behavior are

influenced by culture and the conflicts that arise between teachers and students from

different cultural backgrounds is a topic of growing interest in the research literature

(Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Furthermore, Janet, Debbie, and

Tracy had Masters degrees, while Jennifer, Becca, and Michelle were in the process

of pursuing theirs. Janet and Tracy had over 25 years of preschool teaching

experience and the teacher retention rate at Hawthorne was exceptionally high. This

is in sharp contrast to the data on the level of education and frequent turnover of early

childhood teachers and childcare providers (Ceglowski & Davis, 2004; Whitebook &

Sakai, 2003). The class sizes at Hawthorne were also relatively small. Janet and Debbie described having only seven students as an anomaly, but even 16 in each of the other classes was smaller than many other prekindergarten programs. The disproportionate number of girls in the preschool classes at Hawthorne is also noteworthy and likely contributed to the small number of externalizing behaviors noted during my observations (Jun-Li Chen, 2010). The school's admissions process could have contributed to this as well, although it did not seem to be particularly selective. Finally, the schedule of specials in the preschool gave participants numerous breaks during the week, which is markedly different from many programs in which teachers have primary responsibility for their students for hours at a time, a circumstance that likely contributes to perspectives and practices related to classroom management.

It became apparent early on during data collection that the teachers themselves were going to be a limitation to this study's findings. Beyond their level of education or years of experience, the teachers at Hawthorne were exceptional in their commitment to the social and emotional development of their students. Many of their beliefs- for example, the importance of respecting children's feelings or that teachers need to have patience for the process of children learning classroom expectations- would likely not be replicated in other settings. Further research across multiple and diverse settings is necessary to develop a substantive understanding of preschool teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to classroom management.

Implications for Practice

As mentioned previously, this study was exploratory and its findings preliminary. I therefore view the results as contributing more toward directing future research projects than to current classroom practices. However, there are still a few implications to consider. The Hawthorne preschool teachers had a multidimensional perspective on classroom management that included establishing the environment, teaching social skills and discipline, although this did not represent the full range of best practices, a finding consistent with existing research literature. It seemed that the participants in this study did not have knowledge of additional best practices or the various classroom management programs and social curricula available. This highlights the importance of research-to-practice initiatives and marketing the most innovative educational products to as broad an audience as possible.

The participants in this study consistently cited other teachers as sources of knowledge about classroom management including role models, mentors, and colleagues, and described feedback from accumulated experience as their strongest influence. These findings support several practical applications for general education preschool teachers who are including children with disabilities in their classrooms. School administrators could provide a teacher who is new to inclusion with a mentor who is more experienced for the purpose of classroom management. Feedback and support from a colleague in concert with actual teaching experience could positively impact the teacher's beliefs and practices related to the classroom management needs of a child with a disability who demonstrates problematic behavior. In addition, school administrators could provide opportunities for preschool teachers to observe

the classroom management practices of their colleagues. This would be followed by reflection and discussion about how they might relate what they saw to their own classroom management practices. If classroom observation was not feasible, teachers could present what they do to their colleagues as an alternative. Finally, teacher education programs should ideally provide classroom management training and opportunities for reflection in conjunction with field experience, as well as exposure to the classroom management practices of teachers who successfully include children with behavioral difficulties, if they do not do so already.

Directions for Future Research

The research questions that examined preschool teachers' beliefs about the components of classroom management and the role of the teacher as classroom manager need to be explored across multiple contexts, to determine whether the themes from this study are unique to the Hawthorne teachers or whether they are shared by a broader population of preschool educators. Specific questions include: Do teachers believe that preschool is a separate and distinct setting from home with its own corresponding expectations? What are preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to peer conflict resolution? Do teachers view preschool as a time for children to learn appropriate school behavior or do they have a different perspective? The shared focus of these questions is the degree of variability across preschool teachers and settings with regard to classroom management beliefs.

Findings from this study suggest that fellow educators and accumulated classroom experience influence teachers' classroom management beliefs and practices most, whereas teacher education programs influence them least. This is

consistent with prior research, although it contributes to the perpetual concerns about the efficacy of classroom management training in teacher education programs. The finding from this study that teachers also have personal and informal sources of knowledge about classroom management warrants further investigation. Researchers could explore the extent to which this finding applies to preschool teachers in diverse settings and how these sources of knowledge support or impede the implementation of best practices in classroom management and the inclusion of children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic behavior.

Participants in this study used both structured and unstructured language to manifest classroom management beliefs and knowledge in their practices. Additional research is needed to investigate the potential benefits of structured language. Specific questions include: How do preschool teachers incorporate structured language into their classroom management practices? Does the use of structured language improve classroom management or reduce students' problematic behaviors? Does the use of structured language improve the success rate for inclusion of preschool children with disabilities who demonstrate difficult classroom behaviors? These questions could be explored in the context of an intervention study that implemented increased teacher use of structured language and examined the outcomes.

The participants in this study engaged in classroom management practices that were consistent with their stated beliefs. Moreover, those beliefs were influenced by such personal factors as parents, childhood teachers, experiences with motherhood, and individual interests. The question that emerges from these findings is the extent

to which preschool teachers' classroom management beliefs and practices are flexible or adaptable. The fundamental and varied nature of the participants' sources of knowledge may influence attempts to modify beliefs and practices. A future research project could be designed to follow a group of teachers as they implement a classroom management program or social curriculum and assess the extent to which implementation is impacted by prior beliefs/knowledge and whether there is evidence to suggest that there needs to be a goodness-of-fit between a teacher's perspective on classroom management and a set program or curriculum. This could be applied to preschool teachers' beliefs about inclusion as well.

There is also evidence to indicate that preschool teachers balance conflicting but equally important beliefs and practices related to classroom management. Specifically, the participants discussed and engaged in some behaviors that fostered independence and others that provided support, some that set limits and others that promoted freedom. Future research could explore the extent to which preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that are consistent with their stated beliefs. If the results suggest inconsistency, the researchers should explore possible explanations for that finding and whether balancing different values is a contributing factor. This might be particularly salient to student and novice teachers.

The rationale for this study was based on the role of teachers in the special education referral process, the success of inclusion for children with disabilities who demonstrate problematic classroom behaviors, and the data on expulsion rates for preschool students. There are several findings from this study that may be relevant to these issues and warrant further investigation. The participants in this study

developed their beliefs and knowledge about classroom management from other

teachers, accumulated classroom experience, and personal, informal sources. At the

same time, their classroom management practices were consistent with stated beliefs.

Moreover, the teachers did not demonstrate any firsthand knowledge of or experience

with the IEP process. These factors need to be considered in future research on

providing teachers with meaningful knowledge, experiences, and resources that can

contribute to maximizing successful inclusion and minimizing inappropriate special

education referrals or expulsion. Another finding that may be significant to the

special education population is the participants' use of structured and unstructured

language as the tool for implementing classroom management practices that reflect

their beliefs and knowledge. The use of structured language in particular could be

explored as a potential support to children with disabilities included in general

education settings.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Classroom management. Classroom management is a broad term that incorporates a variety of teacher actions: establishing/maintaining an orderly environment conducive to academic instruction, developing positive relationships with students, fostering social/emotional development, and addressing problematic behavior (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006).

Teachers' beliefs about classroom management. For the purpose of this study, the definition of this term is grounded in the research literature on orientations to management, causal attributions, and self-efficacy/perception of control (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). Orientation to management refers to a teacher's philosophical outlook regarding the nature of the teacher-student relationship, the components of classroom management, the role of the teacher in the development of the child, and the role of the teacher in classroom management. Causal attributions are the reasons teachers give to explain students' problem behaviors. I included studies on causal attributions in the literature review of this study, but this component of teachers' beliefs about classroom management was not included in the data collection or analysis phases of this project. Finally, self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception of his or her ability to perform a behavior or accomplish something in a given situation. It is applied in studies about classroom management as 'perception of control', meaning how teachers view their level of control over their own classrooms. Self-efficacy/perception of control was not explicitly explored in this study; instead I explored whether the participants used terminology related to

self-efficacy/perception of control when discussing their development as classroom managers or their classroom management practices.

Teachers' knowledge about classroom management. For the purpose of this study, the definition of this term is grounded in the research literature (Garrahy, Cothran, and Kulinna, 2005; Martin, 2004). In these studies, knowledge is referred to in terms of: 1) s*ources of knowledge*: who/where teachers attribute learning their classroom management beliefs and practices from and 2) *development of knowledge*: whether and how their classroom management beliefs and practices have changed over a period of time (e.g. student teaching or years of teaching).

Teachers' classroom management practices. For the purpose of this study, the definition of this term is grounded in the research literature (Branson & Demchak, 2011; Carter & Doyle, 2006; Quesenberry, et al., 2011). It includes teacher actions aimed at establishing teacher-student relationships and the classroom environment to prevent problematic behaviors, explicitly teaching prosocial behaviors, and implementing strategies for addressing problematic behaviors.

Appendix B

Research Study Information

Project Title: Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management

Why is this research being done?

This is a research project being conducted by Debra Drang, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland, College Park. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber of the University of Maryland. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a teacher of 3-5 year olds with at least two years of prior teaching experience. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management.

What will I be asked to do?

The procedures involve interviews, observations, and document review. You will be asked to participate in 4-5 interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The purpose of the initial interview is to learn about your experiences with and perspectives on classroom management. Examples of questions that will be asked are:

1. Describe your perspective on classroom management in preschool.
2. What factors have contributed to your perspective on classroom management?
3. How have your ideas about classroom management developed over your years of teaching?

The purpose of later interview sessions will be to discuss the information gathered through observations and document review. Observation sessions will occur in your classroom once a week over a period of about 10 weeks. Each session will last approximately four hours. The purpose of the observation sessions is to gather firsthand information about your classroom management practices. For the document review portion of the procedures, you will be asked to share any existing written policy, handbook, guidelines, or curriculum related to classroom management that you use or identify as a source of beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices.

At the conclusion of the study, you will receive a $50 gift card as a token incentive for participating in this research project.

What about confidentiality?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Debra Drang (the student investigator) will be the only person with access to all data. Data for this research project will consist of the recordings/transcriptions of the interviews*, written field notes from the observation sessions, written analyses of the documents, and your demographic information. All electronic materials will be saved and stored on the personal computer of the student investigator, which is located at her home. Files on this computer are accessed using a password. All hard materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the student investigator. Pseudonyms will be used for you and the school when

information is presented on the study. In addition, information you disclose will not be discussed with others, including participants in the study. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

*This study involves making audiotapes of you during the interviews. The tapes will be being made so that information from the interviews is presented as accurately as possible. Five years after the study's completion, all data will be destroyed; computer files deleted, paper and tapes discarded.

What are the risks and benefits of this research?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.   This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about classroom management from the perspective of the preschool teacher. We hope that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this topic. Although the study is not designed to help you personally, the student investigator will offer to assist you and/or the program with professional training and development after the study is completed, in order to create a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants.

Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Some final thoughts…

My role as a researcher is to listen to, observe, and understand your experiences and perspectives. The interviews and observations in this research project are not going to be used to evaluate you in any way. If you would like to have the opportunity to reflect on what you think, know, and do about classroom management, please consider participating in this study.

My contact information:

Please contact me if you have any questions.
Debra Drang, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
University of Maryland, College Park
410-555-1212
ddrang@verizon.net

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear [name of director],

I am a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland and am looking for a site to collect data for my research project. The study is designed to examine how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management. Data collection involves interviewing and observing three teachers of 3- and 4- year olds over a period of about ten weeks. As part of the project, I would also interview you once about your perspectives on classroom management as program director.

In appreciation for your teachers' participation in this study, I would like to create a researcher-participant partnership by offering my professional services to your program/teachers once the research is completed. I have extensive experience teaching and consulting in the field of early childhood education and would be happy to discuss ways in which I could be of service to [name of program].

Although the teachers will not be paid for participating in this study, it is an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences and expertise, as well as a chance to contribute to research in the field of early childhood education. In addition, teachers who participate will receive a $50 gift card as a token of gratitude for their time and commitment to this project.

Please see the attached file for more detailed information. I would be happy to address any questions or concerns you might have. I would also invite the opportunity to present my study to your teachers in person at an upcoming staff meeting and to respond to any questions or concerns they might have. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Debra Drang, M.Ed.

Doctoral Candidate

University of Maryland

College Park, MD 20742

[My phone number]

Appendix D

Demographic Data Questionnaire

Name: _____

Name of school/program: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

What is the best way to contact you? _____

1. What is your ethnicity?

    a. African American _____

    b. Asian or Pacific Islander _____

    c. Caucasian _____

    d. Hispanic _____

    e. Other (please specify) _____

2. How many years have you been teaching? _____

3. How many years have you been teaching preschool? _____

4. Have you taught other grade levels? _____If yes, please specify _____

    _____

    _____

5. How long have you been teaching at you current school/program? _____

6. Have you taught in other schools/programs? _____ If yes, please

    specify_____

_____

_____

7. Please list any post-high school education/training that you have completed or are in the process of completing. Please include information on your major or area of focus.

_____

_____

_____

8. Please list any degree(s) or certification(s) that you have earned.

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Interview Guide: Teachers

Background Information

1. When did you decide to become a teacher?

2. Were there people in your life who influenced that decision? Were there events in your life that influenced that decision?

3. Describe the path you took to become a teacher- from the time you decided on that career until you first taught in your own classroom.

4. What factors or experiences most influence your teaching today?

Classroom Information

5. How many children in your classroom? How many boys/girls? Do any of your students have IEPs (please do not share their names, just a number)?

6. Describe the classes of students you have taught previously.

7. Without sharing names, describe the class of students you are currently teaching. How does this class compare to the classes you have taught previously?

8. Describe the physical setup of your classroom.

9. Walk me through a typical day of teaching.

10. How do you understand your role as a teacher?

Classroom Management

11. Describe your perspective on classroom management in preschool.

12. What factors/experiences/people contributed to your perspective on classroom management?

13. How have your ideas about classroom management developed over your years

of teaching? What were the factors that contributed to any change in your

perspective?

14. What factors or experiences most influence how you engage in classroom

management today?

15. How do you understand your role in classroom management?

Appendix F

Interview Guide: Program Director

1. How long have you been director of the preschool?

2. What were your professional experiences prior to becoming preschool director?

3. What is your educational background?

4. Tell me about your program.

5. Describe your role in the program. What are your responsibilities?

6. How do you understand the role of a preschool teacher?

7. Describe your perspective on classroom management in preschool.

8. How do you understand the preschool teacher's role in classroom management?

9. What factors/experiences/people have contributed to your perspective on classroom management?

Appendix G: Data Analysis

Research Questions	Codes	Themes
Beliefs: 1) What are the **components** of classroom management in preschool? 2) What is the **role** of the preschool teacher in classroom management?	I call it organized chaos; Different places have different sets of rules; It's the process that matters; It doesn't change from day to day; I'm in charge of my own behavior; We try to give them the tools; I have so many things that I do; My job is to teach them the structure; They are part of a group and their voice is heard; Deserving of their place in the classroom; They always have a reason; You don't really have a few seconds; I am a role model first and foremost; Sometimes disciplinarian and sometimes mother figure; Part of it is judging the situation; It's all setting the tone; A solid in their life; Teach them fundamental problem solving skills	**Component:** Teaching children the expectations of school ❑ **Role:** Facilitate increased independence ❑ **Role:** Model appropriate social behavior ❑ **Role:** Demonstrate recognition and patience for the process **Component/Role:** Establishing structure/routines **Component:** Fostering emotional development ❑ **Role:** Provide emotional security ❑ **Role:** Demonstrate respect for children's feelings
Knowledge: 1) What are the sources of preschool teachers' knowledge about classroom management?	Personal experiences with children; Personal life experiences; Parenting; Instinct; Feedback from students; Input from colleagues; Mentor teachers; Professional development workshops and publications	❑ Teachers: Role models, mentors, and colleagues ❑ Personal and informal ❑ Feedback from accumulated experience
Knowledge: 2) How have preschool teachers evolved or developed as classroom managers over the course of their careers? [Insufficient data for coding]		Enhanced initial management efficacy from prior experience with children
Practices: 1) How are preschool teachers' beliefs and knowledge about classroom management manifested in their classroom practices?	Stating verbal directions; Repeating directions at eye level; Providing physical prompting/assistance; Giving warnings; Verbally preparing for upcoming activity/event; Singing songs/fingerplays; Using physical movement; Stating rules broadly; Explaining consequences; Using positive language; Modeling dialogue; Facilitating conversations; Sign language; Consistent phrases; Redirection; Yoga; Social curriculum books; Classroom jobs; Space for 'breaks'	Language is the tool ❑ Structured language ❑ Unstructured language ❑ When language does not work
Practices: 2) Do preschool teachers engage in classroom management practices that support or contradict their stated beliefs?	[Initially aligned observed practices with codes from research questions on beliefs. During subsequent phase of data analysis, aligned observed practices with identified themes on beliefs: components of classroom management and the role of the teacher in classroom management]	❑ Consistency is a pattern over time ❑ Some beliefs and practices require balance

Appendix H

CONSENT FORM: Teachers

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by Debra Drang, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland, College Park. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber of the University of Maryland. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a teacher of 3-5 year olds with at least two years of prior teaching experience. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management.
What will I be asked to do?	The procedures involve interviews, observations, and document review. You will be asked to participate in 4-5 interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The purpose of the initial interview is to learn about your experiences with and perspectives on classroom management. Examples of questions that will be asked are: 1. Describe your perspective on classroom management in preschool. 2. What factors have contributed to your perspective on classroom management? 3. How have your ideas about classroom management developed over your years of teaching? The purpose of later interview sessions will be to discuss the information gathered through observations and document review. Observation sessions will occur in your classroom once a week over a period of about 10 weeks. Each session will last approximately four hours. The purpose of the observation sessions is to gather firsthand information about your classroom management practices. For the document review portion of the procedures, you will be asked to share any existing written policy, handbook, guidelines, or curriculum related to classroom management that you use or identify as a source of beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices. At the conclusion of the study, you will receive a $50 gift card as a token incentive for participating in this research project.

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
What about confidentiality?	We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Debra Drang (the student investigator) will be the only person with access to all data. Data for this research project will consist of the recordings/transcriptions of the interviews*, written field notes from the observation sessions, written analyses of the documents, and your demographic information. All electronic materials will be saved and stored on the personal computer of the student investigator, which is located at her home. Files on this computer are accessed using a password. All hard materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the student investigator. Pseudonyms will be used for you and the school when information is presented on the study. In addition, information you disclose will not be discussed with others, including participants in the study. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. *This study involves making audiotapes of you during the interviews. The tapes will be being made so that information from the interviews is presented as accurately as possible. ___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study ___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study Five years after the study's completion, all data will be destroyed; computer files deleted, paper and tapes discarded.
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.
What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about classroom management from the perspective of the preschool teacher. We hope that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this topic. Although the study is not designed to help you personally, the student investigator will offer to assist you and/or program with professional training and development after the study is completed, in order to create a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants.

Initials_____ Date_____

Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	Debra Drang is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Joan Lieber at: Department of Special Education 1308 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-405-6467 If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

CONSENT FORM: Associate Teachers

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by Debra Drang, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland, College Park. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber of the University of Maryland. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently an associate teacher of 3-5 year olds with at least two years of prior teaching experience. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management.
What will I be asked to do?	The procedures involve interviews, observations, and document review. You will be asked to participate in 4-5 interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The purpose of the initial interview is to learn about your experiences with and perspectives on classroom management. Examples of questions that will be asked are: 4. Describe your perspective on classroom management in preschool. 5. What factors have contributed to your perspective on classroom management? 6. How have your ideas about classroom management developed over your years of teaching? The purpose of later interview sessions will be to discuss the information gathered through observations and document review. Observation sessions will occur in your classroom once a week over a period of about 10 weeks. Each session will last approximately four hours. The purpose of the observation sessions is to gather firsthand information about your classroom management practices. For the document review portion of the procedures, you will be asked to share any existing written policy, handbook, guidelines, or curriculum related to classroom management that you use or identify as a source of beliefs, knowledge, and/or practices. At the conclusion of the study, you will receive a $50 gift card as a token incentive for participating in this research project.

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
What about confidentiality?	We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Debra Drang (the student investigator) will be the only person with access to all data. Data for this research project will consist of the recordings/transcriptions of the interviews*, written field notes from the observation sessions, written analyses of the documents, and your demographic information. All electronic materials will be saved and stored on the personal computer of the student investigator, which is located at her home. Files on this computer are accessed using a password. All hard materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the student investigator. Pseudonyms will be used for you and the school when information is presented on the study. In addition, information you disclose will not be discussed with others, including participants in the study. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. *This study involves making audiotapes of you during the interviews. The tapes will be being made so that information from the interviews is presented as accurately as possible. ___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study ___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study Five years after the study's completion, all data will be destroyed; computer files deleted, paper and tapes discarded.
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about classroom management from the perspective of the preschool teacher. We hope that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this topic. Although the study is not designed to help you personally, the student investigator will offer to assist you and/or program with professional training and development after the study is completed, in order to create a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants.
Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	Debra Drang is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Joan Lieber at: Department of Special Education 1308 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-405-6467 If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

CONSENT FORM: Head of Lower Division

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by Debra Drang, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland, College Park. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber of the University of Maryland. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are the Head of Lower Division at the program where the study's participants teach. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management. The purpose of your participation is to better understand the context in which the participating teachers operate.
What will I be asked to do?	You will be asked to participate in one interview, which will last approximately one hour. It will be scheduled at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The purpose of the interview is to gather information about your role as Head of Lower Division and your perspective on classroom management, in order to better understand the context in which the participating teachers operate. Examples of questions that will be asked are: 1. Tell me about your program. 2. How do you understand the role of a preschool teacher? 3. How do you understand the preschool teacher's role in classroom management?
What about confidentiality?	We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Debra Drang (the student investigator) will be the only person with access to your data, which will consist of the recording and transcription of the interview*. All electronic materials will be saved and stored on the personal computer of the student investigator, which is located at her home. Files on this computer are accessed using a password. All hard materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the student investigator. Pseudonyms will be used for you and the school when information is presented on the study. In addition, information you disclose will not be discussed with others, including participants in the study. If we write a report or article about this research project your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. *This study involves making audiotapes of you during the interviews.

	The tapes will be being made so that information from the interviews is presented as accurately as possible. ___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study ___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study Five years after the study's completion, all data will be destroyed; computer files deleted, paper and tapes discarded.
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.
What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about classroom management from the perspective of the preschool teacher. We hope that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this topic. Although the study is not designed to help you personally, the student investigator will offer to assist you and/or program with professional training and development after the study is completed, in order to create a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants.
Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	Debra Drang is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Joan Lieber at: Department of Special Education 1308 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-405-6467 If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

CONSENT FORM: Assistant Head of Lower Division

Project Title	Preschool Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practices Related to Classroom Management
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by Debra Drang, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland, College Park. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber of the University of Maryland. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are the Assistant Head of Lower Division at the program where the study's participants teach. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management. The purpose of your participation is to better understand the context in which the participating teachers operate.
What will I be asked to do?	You will be asked to participate in one interview, which will last approximately one hour. It will be scheduled at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The purpose of the interview is to gather information about your role as Assistant Head of Lower Division and your perspective on classroom management, in order to better understand the context in which the participating teachers operate. Examples of questions that will be asked are: 4. Tell me about your program. 5. How do you understand the role of a preschool teacher? 6. How do you understand the preschool teacher's role in classroom management?
What about confidentiality?	We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Debra Drang (the student investigator) will be the only person with access to your data, which will consist of the recording and transcription of the interview*. All electronic materials will be saved and stored on the personal computer of the student investigator, which is located at her home. Files on this computer are accessed using a password. All hard materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the student investigator. Pseudonyms will be used for you and the school when information is presented on the study. In addition, information you disclose will not be discussed with others, including participants in the study. If we write a report or article about this research project your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. *This study involves making audiotapes of you during the interviews.

	The tapes will be being made so that information from the interviews is presented as accurately as possible. ___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study ___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study Five years after the study's completion, all data will be destroyed; computer files deleted, paper and tapes discarded.
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.
What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about classroom management from the perspective of the preschool teacher. We hope that in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of this topic. Although the study is not designed to help you personally, the student investigator will offer to assist you and/or program with professional training and development after the study is completed, in order to create a more reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants.
Do I have to be in this research? **May I stop participating at any time?**	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	Debra Drang is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Joan Lieber at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Joan Lieber at: Department of Special Education 1308 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-405-6467 If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Appendix I

Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you that your child's teacher has chosen to participate in a research study through the University of Maryland, College Park. The purpose of the study is to gather information on how preschool teachers understand and practice classroom management. As part of this project, I will be observing your child's teacher in the classroom once a week over a period of about 10 weeks. At no point will any personal information on any individual student be shared with me. Furthermore, I will not be soliciting any information directly from the children.

If you have any questions regarding this research study, do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 555-1212.

Sincerely,

Debra Drang, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
University of Maryland
Department of Special Education

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