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A CASE STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN AN ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE
DEGREE EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM:
PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

by

Tracy E. Sermon

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in

Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

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2014

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ABSTRACT

A Case Study of Preservice Teachers in an Associate of Science Degree Early Childhood
Teacher Education Program: Perceptions of Professional Preparation

by

Tracy E. Sermon, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2014

Major Professor: Martha Dever, Ed.D.
Department: Teacher Education

The purpose of this qualitative, purposeful, bounded case study was to examine the experiences of preservice teachers in a specific associate degree (AS) early childhood teacher education program. My intent was to discover, from the preservice teachers' perspective, what skills and knowledge preservice students considered necessary to teach young children. I was also interested in how they viewed their professional preparation at the completion of their associates of science degree program. The lens through which I viewed the student's perspective was the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice. Research methodology included participant interviews, review of archival documents, and program contextual data (faculty focus group and program documents).

In the analysis of the data, seven themes were identified that represented the student's perceptions of the skills and knowledge needed for working with young children (child development, learning environment, guidance, curriculum, teaching,

assessment, and experiences with children). All students reported the development of knowledge and skills through their participation in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. Each of these themes identified student support and belief in the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices.

Three themes were identified that supported the overall perception of their professional development: reflection, NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) New Teacher Standards, and becoming a professional. All preservice students identified development of professional skills and reported increased confidence in their preparation to be early childhood classroom teachers. All identified NAEYC New Teacher Standards as part of their professional development and understanding.

This study provides the perspective of the AS degree seeking, ECE preservice student. Little research is available on 2-year students. Further research in this area would aid in understanding and preparing teachers who are likely to work with the youngest in our society.

(189 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

A Case Study of Preservice Teachers in an Associate of Science Degree Early Childhood
Teacher Education Program: Perceptions of Professional Preparation

by

Tracy E. Sermon, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2014

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of preservice students completing their associate's degree (AS) in early childhood education (ECE). My intent was to discover, from the preservice teacher's perspective, what skills and knowledge preservice students consider necessary to teach young children. I was also interested in how they viewed their professional preparation at the completion of their AS program.

The methods included participant interviews, documents and assignments completed by students, and program contextual data (faculty focus group and program documents). Seven themes were identified that represented the student's perceptions of the skills and knowledge needed for working with young children (child development, learning environment, guidance, curriculum, teaching, assessment and experiences with children). All students reported the development of knowledge and skills through their participation in the ECE program. Each of these themes identified student support and belief in the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices.

Three themes were identified that supported the overall perception of their

professional development (reflection, National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] New Teacher Standards, becoming a professional). All preservice students identified development of professional skills, and reported increased confidence in their preparation to be early childhood classroom teachers. All identified NAEYC New Teacher Standards as part of their professional development and understanding.

This study provides the perspective of the AS degree seeking ECE preservice student. Little research is available on 2-year students. Further research in this area would aid in understanding and preparing teachers who are likely to work with the youngest in our society.

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As ever, my children have been supportive and expressed their unwavering belief that their mom could do anything she put her mind to.

I offer my greatest love and appreciation to my husband, who patiently endured my procrastination, complaining, and times of discouragement. I will always be indebted to him for the tedious work of transcribing interviews, and the time spent reading, editing, and formatting this dissertation. He is my rock.

Tracy E. Sermon

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs

The mission of teacher preparation programs is to prepare new teachers in theories, principles, and educational practices; and provide field placements and teaching opportunities to develop the skills and dispositions necessary to become effective teachers. Early childhood teacher education programs have the same mission: to prepare teachers to provide the appropriate environment and learning experiences that will best benefit young children. Teacher professional programs have the potential to directly improve the quality of teachers' instructional and emotional interactions with children, which in turn improves children's development (Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008). The mission of most early childhood preparation programs is to instill an understanding of child development, leading to teaching behaviors that are correlated with a positive impact on children's learning and development (Wilson, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2007). This training task is an important one—each year over 36,000 students receive degrees in early childhood education (ECE), with nearly half, approximately 16,000, receiving an associate's degree (AS) in early childhood education. Many students who receive an AS in ECE work directly with young children upon graduation (Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006).

Two-Year Preservice Programs

In this time of heightened accountability, program quality and effectiveness in preparing new teachers has been at the forefront. Often program effectiveness is defined by successfully meeting accreditation requirements. An accredited program meets rigorous criteria, as defined by an accreditation body. Council for Accreditation of Education Programs (CAEP) is a nationally recognized organization that focuses on four-year, bachelor's degree teacher certification programs. Two-year, associate of science degree early childhood teacher education programs may opt for evaluation through National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which provides an associate's degree accreditation in connection with their Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (NAEYC, 2010b). These standards are the only nationally recognized standards for institutions that prepare preservice ECE teachers (Hyson & Dunn, 2004; Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009). For various reasons, only 10% of the eligible institutions offering an AS in ECE have received accreditation from NAEYC (NAEYC, 2010b). While most of the ECE 2-year programs are unaccredited, researchers noted that 77% of teacher educators viewed these NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs as very valuable to their program (Hyson et al., 2009).

Little research has focused on students in ECE AS degree programs (Connolly, 2000; Nakanishi, 2007). In considering nonaccredited programs, no research has been identified regarding how students view their acquisition of the knowledge and skills essential for teaching young children. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into a

specific nonaccredited ECE teacher education program, with the intent to discover how preservice teachers perceive their own professional preparation, and how they described their personal development towards acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach young children.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice as a Theoretical Lens

The NAEYC is the largest professional organization promoting quality educational experiences for young children, and it endorses a philosophy that has become commonly known as Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). As noted, over three fourths of early childhood teacher educators view the NAEYC standards for preservice teachers as a valuable framework for their programs (Hyson et al., 2009). These standards are rooted in the philosophy of DAP. Because the teacher education program evaluated by this study currently formats their graduation professional portfolio after the six NAEYC standards, it is through the lens of DAP that I viewed the perspectives of the preservice teachers.

Problem Statement

The 2-year, Early Childhood Teacher Education Program at Valley University has not pursued the AS degree accreditation from NAEYC. While unaccredited, the widely accepted NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation have been integrated into the course objectives, assignments, and field experiences in an effort to prepare students to effectively work with young children. This program uses student

teaching evaluations and a completed portfolio of learning assignments to evaluate whether students have acquired the knowledge and skills encompassed in the NAEYC standards. However, it is not clear how preservice teachers view their own development, nor if they perceive that their knowledge and skills necessary for teaching children have grown as a result of their participation in the early childhood teacher education program.

This study addressed the following research questions.

1. What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills necessary to teach young children?
2. How do they describe their professional preparation through participation in their early childhood teacher education program?

These findings will benefit the particular program under review as well as other early childhood teacher education programs by adding insight into the preservice student's experience.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of preservice teachers in a specific early childhood teacher education program. My intent was to discover, from the preservice teacher's perspective, what skills and knowledge students thought were necessary to effectively teach young children. I was also interested in how they viewed their own professional preparation at the completion of their AS program.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of a review of literature is to “set(s) the broad context of the study, clearly demarcate(s) what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation. It also situates an existing literature in a broader scholarly and historical context. It should not only report claims made in the existing literature, but also examine critically the research methods used to better understand the claims warranted” (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 3). In order to set the theoretical framework for this study, I will first discuss the philosophy of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). I will also discuss how this philosophy was developed and revised over the past 20 years. I will identify research supporting the implementation of this practice in early childhood classrooms. While many preservice teaching programs value this philosophy (Hyson et al., 2009), it is not without critics. For this reason, I will identify competing views and philosophies on the education of young children.

The following databases were useful in identifying studies for review regarding early childhood teacher education programs, accreditation of ECE teacher education programs, and DAP: Education Source, ERIC, ProQuest Digital Dissertations, JSTOR and EBSCO Host (Academic Search Premier, Professional Development Collection, Teacher Reference Center, and Vocational and Career Collection). The search terms included *early childhood preservice teachers, early childhood teacher education, associate degree and early childhood education, accreditation of associate degree and early childhood education, developmentally appropriate practice and NAEYC Standards*

for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs References in several articles lead to additional studies on investigating the development of early childhood preservice teachers, DAP, and early childhood teacher education programs.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions will be employed throughout this text.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) refers to the general area of study of teaching young children

Teacher education programs refers to post-secondary programs tasked to train new teachers

Preservice teacher or student refers to the individual enrolled in the teacher education program

New teacher standards refers to the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

Early childhood teacher education program refers to the specific program under investigation

Theoretical Framework: Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The theoretical framework is “the orientation or stance that you bring to your study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 45). For my case study, the lens through which I viewed the preservice teacher as the philosophy of DAP, and the connection to the NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation. This philosophy has widespread support in early childhood teacher education programs (Hyson et al, 2009) and is currently the framework

for this specific early childhood program of study. In order to more fully understand this philosophy, I will provide a brief history of DAP, noting the most current definition. I will next identify and briefly discuss three theoretical views supporting the ideals upon which DAP rests, and I will then discuss the research regarding the application of DAP in early childhood classrooms.

As DAP is not without its critics, the concerns of educators both within and without the field of ECE will be addressed. To conclude the review of my theoretical framework, I will note the connection of DAP with NAEYC's professional standards.

History

The NAEYC was founded in 1926, and is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children. They are committed to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8 (NAEYC, 2010a). While they embrace a number of missions, accreditation for higher education programs in ECE is directly impacted by the development of the philosophy of DAP.

Over 25 years ago, when NAEYC began the development of accreditation standards for institutions that prepare preservice teachers to work with young children, it became apparent that a foundation or philosophy of practices would be necessary to support the new standards (Seefeldt, 1988). In 1987, NAEYC published a position statement (Bredenkamp, 1987) that described appropriate practices for programs serving young children, which came to be known as Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). This statement attempted to define those practices and behaviors that would

provide high quality experiences for children, supporting opportunities for a child's optimal learning, growth and development. The efforts of NAEYC to define appropriate practices were not only spurred by the accreditation standards being developed, but also in response to the increasingly academic focus of early childhood programs influenced by public school curriculum (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

From this position statement, the book, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (Bredekamp, 1987) expanded upon the ideas to provide specific guidance to teachers working in early childhood programs. This book became the primary guidebook for those who adhered to the philosophy (Dickinson, 2002), and it focused on either/or descriptions of practice—DAP or not DAP (Developmentally Inappropriate Practice, or DIP). In 1996, NAEYC revised their position statement to reflect more current research in ECE, as well as the varied critiques regarding DAP. With this revised statement came a revision of Bredekamp's book (1987). The author moved away from the “either/or” to “both/and” thinking. One example from the 1997 edition noted: “Children construct their own understanding of concepts **and** they benefit from instruction by more competent peers and adults” (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 23) (bold in original text).

Additionally, the focus of both the position statement and the book clarified three ideas, which are that early childhood teachers are decision makers who base their practices on three kinds of information: (a) what is known about child development and learning; (b) what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each child; and (c) knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live (Bredekamp &

Copple, 1997, p. 9).

Again, in 2009, NAEYC revisited their position statement regarding DAP, noting new knowledge and the changing contexts in which children are cared for and educated (NAEYC, 2009b). Decision making is still the core of a teacher’s practice—to use their understanding of child development, individual children, and the social context in which the children live to make decisions that best support the learning and development of the children in their care. In addition, the focus of “challenging and achievable” was included to reinforce the notion that teachers should be intentional in their planning. Learning opportunities should be from the classroom environment, their curriculum, their guidance and teaching strategies, their assessments, and their interactions with families and communities. The third edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (Copple & Bredekamp 2009) was published to support the revised position statement.

Definitions

In this new edition by Copple and Bredekamp (2009), the authors identified four key elements to answer the question, “What is DAP?”

1. Developmentally appropriate practice requires both meeting children where they are—which means that teachers must get to know them well—and enabling them to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable.
2. All teaching practices should be appropriate to children’s age and developmental status, attuned to them as unique individuals and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.
3. Developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for children. Rather it means ensuring that goals and experiences are suited to their learning and development, and challenging enough to promote their progress and interest.

4. Best practice is based on knowledge—not on assumptions—of how children learn and develop. The research base yields major principles in human development and learning (this position statement articulates 12 such principles). Those principles, along with evidence about curriculum and teaching effectiveness, form a solid basis for decision making in early care and education (preface, p. xii).

This current position statement and text will provide the theoretical lens through which I will explore the preparation of preservice teacher professionals.

Foundational Theories Supporting DAP

DAP is “based on knowledge about how children develop and learn” (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 9). Twelve principles regarding child development and learning were offered by Copple and Bredekamp (2009; see also Appendix A). The support for these statements comes from theory and literature identifying factors to be considered in children’s development and learning. The works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky were widely referenced as influences in support of these principles. These were the scholars upon whom Bredekamp and others based the notion of DAP.

Dewey, in his essay titled “Democracy in Education” included in *Sources: Notable Selections in Education* (3rd edition), offered a technical definition of education—the “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (Dewey, 2001, p.40). He supported learning that is purposeful, allowing the learner to make connections. He viewed children as important decision makers in their educational experiences and believed that they need some ownership in their learning. While education and experience are related, they are not equal. He believed that a learning activity is not educational if it lacks purpose and organization and that the

teacher's role is to appropriately provide that purpose and organization (essay included in *Sources: Notable Selections in Education*, 3rd edition; Dewey, 2001).

Piaget, known for his theories regarding cognitive development and how children construct knowledge, postulated that through interaction with his/her environment, the child creates a scheme, or the ability to recognize an object or situation, associate a specific activity with it and expect a specific result, which leads to learning (von Glasersfeld, 1989). This intellectual growth is supported by both physical development and interactions with the environment. He placed less emphasis on “teaching” and viewed the role of the teacher as one “who nurtures inquiry and supports the child’s own search for answers” (Mooney, 2000, p. 42). “Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely” (Piaget, 1970, p. 715).

In contrast to Piaget, the philosophy of Vygotsky asserted that children learn through their social interactions with others; cognitive development is supported as a child interacts with family, peers, and teachers. When children are on the edge of learning a new concept, Vygotsky proposed that they are learning in the zone of proximal development (ZPD); they benefit from interactions with more knowledgeable peers and teachers. Such support is called *scaffolding* (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993). The framers of DAP see the child as the constructor of knowledge (Piaget) *and* as a social constructor when gaining new understanding (Vygotsky).

These theorists all supported the notion that learning is child centered—viewed from the perspective of the learner. Direct involvement with materials, experiences,

peers, and teachers provides an appropriate environment for learning. This child-centered foundation is at the heart of DAP. When a teacher understands how children develop, knows each child individually, and recognizes the factors that support learning, then they are ready to prepare the environment and learning opportunities that meet the young child's needs. For a detailed listing of the twelve child development principles that inform the theory of DAP, see Appendix A.

Research on the Benefits of DAP

Following the first publication regarding DAP, many researchers in the field of ECE investigated the application of DAP in the preschool classroom. Through the 1990s and early 2000's a variety of studies sought to identify the benefits, if any, of implementing child centered principles in the classroom. Frede (1995) reviewed research from several studies and noted the following: more positive interactions among children in classrooms that were rated as more appropriate; in a middle income preschool group, children in DAP classrooms performed better on measures regarding academic skills and creativity, and reported less anxiety as compared to those in didactic programs; children in some DAP head start programs were more likely to achieve academically and socially than the traditional didactic classroom.

Reviewing several studies in detail offers a look at the way researchers evaluated DAP. Some researchers who were interested in comparing the effects on children's participation in developmentally appropriate and developmentally inappropriate (DIP) classrooms, created several scales: a teacher questionnaire, called the Teacher Beliefs Scale (TBS), to measure teachers practices and beliefs in regards to DAP; and a subscale

of the TBS, the Instructional Activities Scale (IAS) allowing teachers to determine the frequency of children's participation in various classroom activities (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1990). In addition, Burts and colleagues created a Checklist for Rating Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Kindergarten Classrooms (reflective of the teacher questionnaire), developed for observer ratings of classrooms for appropriate/inappropriate practices. These scales were employed initially to investigate the DAP/DIP kindergarten classrooms in relation to children's stress levels. Examples of children's response to stress include behaviors that involve the self, such as nail biting, thumb sucking, and complaining of being sick. Other behaviors connected to interactions with others include stuttering, bullying, and excessive dependency on others. With a relatively small sample (two kindergarten classrooms; 37 children in a more DAP classroom, 17 in a less DAP classroom), the findings suggested that children exhibited significantly more stress behaviors in a less DAP classroom than children in the DAP classroom.

Subsequent research (Burts et al., 1992) investigated a larger sample. Twelve classrooms were selected; six were identified as DAP and six were identified as DIP. The sample size of kindergarten children was $n = 204$, with $n = 101$ in classrooms rated inappropriate, $n = 103$ in DAP classrooms. Results were reported regarding race, sex and socioeconomic status (SES). In regards to DIP classrooms: males exhibited more stress than males in DAP classrooms; blacks exhibited more stress than whites during transitions, waiting times and teacher directed whole group instruction; whites exhibited increased stress during whole group story time. More overall stress was displayed by all

children in DIP classrooms, particularly during transitions, waiting times and worksheet activities. Low SES black children demonstrated more total stress behaviors than low SES white children, regardless of classroom type. In regards to types of activities, low SES and black children tended to be less involved in DAP activities. The authors noted that learning styles of black children and the white middle class school culture could account for some of the stress for black children irrespective of the classroom philosophy.

It should be noted that these scales were developed using the initial guidelines published in 1987. Critics had voiced concerns that many practices were identified as “either/or”; if the practice was not DAP, then it was DIP (Dickinson, 2002). The position statement regarding DAP from NAEYC (1997) moved away from this stance, to “*both/and* (emphasis added) thinking...(in an effort) to convey the interrelationships among the principles of children’s development and learning” (p. 15).

Other researchers reported that children in DAP classrooms/curricula have increased self-competence (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 1999). Ninety-one children, representing a variety of ethnicities and attending seven different preschools, were administered the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance. Classroom practices were rated using the checklist for Rating Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Classrooms. Results indicated the DAP practices of appropriate curriculum goals, teaching and guidance strategies and promoting intrinsic motivation were significantly strong predictors of the preschool child’s perception of self-competence

One study involving children with disabilities reported that children

mainstreamed into a developmentally appropriate classroom acquired and maintained targeted skills (Fox & Hanline, 1993). This study focused on two individual children, each with behaviors identified for intervention; results indicated that supportive teacher intervention in the developmentally appropriate environment increased the targeted behaviors both during and after intervention.

Huffman and Speer (2000) investigated kindergarten and first grade classrooms in an urban setting with minority student populations. Twenty-eight classrooms were rated using the Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs, with classrooms identified as lower DAP and moderate DAP. Three scales of the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement were administered to sample of 113 children. Those attending kindergarten and first-grade classrooms that were rated as moderately DAP scored significantly higher in word identification and applied problem solving skills than those in the lower DAP classrooms.

In another study, children in child-centered programs exhibited less stress and had higher motivation measures than children in didactic programs that stressed basic skills (Stipek, Feiler, Daniels, & Milburn, 1995). These researchers compared 227 children (aged 4-7) in preschools and kindergarten classrooms described as either child-centered or highly academic. Children from poor, minority and middle class groups were represented. Children in the academically structured classrooms scored significantly higher in letters and reading achievement, but not in terms of a number achievement test. However, the researchers suggest not viewing the results in black and white terms, but noting that some skills may benefit from didactic practices and that teacher's thoughtful

application of practices in the classroom could balance both practices in ways that are beneficial to young children.

Long-term effects of DAP classrooms have also been reported. Two notable longitudinal studies have followed children into adulthood (Campbell & Ramey, 2010; Reynolds, Englund, Ou, Schweinhart, & Campbell, 2010; Schweinhart, 2010). Both employed a classroom model with a child-centered focus. The High Scope Perry Preschool Study, conducted from 1962-1967, was a landmark study that followed 123 randomly assigned low income children attending either child-centered preschools (defined as constructivist and cognitive-developmental, $n = 58$) and children who received no preschool instruction ($n = 65$; Schwienhart, 2010). Schwienhart noted that at age 23, several significant advantages were manifested for those who attended the child-centered programs, including fewer arrests and acts of misconduct, a higher rate of marriage, and a significantly higher rate (70% vs. 36%) of desire and intent to graduate from college.

In the Abecedarian Project (1972 to 1977), 111 infants were randomly assigned an intensive education intervention for low income, at risk children (Campbell & Ramey, 2010). Children in the treatment group were followed to the age of 21. Children in the treatment group (identified as a child-centered, developmental preschool program), earned significantly higher scores as adults on intellectual and academic measures, completed more years of education, and were more likely to attend college than those who received no intervention. It should be noted that critics of these longitudinal studies have expressed concerns about small sample sizes, as well as the general accuracy of cost

benefit analysis (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010).

Frede and Barnett (1992) investigated the application of the high scope program in the public school setting to see if a large-scale public program could offer similar results to the small scale High Scope study. Twelve classrooms in major population areas of South Carolina were chosen for an intensive study. Children in both the experimental ($n = 223$) and control group ($n = 167$) completed pre/posttests using the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Revised. Students in classrooms that implemented the High Scope curriculum (identified as *moderately well* to *very well*) scored higher on the school readiness measure than the control group.

While DAP still enjoys wide acceptance (Hyson et al., 2009), research regarding DAP practices has declined. Internationally, researchers from Taiwan (Lee & Lin, 2013), Beijing (Hu, 2012), Greece (Sakellariuo & Rentzou, 2011), and Jordan (Abu-Jaber, Al-Sjawareb, & Gheith, 2010) are among those who are continuing the investigation of the implementation of DAP in regards to their schools and preservice teachers.

Critics of DAP

Since the publication of the original position statement, the philosophy of DAP has been critiqued both from inside and outside the early childhood profession. Those critics outside the profession are other educators who have philosophical differences with the theoretical foundation of DAP (Hirsch, 1997; Kozloff, 2002; Ravitch, 1996; Stone, 1996). Kozloff identified “romantic modernism” as the foundation of several educational philosophies, including developmentally appropriate practices. He argued that romantic modernism, with its child-centered focus, is a fad that lacks support in empirical research

and that a teacher-directed, field-tested curriculum focusing on skills and content are supported by the “strongest and longest” history of educational research (p. 5).

Hirsch (1999), Ravitch (1996), and Stone (1996) have also voiced concerns about basing curriculum and instruction on a philosophy that depends upon a developmental, child-centered focus. Hirsch and Ravitch both asserted that children are not challenged in a developmental setting, and that a demanding curriculum is often withheld because educators believe it is inappropriate for the young learner. Stone also expressed apprehension that the child is afforded too much freedom in learning, and described parents and educators as observers, who are often undermined in their responsibilities to assist children to mature and develop responsible behavior. He too believed that other methodologies, such as *programmed instruction* and *mastery learning*, offer research-supported outcomes for children.

Critics from within the field of ECE have articulated different apprehensions. From the outset, some voiced concerns about the strong connection to Piagetian theory and the lack of a social and culture perspective (Edwards, 2003; Lubeck, 1998; O’Brien, 1996; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2006). With the 1997 revision of the DAP position statement (NAEYC, 1997), with its emphasis on cultural knowledge, many were still concerned that the philosophy was not adequate. Lubeck (1998) expressed concern that diverse views are not often valued when DAP is too narrowly defined. O’Brien (1996) cited some caregivers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who feel a sense of indoctrination regarding practices that are defined as DAP/DIP and are, therefore, not convinced that the children in their care are best served by these practices. Another

concern is that the field of ECE is dominated by white middle-class women, which therefore represents a dominant ideology (O'Brien, 2000).

Others (Cannella, 1999; Cannella & Bloch, 2006; Cannella & Greishaber, 2001; Ritchie, 2001; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2006; Soto, 2002) have identified a movement away from developmental knowledge as the frame in which ECE is viewed and have advocated, in its stead, a post-structuralist, critical, or postmodern perspective. Cannella and Greishaber (2001) described that they

...identify somewhat different issues as most prominent in human life than do the developmentalists. We approach our work with those that are younger using different philosophical frameworks and beliefs about human beings. We do not propose that our perspectives are a "truth," or the "correct" way of viewing the world: in our work, we try to challenge that need for a truth....From within any set of beliefs, the questions must be asked: "Who is helped? Who gains power? Whose knowledge? Whose knowledge is privileged? Who is hurt? Who is disqualified?" Yet we also hope to continually challenge the biases within the questions that we raise. (pp. 24-25)

The alternative view of Soto (2002) identified using the critical frame "that examine(s) issues of power and pursues a utopian dream of equity and social justice....(leading to a more personal, liberating, democratic, multicultural, decolonizing, perspective...for children growing up in a postmodern context (p. 450). Ritchie (2001) addressed collectivist values inherent in some cultures that may be at odds with some DAP ideals. These concerns reflected philosophical issues with DAP, not research that classroom practices regarding DAP have adverse effects on children.

Open dialogue and debate about DAP will most likely continue. Cannella and Greishaber (2001) noted that the language educators use to describe developmentalists and reconceptualists might have created a dichotomy that might not exist; both groups

“care about the lives, care and education of those who are younger...we want to serve other human beings” (p. 23).

Currently, DAP has a strong following, with most ECE teacher education programs supporting its practice, and with approximately 75% of 2-year programs relying in some way on the NAEYC professional new teacher standards (and DAP) to maintain or improve their program quality (Hyson et al., 2009). National conferences held by NAEYC in 2012 and 2013 promoted the theme of “DAP in the 21st Century” and the national organization frequently offers new publications promoting DAP practice in early childhood programs. DAP continues to be a philosophy that will be practiced and discussed in the coming years.

DAP and NAEYC Professional Standards

In an effort to establish a level of quality for programs preparing early childhood teachers entering the teaching profession, NAEYC has worked over the past 30 years to develop guidelines and establish standards under which the preparedness of the entry level teacher can be measured (Seefeldt, 1988). In 1985, these standards for accreditation were offered as suggested *guidelines* for the 2-year associate degree ECE programs. These guidelines were in use for over 15 years, with revisions made in 1996, 2001-2003, and 2009. The most current revision (NAEYC, 2009a) now identifies these guidelines as standards for students in all ECE degree programs: AS, BS and advanced degree. The complete, revised standards, on which this study was focused, are found in Appendix B. These standards have been expanded to include core knowledge, understanding, and

methods that a professional would use in multiple settings and roles (NAEYC, 2009a).

As noted earlier, a foundation or philosophy of practices is necessary to support professional standards (Seefeldt, 1988). The philosophy of DAP is embedded in each of the six standards. In order for a prospective teacher to demonstrate adequate knowledge and skills necessary to teach young children, an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice is required. The revised new teacher standards (NAEYC, 2009a) and the revised DAP position statement (NAEYC, 2009b) are companion documents and were the philosophical foundation for the program under study.

Purpose and Research Questions

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of preservice teachers in a specific early childhood teacher education program. My intent was to discover, from the preservice teacher's perspective, what skills and knowledge students think are necessary to teach young children. I was also interested in how they view their professional preparation at the completion of their AS program. In addition, connections were made from the data gathered from student interviews and documents to the fundamental philosophies and practices of DAP.

Research Questions

1. What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach young children?
2. How do they describe their professional preparation through participation in

their Early Childhood Teacher Education Program?

My intent was to provide an in depth, intimate understanding of AS degree preservice students perspective regarding their professional development. Little research has been published on 2-year early childhood preservice teachers. This research provided insight into an understudied group, the members of which are likely to work with the youngest in our society.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

Choosing a research method is highly dependent upon the topic of investigation and the questions the researcher has about the subject matter. The choice to use a qualitative approach originated with my desire to gain an understanding of preservice teacher's perspectives of their college experience; their thoughts, feelings and explanations of their growth and development upon completion of the program. Lichtman (2010) explained the rationale of utilizing qualitative methods to further understanding.

Qualitative research is a general term. It is a way of knowing in which a researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters. It often involves in-depth interviews and or observations of humans in natural and social settings. (p. 5)

Qualitative case studies have been frequently employed in the social sciences as a research method (Yin, 2009) and by researchers in the field of education for over 40 years (Merriam, 1998). The case study “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). This design was selected for this study due to my interest as the researcher in “insight, discovery and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 28-29). In order to examine the perspectives of preservice teacher's professional development, a variety of information was necessary. I collected program documents and conducted a faculty focus group in order to gain an understanding of the philosophy of the teacher preparation program in general and regarding developmentally appropriate practice and the NAEYC New

Teacher Standards. This information provided the context for the interview questions for the preservice teachers and the framework for the coding and generation of themes. In addition, I interviewed a purposeful sample of early childhood preservice teachers in order to gain a better understanding of how these students describe the knowledge and skills they developed through participation in the program.

Case Study Design

The qualitative research design chosen for this study was a single case study. The case study allowed for the “exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or case through a detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). Creswell continued that “bounded systems” are bounded by time and place, and identifies a case as a program, event, activity or individual. Within the teacher education environment at Valley University, the early childhood program was the bounded system to be investigated. For this study, the specified time period was one semester, during which archival data were collected and interviews with preservice teachers were conducted. This case study was viewed as instrumental—the question of interest was the participants’ understanding of DAP and their own development of the knowledge and skills identified in the NAEYC New Teacher Standards. Zeichner (1999) notes that case studies in teacher education programs have “provided a close-up and detailed look at particular teacher education activities, and show what a teacher education program looks like from the inside, from the perspectives of students and faculty” (p. 9). For this study, data collection included examination of existing documents and artifacts,

along with a focus group, and individual interviews (Yin, 2009). Through an examination of the data, and the opportunity to interpret themes and identify connections (Stake, 1995), I attempted to reveal insights into the particular case—how preservice students perceived their development of knowledge and teaching skills they will gain upon graduating. The preservice teachers' individual perspectives of personal development will provide a richer, fuller 'inside' perspective; essentially, the study of the lived experience (Glesne, 2006).

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine a specific early childhood teacher education program through the eyes of its participants, to uncover the elements that contribute to the preservice teacher's knowledge and skills, and to describe this development from the preservice teacher's perspective. In addition, this study looked to uncover evidence of the influence of the philosophy of DAP.

Research Questions

1. What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills necessary to teach young children?
2. How do preservice teachers describe their professional preparation through participation in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Program?

Overview of Methodology

For this study, data were collected from several sources. The primary source of data was preservice students who participated in individual interviews and documents they created. The additional information regarding the teacher education program included a faculty focus group interview and a review of program documents to identify program philosophy and beliefs. The following sections of this chapter include detailed information concerning the data collection for the preservice students regarding interviews and documents. Sample selection procedures and participant descriptions are detailed. Following the student data collection, details regarding the faculty focus group and program archival documents will be addressed. Data analysis for the data sources follow. Trustworthiness will be addressed, which speaks to the issue of research bias and the value of a bracketing interview. This chapter closes with recognition of the limitations of this study.

Data Collection

Preservice Student Data

Sample selection. A *purposeful sample* (Merriam, 1998) was selected to obtain a sample from which the most insight could be gathered. This sampling strategy was “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). Merriam continues that we learn the most from information rich cases, and criteria are necessary when choosing essential attributes that reflect the purpose of the study. The

ECE Teacher Education Survey (Appendix C) used by the education program for demographic information and program evaluation, was implemented to select a maximum variation sample of students for the interviews. In order to gain a better understanding of this specific ECE program, any students selected for interview must have completed at least 75% of the ECE course work from the EC Teacher Education program. From this pool, I anticipated interviewing at least one student from each for the following categories.

- Traditional students (attending college immediately after, or within five years of completing high school)
- Nontraditional students (returning to college after an extended break of five years or more).
- Students with no prior paid experience with young children in a classroom setting
- Students with one or more years previous paid experience with young children in a classroom setting

By employing the above criteria, students with diverse backgrounds and teaching experience provided the broadest perspective and the opportunity to obtain rich and in-depth information (Creswell, 1998). Traditional and nontraditional students differ in age, work, and family experiences, which bring a variety of perspectives and prior knowledge regarding the early childhood profession. Paid teaching experience in a classroom with children can also influence the knowledge and understanding a student might gain during their participation in the program. I anticipated identifying two traditional students; one

with paid teaching experience and one without. I also anticipated the same for nontraditional students; one with paid teaching experience and one without (see Table 1).

Interview participants were selected from preservice students completing course work in the Early Childhood AS degree program at Valley University during the 2010-2011 academic year. The purposeful sample was obtained from the ECE survey distributed in the Early Childhood Assessment course at the beginning of Fall and Spring Semesters. This survey included questions addressing when and where ECE course work was completed, and brief descriptions of experiences with children—both paid and volunteered. High school graduation dates were obtained from the ECE advisor. By the end of Spring term 2011, 12 students seeking AS degrees completed all requirements for graduation. From the pool of 12 graduating students, nine met the 75% course work requirements.

From the pool of potential participants, students were individually contacted in person or by phone concerning the proposed research study. Four students agreed to participate. Table 2 represents the four students willing to participate in the research study.

Table 1

Potential Participants

<i>n</i>	Student type	<i>n</i>	Student type
5	Traditional student, no paid classroom experience	1	Nontraditional, no paid classroom experience
1	Traditional, paid classroom experience	2	Nontraditional, paid classroom experience

Table 2

Selected Study Participants

<i>n</i>	Student type	<i>n</i>	Student type
2	Traditional, no paid classroom experience	1	Nontraditional, no paid classroom experience
0	Traditional, paid classroom experience	1	Nontraditional, paid classroom experience

Only one possible participant identified as a traditional student with paid classroom experience; this individual did not choose to participate. An additional participant was recruited from the traditional students, without paid classroom experience category. I anticipated interviewing 4 students and this addition increased representation of the traditional students, which represented the majority.

Participant descriptions. Pseudonyms were selected for each of the four participants to ensure confidentiality.

Student 1: Anne. Anne was a nontraditional student, returning to college 25 years after raising her children and enjoying a satisfying noneducational career. She described her interest in returning to school as follows.

When I was little in the 60s, there was a new program that was starting. And my nephew was...he qualified, and that's all we knew. I was in elementary school, and my job in the summer was to take him and leave him there—because my sister worked. And when I got there they said “Oh, it's a program called Head Start. And I stayed a little bit because my nephew was hesitant. And I thought “Wow, that is neat, that's what I want to do when I grow up.” Well, I graduated from high school, and I didn't go into education. I did other things, and I worked in a career for 25 years and loved it, it was wonderful. And then I thought “You know what, I'm getting really old, and my kids are getting old and married,” and I decided to go back to school to finish something I started. I remembered Head Start and I tried to find it and I started to work for Head Start. And I thought “Now I'll go back and finish.” I started college in 1971, that's a 100 years ago. So, I finally came back, and I'm doing what I wanted to do since I was...probably

in the second grade. So that's why I'm back in here.

When Anne began her early childhood courses she had been employed for 2 years as a teacher in a migrant Head Start program and also worked as a Head Start educational specialist. She noted that "everything that I learned from the classes (ECE courses) I've been able to incorporate right away and use."

Student 2: Mary. Mary was also a nontraditional student, returning to college almost 10 years after graduating high school. She noted:

I started out as an Elementary Ed major, and still am. I'm in the Early Childhood Ed as well, doing both. And I think it's when I became a mother, actually, that I became really, really, almost obsessed with-I wanted to know everything I could so I could be the best mother to her. So, even before I had decided to take on these extra Early Childhood classes, I'd gone to the library and I'd gotten everything I could find on Early Childhood and looked into the psychology and everything from being in my womb to when she was born. And then I took just a couple classes just to check it out, and decided to add it on. So, I'm actually going to finish Early Childhood before I finish my Elementary Ed. So, that's been more my focus now, which has been interesting for me. So, that is why. And I love it; it's become a huge passion of mine.

Mary had 4 months prior work experience as a preschool aide in a classroom in the School for the Deaf and Blind, and was currently a full-time student and mother of a 3-year-old child.

Student 3: Kathy. Kathy was a traditional student, entering college upon graduation from high school. While she did not have any employment experience in an early childhood classroom, she had limited experience as a volunteer in a weekly church nursery program. She described her main goal as being a mother; she chose ECE as a major for several reasons.

I chose Early Childhood Education as my major because...um, for a while I wasn't sure what I was going to go into, but I've always liked to work with kids;

it's always brought me a lot of pleasure. And so, when I found that they had a major in Early Childhood Education I thought "Ooh that would really intrigue me." I had an interest of working with young children. And I never really thought I would be a teacher, but when I found that... the younger children, really... [I] kind of took to them, and I was like "I could...I could really enjoy that," and I figured because my main goal is actually to be a mother if I can, and so I figured it would help build those skills, and if I needed to work I can work in a way that would probably be scheduled pretty close to what my children's would be. So it seemed family friendly and interested me.

Student 4: Ashley. Ashley was also a traditional student. She had no prior classroom experience, but reported two months experience as a part time nanny. She described her decision to choose ECE as a major:

Growing up, there were ten kids in my family and I was the youngest, so I never had (younger) brothers and sisters, but I had lots of nieces and nephews and I loved babies and little kids, and seeing how great of a family I had and my mom was such a great mom; all I wanted to do when I grew up was be a mom. Then it came time to choose what I wanted to do with my life education wise, and I knew I needed to go to school. So I thought "What could I do that would help me be a mom, and maybe even give me experiences of being a mom before I become a mom?" And I thought Early Childhood Education would be perfect because...it's just fun, and I don't know, I think that's really what led me to do that.

Archival student data. Documents created by the students consisted of work samples from their professional portfolios completed as a requirement for graduation. These portfolios included their philosophy of ECE, as well as two work samples and reflections related to each of the six NAEYC New Teacher Standards. Also available were their ratings from three belief "sorts" completed just prior to graduation. These three scales allowed students to prioritize their beliefs on a scale of 1-20 (see Appendix D). These scales listed teaching beliefs generally, beliefs about guiding children, and teaching practices (Rimm-Kauffman, Storm, Sawyer, Pinata, & LaParo, 2006). For each of the three sorts, 20 statements were listed. Respondents were asked to rank the

statements from 1-20, identifying their attitudes as *very, somewhat, hardly* or *least characteristic* of their beliefs.

Program Data

Focus group interview of ECE program faculty. In addition to interviewing preservice students about their perspectives, it was necessary to gather information about the ECE program where their learning took place. To gain an understanding of the philosophical views and attitudes of the faculty in the early childhood program at Valley University, a focus group was conducted to explore beliefs and understandings about children, the environment, child guidance principles, and other things that various instructors felt were important for students to understand as their courses were taught.

Examination of program documents. To gain a fuller understanding of the ECE program, establish evidence of the EC Teacher Education program's connection to DAP, and study the use of the NAEYC professional standards, archival documents were collected and evaluated. Documents included the university catalogue, information from the university course management system, advisement materials, and the syllabi from individual courses.

Qualitative Data from Preservice Students

Qualitative data can consist of direct quotes from individuals (obtained during interviews) regarding their "experiences, opinions, feeling and knowledge," and "excerpts, quotations, or entire passages" gleaned from various documents (Patton, 1990, p. 10). Data were collected to gain an understanding of preservice student perceptions,

and included information obtained directly from the students.

Semistructured interviews with preservice teachers. Interview questions (Appendix E) explored preservice student views about coursework, instructors, relevant learning experiences, and field work opportunities. Inquiry was made into the students' perceptions of the skills and knowledge they had about teaching young children, and the professional preparation developed through their experiences in the Early Childhood program. No direct questions employed the term *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*. However, when addressed by students, the topic was freely explored.

Interview setting and protocol. Preservice teachers were individually interviewed concerning their experience in the Early Childhood Teacher Education program by the early childhood program coordinator, who conducted the interviews using the interview protocol I provided. This arrangement was created to prevent any undue influence on the respondents, as all had been former students of mine, and would be completing their professional portfolio under my direction. While the ECE program coordinator oversaw most aspects of the ECE program, she had not taught or previously met these students on an individual basis. All interviews were conducted in the education building on the Valley University Campus in a small, comfortable conference room that was free from distractions. I received prior Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for audio-recorded data collection, and signatures were obtained before each interview. They are found in Appendix F. An initial interview guide (Appendix E) was used to begin the semi-structured interviews.

Students were asked to discuss the skills and knowledge related to teaching young

children. These questions explored coursework, instructors, relevant learning experiences, field work opportunities, and the NAEYC New Teacher Standards. The preservice students had the opportunity to share how knowledge, skills and beliefs were developed during their educational experience. The interviewer was free to ask probing questions in order to gain clarity and allowed opportunity for the respondents to explore their experiences. All interviews were audio recorded, and a contact summary form was completed immediately after each interview to note impressions by the interviewer and identify any follow-up questions (Appendix F).

During the process of reviewing, transcribing and preliminary coding, the interview script was revised to focus on the emerging themes in more depth. This “persistent observation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1991, p. 304) allowed for more focused and relevant information to be uncovered in subsequent interviews. As each interview was coded, and general themes identified, I met with the ECE coordinator who was conducting each interview. We reviewed the themes and reread the notes from the contact summary form. This resulted in refining interview questions in order to pursue themes in subsequent interviews.

Interview transcripts were emailed to each participant for member checking, with instructions to review the document. Respondents were allowed to insert comments on the transcription or add additional thoughts in an email. All respondents were contacted by a second email for final follow up, with an opportunity to add any additional clarifications or thoughts. However, the participants made no clarifications or additions.

Program Data Collection

Faculty focus group. In addition to interviewing preservice students about their perspectives, it was necessary to gather information about the ECE program where learning took place. To gain an understanding of the philosophical views and attitudes of the faculty in the early childhood program at Valley University, a focus group was conducted to explore beliefs and understandings about children, the environment, child guidance, and what various instructors felt was important for their students to understand as they taught their courses. IRB approval was obtained and consent forms were explained and signed (see Appendix H).

This focus group interview consisted of semi-structured questions about the program, philosophy, courses, assignments, and understanding of how NAEYC professional standards are incorporated into the ECE program (Appendix I). This data provided an understanding of the faculty/staff perspective of philosophy and beliefs about the ECE program, evidence of DAP beliefs generally, and thoughts regarding the NAEYC professional standards.

The focus group meeting was held at the beginning of the semester, January 2011. Five members of the early childhood faculty were in attendance; the program coordinator, a full time lecturer, and three adjunct faculty. The discussion lasted approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

As the discussion leader, I began by writing a statement on the white board. As the discussion unfolded, I interjected to ask for clarification, or to move the discussion to another idea. In the course of the discussion our beliefs (individually and as a program)

about young children, teaching children, guidance, curriculum and the classroom environment were addressed. These were listed as topic headings, with comments made by the group recorded on the white board to track the ideas and assist in directing the discussion. Included in the discussion were opinions about how the ECE program prepared students with the skills and knowledge needed for employment in classrooms with young children. NAEYC new teacher standards were discussed in connection to course work and the overall preparations of the students in the Valley University program. All dialogue was audio recorded, and notes generated on the 4x8 white board throughout the discussion were photographed and transcribed in table format.

Program archival documents. The following documents were available and considered.

- Course catalogue descriptions
- Advisement sheets for completing course requirements
- Course details: Online course management system
- Course syllabi: objectives, textbook information, field/practicum experiences
- Exit portfolio information and completed evaluation rubric

These documents were valuable in several ways. The course catalogue offers a general description of each course, and a quick snap shot of the program as a whole. This information is available to new/prospective students, and to those already enrolled in the program. The advisement sheets are provided to each student after meeting with the advisor (when they declare the ECE major). This sheet details all required courses, suggested electives, and all requirements for graduation. Information about all university

courses is accessible in the online course management system. Course descriptions, course objectives and a brief semester learning outline is available. All ECE syllabi were reviewed to note textbook choices, along with information regarding field experiences. The exit portfolio instruction sheet and evaluation rubric was also reviewed. While these documents were not coded in any way, they were used in providing context to the faculty focus group data, student interviews, and the graduation portfolio.

Analysis

Preservice Student Interviews

The interviewer, my ECE colleague, completed a Contact Summary Form during and/or after each interview (Appendix G) in order to record her impressions and/or other field notes, and my second coder and I reviewed the forms during the coding process. The audio recorded interviews were transcribed by a volunteer technical editor. I then number lined the documents to facilitate easy identification of sections of the transcripts. To gain familiarity with the respondents' expressions and tone, I read through the interview transcripts several times and listened to the audio recording on numerous occasions during the coding process. I generated provisional categories on the right side of the transcript, using single words or brief phrases to describe the respondent's statement (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

From these categories, I looked for themes and patterns. A reduction in codes narrowed the focus as overall themes emerged. The following seven themes were identified in regards to requisite skills and knowledge for working with young children:

- Child Development
- Learning environment
- Guidance
- Curriculum
- Teaching/strategies
- Assessment
- Experiences with young children

In addition, three themes supported an understanding of the students' perceptions of their professional development.

- Reflection
- NAEYC New Teacher Standards
- Becoming a professional

After reducing my codes to themes, and pondering on the principles of DAP, I printed clean number lined transcripts and re-coded the interviews. The principles I used to complete this reduction were key terms identified with DAP. These nine statements are found in the textbook used in three of the required courses in the preservice program (Bredekamp & Copple, 2006). This second coding of the transcripts identified both explicitly stated DAP practices and those implied. These key principles were as follows.

1. Considering what is age appropriate
2. Considering what is individually appropriate
3. Considering what is culturally and socially appropriate
4. Relationships' with responsive adults

5. Hands on active involvement
6. Meaningful experiences
7. Constructing understanding of world
8. Challenging and achievable goals
9. Met children where they are individually and as a group

These statements were numbered 1-9 when coding a fresh transcript, with the numbers written to the left when statements either implicitly or explicitly mentioned one of the nine practices. A table was used to identify frequency with which the DAP principles or practices were mentioned. The purpose of this second coding was to specifically focus on the DAP principles as taught in the ECE program from the textbook *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for teachers of children 3-6* by Bredekamp and Copple (2006). This textbook is required in three ECE courses, as noted on the syllabi of EDEC 2600, 2620, and 2700.

I conducted collaborative coding with the interviewer, my ECE colleague. Collaborative coding supported the belief that data codes are not necessarily reliable truths, nor that agreement in codes equated with reliability (Smagorinsky, 2008). Different levels of expertise may emerge in the process of discussing data, and discussion between coders is more likely to produce thoughtful exchange and new insights about the data than coding that involves establishing agreement between independent coders.

Archival Documents

A variety of documents were available for review. Each preservice teacher completed a professional portfolio for review prior to graduation. A variety of work

samples (lesson plans, assessments, presentations, journal, field exercises, papers, etc.) are included, along with reflections in two of the NAEYC standards that each of the early childhood courses require. Students selected from their ECE courses the best examples of their work in connection to the six new teacher standards. Two work samples with a one page written reflection were available from each student. A philosophy of teaching was also included in the portfolio, identifying their definition of teaching and learning and the roles of the teacher and student in the classroom. All students completing the ECE program also completed a Q-sort: a set of three rating surveys of teaching beliefs and practices. On each sort, student's rated their beliefs of 20 statements, the top four of which were considered in this research. These four are representative of their most closely held beliefs. All documents were also used as comparative documents to the student's interview responses.

Faculty Focus Group

The transcribed audio recording of the faculty focus discussion, along with the white board notes, were made available to all participants for member check. The printed transcriptions were coded by the researcher, and noted on the line numbered transcript. A second coder viewed the coded transcription to gain a richer view of the data. Several meetings were held with the second reviewer as initial codes were discussed and general themes emerged. This collaborative coding “provides a means though which levels of experience may emerge though the process of discussion in relation to the data” (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 402). The use of collaborative coding (as compared to achieving coder agreement) provides additional insight from colleagues with unique experiences.

Researcher Positionality

Background

I attended a community college for one year before transferring to Virginia Tech to complete a dual BS degree in Child Development and Elementary Education. Upon graduating, I attended Brigham Young University to pursue a MS in Early Childhood Education. Upon completing this degree, I was employed as a part-time faculty member as head teacher in the laboratory preschool at Brigham Young University for two semesters. I was self-employed as a private preschool teacher for several years, and for 5 years worked at the state School for the Deaf and Blind as a parent advisor interacting with both visually impaired children (ages 0-5) and their parents; providing assessment, instruction, and materials to parents to help their child progress in a variety of developmental capacities. For the last 14 years, I have been employed as an instructor at Valley University; 9 years as a head teacher in the laboratory preschool, and part-time Early Childhood Education (ECE) course instructor and 5 years as a full-time instructor for ECE and Elementary Education courses.

Bracketing Interview

In order to address my attitudes and biases as the researcher, a bracketing interview was completed with my dissertation chairperson, who has expertise in qualitative research. "Bracketing is a scientific process where a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories or previous experiences to see and describe the essence of specific phenomena" (Given, 2008, p. 63).

The purpose of a bracketing *interview* is that it allows the researcher to account for any potential biases and bracket out their views before proceeding with the experiences of others (Creswell, 2007). Dale (1996) noted the importance of the bracketing interview in creating a “consciousness of presuppositions.” In other words, the researcher must acknowledge that presuppositions by the author exist, and account for them by using a bracketing interview. Bracketing typically refers to an investigator’s identification of vested interests, personal experiences, cultural factors, assumptions, and hunches that could influence how he or she views the study’s data. For the sake of viewing the data freshly, these involvements are placed in *brackets* and *shelved* for the time being as much as possible (Fischer, 2009). The accounting of one’s potential biases was particularly important in this study, as I (the researcher) was a member of the early childhood teacher education program under investigation, and a prior instructor of the students interviewed. To assist me in accounting for potential biases and presuppositions regarding early childhood teacher education, the interviewer explored my education background, teaching experiences, understanding and opinion of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, views regarding teaching preservice teachers, and interpretations about the critiques on DAP.

The interview was recorded and transcribed. Coding was completed to identify beliefs, opinions, and perceptions regarding teaching preservice teachers, children, and the philosophy DAP. A full, complete discussion of this interview is found in Chapter 4 regarding contextual factors.

Trustworthiness

Using multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, focus groups, documents, and archival records, provided for the development of converging lines of inquiry; a process of triangulation. This leads to the likelihood that findings or conclusions may be considered accurate or convincing (Yin, 2009). In this research, the triangulation of collected information was aimed at corroborating the preservice perspectives with documents created by the students themselves and any connection to the philosophy and mission of the teacher education program. In addition to triangulation of multiple data sources, Merriam (1998) noted validity was enhanced when member checks, peer examinations, and a check of researcher's biases are employed. Students received transcriptions of their interviews with an opportunity to comment and clarify. An ECE colleague reviewed all transcripts and collaborated on coding and reduction of codes, providing me with a richer view of the data (Smagorinsky, 2008). As the researcher, I was also a research 'instrument' (Merriam, 1998) because I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and my interpretations were assessed through my observations and interviews; therefore it is imperative that a bracketing interview identified my beliefs and bias at the outset of the study.

Delimitations

The intent of this study was to uncover perceptions of preservice teachers regarding their professional development. This study was limited in size and scope by investigating a purposeful sample of students in a single early childhood teacher

education program. The findings will be of greatest benefit to the particular program under review, but they cannot be generalized to the larger population of preservice teachers. It is possible that other early childhood AS degree programs may benefit from the added insight into preservice teacher perspectives.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Situating the single case of preservice teachers within the ECE program experience required obtaining background contextual information in order to better understand the perception of the program participants. The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of the researcher's background and beliefs and the ECE program wherein the students participated. A clear understanding of the ECE program history, purpose, program requirements, and an understanding of faculty philosophies provided the background necessary with which to view the perceptions of ECE students.

I will first address the researcher perspective, reviewing the purpose of the bracketing interview and providing an overview of the interview. This overview will flesh out my background and experiences in the field of ECE and explore the development of my beliefs. I will then identify the key themes that emerged from reviewing this interview.

I will also review the background of the program under study to provide the foundation from which to view the students' perceptions. This will include an overview of the university in general as well as the specifics of the ECE program. I will address the need for the faculty focus group and describe the themes that evolved from the coding reduction process. These themes will be explored in some depth. I will conclude this chapter with a review of the archival documents that added additional insight into specific elements of the program, and related directly to the preservice student experience.

Researcher Context

Purpose of Bracketing Interview

The purpose of a bracketing interview is to allow the researcher to account for any potential biases and bracket his/her views before proceeding with the experiences of others (Creswell, 2007). Dale (1996) noted the importance of the bracketing interview in creating a “consciousness of one’s presuppositions” (p. 311). In other words, the researcher must acknowledge that presuppositions exist, and account for them through a bracketing interview. During this process, a researcher can uncover any preconceived assumptions, and stating upfront personal beliefs and biases. I completed a bracketing interview with my chairperson, which was transcribed and coded using the same procedures as noted in Chapter III. After reviewing the initial codes, I summarized my beliefs into four broad statements.

Overview from the Bracketing Interview

I began my post high school education experience at a community college, including general education courses and child development classes. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about young children, and as a work study, I spent 20 hours a week as a teaching aide in the college’s laboratory preschool. My head teacher “Sally” was a graduate of the early childhood program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She seemed “cued in” to the children’s individual needs and I wanted to mimic her teaching style. She calmly dealt with interruptions and behavioral issues, by offering choices and providing opportunities for children to develop individually. I held her in great esteem as a mentor,

and I wanted to be just like her. Her classroom felt emotionally safe for the children, and I in turn felt safe, safe to try out lesson plans and activities that I was concurrently learning in my ECE courses. Sally always encouraged me, and helped me to believe that I could develop those skills for working with young children. I decided to obtain a teaching license, whereupon I transferred to VA Tech to complete a degree in Child Development and Elementary Education.

Throughout my undergraduate schooling, I was exposed to a philosophy that in general, stipulates that children need direct experiences to learn (i.e., they need toys and materials that allow for exploration and discovery; observation was important to fully understand what would benefit individual children; and classroom experiences were relatively unstructured, because teachers were mentors and not necessarily instructors). In beginning my master's program, I discovered a significant distinction between child development and ECE. While I previously observed children and wrote lessons to aid in their development, the ECE master's program strongly focused on lesson planning and instructional experiences as the "mission" of teaching children. These practices were still child-centered and experience-oriented, as I had learned in my undergraduate experience, but, in addition, we were taught to be intentional in our planning and to meet desired outcomes. Throughout my BS and MS training, DAP had not been articulated or promoted by any group; yet there were similarities between the DAP philosophy and what I was learning and doing. It was not until beginning my employment in the university setting in 2000 that I heard the term "Developmentally Appropriate Practice," and spent time reading through the second edition of the Bredekamp and Copple (1997)

text to get a more complete understanding of the philosophy. I recognized that what I was reading connected to many of the beliefs that I had developed over the prior 20 years. As I began my tenure at Valley University, I felt at home. My beliefs were welcomed, and fit with the established practices of the early childhood program. As I worked with preservice students in the laboratory school and in various courses, I was free to implement and promote my own beliefs.

The following are key themes that emerged from my interview and are representative of my beliefs.

1. Child-centered programs are most appropriate for young children
2. Teachers must understand children generally *and* individually in order to provide appropriate learning experiences
3. Children need to learn socially appropriate behavior to be successful, although not to the point of suppressing a child's individuality. In other words, collectivist theories generally do not match my beliefs.
4. Two year preservice teachers absorb a lot of information throughout their course work; they are often very accepting of what they read and are taught, frequently accepting information without much personal introspection or analysis.

Background of Institution

Valley University (pseudonym) was established in 1941 as a vocational school to support the war effort during WWII. According to the university website,

In 1963, the school's name changed to Valley Trade Technical Institute (pseudonym) to reflect its growing role in technical training. The institution was

approved in 1966 to grant Associate of Applied Science degrees, in 1967 to offer general education courses, in 1971 to grant Associate of Science degrees (discontinued in 1974 and reinstated in 1981), and in 1987 to grant Associate of Arts degrees. With its expanded degree offerings, the institution's name changed again to Valley Community College (pseudonym) in 1987. In 1993, the institution's name changed to Valley State College (pseudonym) and the mission was expanded to include the offering of bachelor's degrees. On July 1, 2008, the institution underwent another mission and name change to Valley University (pseudonym) and began offering master degree programs.

Throughout the growth from several hundred students to over 33,000, Valley University has maintained many of the vocational and trade programs, currently offering AAS, AA and AS degrees in a variety of departments.

Early Childhood Education Program at Valley University

The ECE program was developed over 30 years ago as an Associate Degree in Applied Science (AAS). The focus of the program was to meet the growing need for teachers in preschools, daycare programs, and Head Start programs. During the change to community college status, the Associate of Science (AS) was added to meet the needs of the transfer student. By 2001, the AAS degree was phased out, leaving the AS degree in place and adding a certificate that only included early childhood courses for students with previously earned AS degrees, or those not interested in completing general education courses. This certificate is not a license, but it is often considered in earning credit toward career ladder advancement in the field of child care. Associate degree seeking students and certificate seeking students have similar ECE requirements and participate in classes together.

For the purposes of this study, only those students completing the AS degree were

included in the purposeful sample. Students seeking a one-year certificate may have completed an AS degree prior to entering the program. It is also possible that they will not complete any general education courses, focusing exclusively on early childhood curriculum. Some students lack the skill and/or desire to complete the general education requirements. Because the certificate-seeking students had varying educational backgrounds, I chose not to include them in this study.

According to the University course catalogue, the purpose of Early Childhood Education program is to provide instruction and preparation for those seeking to work with young children in preschool and day care facilities. This is accomplished through course work, assignments, observations, and direct experience. The program is strongly aligned with community needs—providing teachers for Head Start centers, day care centers and preschools, as well as teacher’s aides in elementary classrooms and potential owner/directors of private child care/preschool programs.

Program Requirements

“The scope and sequence of a higher education program’s course of study, along with its pedagogical philosophy, play a potentially significant role in shaping students’ experience (Whitebook et al., 2012, p. 1). Gaining a clear view of the ECE teacher education program offered the context through which to understand the preservice student’s experience. All students attempting to fulfill the requirements for the 2-year degree must complete all required general education courses as outlined by the university, and these courses are generally the same across departments. Because this is not considered in the research, the details of general education (GE) coursework will not

be included. The following are the discipline core courses for the AS degree in Early Childhood Education, as outlined in the university catalogue and the advisement sheets provided in the School of Education advisement center (Appendix J).

- EDEL 2200 Computer Technology in Education
- EDEC 2330 Including Young Diverse Learners
- EDEC 2500 Child Development: Birth to eight Years
- ECEC 2600 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- ECEC 2610 Child Guidance
- ECEC 2620 Early Childhood Curriculum
- EDEC 2640 Literacy and Literature for Early Childhood
- EDEC 2700 Early Childhood Practicum
- EDEC 2720 Early Childhood Assessment

These required courses total 23 credit hours, with an additional 1 credit hour remaining for elective credit. A detailed description of each of the required early childhood courses can be found in Appendix K. Each early childhood course includes course objectives that can be found on the University wide curriculum system (COMET) and have been approved by the School of Education Curriculum Committee and the University Curriculum Committee. Specific objectives for each course are detailed and found in Appendix L. Course syllabi, prepared by faculty and instructors, include these objectives, and each object is individually connected to the NAEYC New Teacher Standards.

In addition, specific graduation requirements for the AS degree are as follows:

1. completion of a minimum of 60 semester credits
2. Overall grade point average of 2.0 (C) or above. (C-) grade or higher in all program classes unless otherwise specified.
3. Residence hours—minimum of 20 credit hours through courses attendance at VU
4. Completion of GE and specified department requirements.
5. First aid/CPR certification, food handler's permit, professional portfolio review and acceptance by Education Committee. (Advisement sheet, ECE, Appendix J)

Professional Portfolio and Graduation Interview

All early childhood students are required to complete a professional teaching portfolio. Creation of this portfolio begins in EDEC 2600, Introduction to Early Childhood Education. Artifacts (work samples) are designated for each ECE course. A table of courses was created by the program coordinator (Appendix M). Included in the table are specific assignments from each ECE course that connect to the six NAEYC new teacher standards, providing a framework for creating the portfolio. Preservice students complete two work sample reflections in each early childhood course, and are encouraged to retain them to be included in the completed professional portfolio. The collecting and organizing of work samples and reflections is an assignment in EDEC 2720 Early Childhood Assessment. In this course, the students are instructed in the format and compilation of documents that are required for the completed professional portfolio. At the end of the semester prior to graduation, students schedule an exit interview with two members of the early childhood committee. Committee members review and score the portfolios with a rubric (Appendix N) and during the interview the

student has the opportunity to highlight their development from the portfolio. A measure of teaching beliefs (Q-Sort rating Appendix D) is given to all students prior to the Exit Interview.

ECE program Statistics

Table 3 shows the statistics that were available to faculty and were gleaned from the “faculty only” port of the university online program.

For a variety of reasons, the graduation rate of 17-20 students per year (department statistic, verbally reported from advisor) is small compared to the number of declared ECE/EDEC majors. Advisors report these reasons include students transferring to other institutions, dropping the program, changing majors, or moving out of area with a spouse. In addition, some students outside the school of education take ECE courses for personal interest only.

Table 3

ECE Program Statistics

Information available	Course and number enrolled
Total number of students in ECE courses	Fall 2011: 172 Spring 2012: 170 (Students are counted more than once if in multiple ECE courses)
Student's enrolled in ECE courses (Unique individuals)	95
Students enrolled in ECE courses with the following majors	ECE majors: 7 (Early Care and Education certificate- 1 year program) EDEC majors: 42 (Early Childhood Education, AS) EDEL majors: 31
Students not education majors	15
Students graduating 2010-2011	ECE Certificates 5 AS Degrees 12

Faculty

The faculty of the early childhood program included two full-time faculty members and approximately four part-time (adjunct faculty). A tenured faculty member served as the program coordinator and oversaw the hiring of part time faculty, managed course objectives, interfaced with early childhood advisors in matters regarding students and course offerings. This faculty member also worked with the department chair in scheduling and other university matters that involved the early childhood program. This faculty member did not teach any early childhood courses. I was the other full-time faculty member, and as such I worked directly with adjuncts regarding syllabi, assignments, and field and practicum placements. I also interfaced with the partnership preschool within the local school district where practicum students are placed. I taught two early childhood courses per year. Seven of the eight early childhood courses were taught by a variety of adjuncts on a regular basis. Table 4 shows the faculty positions and course assignments for the 2010-2011 school year.

Faculty Focus Group

Faculty members' academic backgrounds and professional experiences with young children are likely to influence the theoretical and pedagogical content of the curriculum and the depth of its focus (Whitebook et al., 2012). In order to gain an understanding of the philosophical views and attitudes of the faculty in the early childhood program at Valley University, I conducted a focus group with the ECE faculty in order to explore beliefs and understandings about children, the environment, child

Table 4

Faculty Information

Title	Status	Degree	Years at Valley University	ECE courses taught
Program coordinator	Full time	PhD in Human Development MS ECE BS ECE/ ELED	14	none
Senior Lecturer	Full time	PhD (ADB) Curriculum and Instruction MS Family Sciences emphasis ECE BS Child Development and ELED	14	EDEC 2610 Child Guidance EDEC 2620 Early Childhood Curriculum
Adjunct	Part time	MS Family Studies BA Home Economics	15	EDEC 2500 Birth-Eight EDEC 2300 Young Diverse Learners
Adjunct	Part time	MS Family Science BS ECE/ ELED	25	EDEC 2600 Introduction to Early Childhood Education EDEC 2700 Early Childhood Practicum EDEC 2720 Early Childhood Assessment
Adjunct	Part time	MS Family Science BS ECE/ ELED	6	EDEC 2640 Early Literacy EDEC 2610 Child Guidance
Adjunct	Part time	BS ECE/ELED	3	EDEC 1640 Children's Music and Movement (elective)

guidance, and what various instructors felt was important for their students to understand as they taught their courses. IRB approval was obtained, and consent forms were explained and signed (Appendix H).

The meeting was held at the beginning of the semester, January 2011. Five members of the early childhood faculty were in attendance: the program coordinator, myself (full-time lecturer), and three adjunct faculty members. The discussion lasted approximately 1 hour 45 minutes. The dialogue was audio recorded and transcribed. The

notes from the 4x8 white board that were generated throughout the discussion were also photographed and transcribed in table format (similar to how it appeared on the board).

I facilitated the discussion to address the following categories: beliefs about young children, teaching children, the classroom environment, and curriculum. These were listed as topic headings, with comments made by the group recorded on the white board to track the ideas and assist in directing the discussion. Included in the discussion were opinions about how the ECE program prepared students with the skills and knowledge needed for employment with young children. NAEYC new teacher standards were discussed in connection to course work and the overall preparations of the students in the Valley University program.

The transcribed audio recording of the discussion, along with the white board notes were made available to all participants for member check. The transcriptions were initially coded with provisional codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A colleague reviewed the coded transcripts and discussions were held. As noted previously, collaborative coding (rather than independent coding) was conducted with the ECE coordinator. This supported the belief that data codes are not necessarily reliable truths, nor that agreement in codes equated with reliability. Different levels of expertise could emerge in the process of discussing data, and it is more likely to produce thoughtful exchange and new insights about the data (Smagorinsky, 2008). From this collaborative coding, several discussions lead to refining codes and clarifying the descriptors that best described the data. I then sorted my codes into groups, looking for themes that emerged from the groupings. The themes were listed and after additional introspection were then further reduced. The

following themes emerged as the major beliefs held by the faculty.

- Beliefs about children
- Child-centered curriculum
- Teacher behaviors and skills
- NAEYC New Teacher Standards
- Beliefs about preservice teachers

Each theme will be explored in the following section.

Beliefs about children. The first prompt for discussion was “what are our beliefs about children?” The faculty focus group offered their thoughts about child development and expressed beliefs about children’s needs and capabilities. This theme was pervasive throughout the meeting. Responses included “they’re delightful...they’re basically good.” And “... they should be treated as individuals rather than groups.” “Because when we get into teaching they tend to just kind of blur into a group, but we need to treat them as individuals.” One faculty member noted that “we need to allow them to be 3, allow them to be 4, allow them to be 5... allow them to be their age.”

Play was often mentioned when discussing children in general. Several faculty described play as inherent and essential; another defined play as an “absolute need.” Children were also described as capable and as needing opportunities to make choices. While this was the first topic explored and recorded on the white board, additional beliefs about children emerged when discussing curriculum, environment and teaching.

Child-centered curriculum. The prompt regarding “teaching children” immediately spurred a discussion of child development, learning styles and teaching

strategies. Vygotsky, Gardner, Montessori and Piaget were mentioned. One faculty member noted “children construct learning...(Piaget)...and then there is the...guided instruction, where you go from demonstrating...you know, and the gradual release so you show them how to do it.” “Hands on” was identified as imperative, and referred to throughout the discussion of both teaching and curriculum. It was also used interchangeably with *concrete*, as in “concrete experiences.” Several noted the value of an intentional curriculum with integration of content areas, while another stated that curriculum should be “driven by the needs and interests of the children; it’s not curriculum driven.” This discussion included ideas about both a variety of content areas (such as math, literacy, science, social studies), and “things children are interested in.” Most faculty agreed that it is not necessarily a particular set of specific guidelines or objectives (though meeting objectives was mentioned by two faculty members), but that curriculum is part of the everyday things that happen in a classroom. Assessment was briefly included in this discussion as an essential part of curriculum planning, but was not explored in any depth. One professor declared that to be a child centered classroom it did not matter the age of the child; “When it is child centered though...when it is child appropriate and child centered learning, or whatever it is— it doesn’t matter whether it’s preschool [or older]—it can be [any classroom].”

Teacher behaviors and skills. The topic of teaching included discussion regarding guidance techniques, preparing the environment, and teaching strategies and approaches. Several faculty members noted that children benefit from teaching approaches that include positive interactions with children: “consistent expectations,”

“shared governance,” “positive verbal and nonverbal messages,” “natural and logical consequences,” and using “positive personal messages.” The general consensus was that “guidance is really based on relationships” and in “creating a classroom community.”

These comments easily segued into a discussion about the classroom environment. Comments about the environment included broad ideas about how it should be organized, and that it should be clean, healthy and in good repair. Others specifically noted “safe...warm, inviting, motivating...child centered.” One noted that “there needs to be quiet, noisy, and active areas,” while another indicated that it should be “soft and aesthetically pleasing.” Another faculty member said “you need clear pathways and borders.” Another recalled her experience visiting a Reggio school:

Their philosophy is, there’s always three teachers, there’s always a head teacher, there’s always an aide, and there’s always the environment. And they say that none are any more important than the other, it’s like the three; so they actually claim that the environment is the 3rd teacher.

The last thought about the environment addressed by the faculty noted the importance of an “environment that reflects cultural relevancy...reflecting the family and the child’s work.” Others added that this should include representing “the child’s learning” [in the environment] as one way to share the child’s classroom experience with his/her family.

Teaching strategies was the last topic under teacher’s behaviors and skills. In this discussion mention was made of the teaching continuum (a list of strategies from direct instruction to mediating to nondirective behaviors), which is taught in several of the program’s courses. There was consensus that while the continuum was taught in several ways, students did not fully understand the use of strategies until they were enrolled in the practicum course. Other approaches were described as planning for the use of “open-

ended materials, so they can explore, so they can learn [by] trial and error...[and be] open-ended and self-correcting.”

NAEYC new teacher standards. As the new teacher standards were discussed, one member stated “We follow the standards for NAEYC’s new teacher standards” and another followed with “So then that philosophy would set the standards that we [are] following.” Another faculty member clarified:

That’s what we use, and I have them do the portfolio [page] at the end [of the course] with the reflection that reflects the professionalism and the different standards. So they do respond to those, and we’re supposed to be using those as our guideline for our classes.

These comments refer to faculty discussing the specific assignments they use to meet the standards in their individual courses. There seemed to be some lack of clarity among two of the part time faculty concerning the larger purpose of the standards for the ECE program. While it was noted that “the direction of all of our classes were going... [to] follow the NAEYC [standards],” the purpose of using the standards, or why the ECE program used them, was not universally understood. A clear description of the purpose of the standards was expressed by the program coordinator, who is closely involved with the graduation portfolio that addresses all of the standards. She noted:

The [students] are able to demonstrate—at least have 2 artifacts in each one of those 6 areas... We feel like (the artifacts) are good strong demonstrations and that they’ve learned those. It’s not that it always reflects that they understand all of these things because well, that’s 12 artifacts overall, but that’s an awful lot of work to do that; but it’s very gratifying at the end to see where they are.

Beliefs about preservice teachers. Throughout these discussions, many topics lent to interjections concerning the preservice students in the ECE program. Some noted that students were resistant to new information when they did not have prior knowledge

to make connections. The faculty recognized that some material was new to students, and that “they’re just being introduced to [the ECE field],” and were developing “more of an awareness.” Several faculty addressed group work and the struggles some students have had working together on tasks or presentations. “Whining” about assignments, and the work involved in creating the profession portfolio was noted, but the group consensus was that these were inevitable parts of some classroom experiences. Nevertheless, faculty offered a generally favorable view of the students. Two faculty noted how excited they were when they could see what their students had gained from their instruction. One reflected:

I do also have them write down what excited them the most (about the course) -- what is something they are going to take and learn, and what is something they are going to change, anyway, based on that from the class...they are coming away with many of these concepts, and I’m pleased and gratified with what they have to say, and that they are really excited.

Another noted:

At the end of the final, in 2600, there is a full section of ‘what did you learn, how did you learn it, and how are you going to use it?’ We let them pick those 3 things, I love those, and I read every word of every one of those, even the ones that drone on for 2 pages. Even if 2 people say I did this, and it worked, even if it’s not my profession. It changed my primary class or it changed my nursery class. I deal with my nieces and nephews differently. It gives them the opportunity to say how they put it into their lives and their world. I like that part of the final, it is kind of the kudos part, where you like (say) “yes somebody got something out of this class.”

Faculty agreed that they received satisfaction when their students demonstrated growth and development during their experiences in the program.

Summary of Faculty Focus Group

Several philosophical beliefs and attitudes were identified from the faculty in the

ECE program. The group identified with philosophies and theorists' that are strongly connected to DAP. Vygotsky and Piaget were identified. Faculty viewed children as unique, delightful and basically good. Good curriculum was thought to be student-centered and student-driven, though appropriate content should be addressed in ways that allow children to experience and explore. They believe teachers should provide a warm caring environment for children where the teacher is positive, and the development of relationships and creating a caring community is important. They agreed that a variety of teaching strategies should be employed, and that approaches to teaching children should include opportunities for hands-on experiences, play and exploration.

They were aware that the NAEYC new teacher standards were part of the ECE program, but understanding was limited to individual faculty members and their own assignments that addressed a specific standard. The program coordinator, the assessment instructor, and I were the only faculty members that understood the larger part the standards played in the preservice student's preparation. Generally though, the faculty believed that the professional standards added a professional element to the program. The faculty expressed generally positive beliefs about the preservice students. This overview of the faculty beliefs demonstrates a strong connection to DAP, particularly in considering children individually, and teaching in ways that children learn best (Bredekamp & Copple, 2006). Understanding the faculty beliefs and attitudes provides the context from which to understand the perceptions of the preservice students.

Program Archival Data

Documents were collected from the ECE teacher education program. These documents provided information supporting an understanding of the ECE program and provided context in understanding the preservice student experience. The documents were also previewed for evidence of the philosophy of the program. The following documents were collected and analyzed.

- The advisement sheet detailing all course requirements for the AS degree seeking student.
- Course syllabi from all ECE require program courses
- Two faculty evaluations for each of the participants professional portfolio

The collection of documents was not coded. However, pertinent information was gleaned from each document and is described as follows in Tables 5-7. A summary of the documents will follow the tables.

Summary of Archival Documents

A review of these documents found three of the key dimensions described as necessary in preparing effective early childhood teachers (Whitebook et al., 2012). These include program content, clinical experiences, and institutional context (faculty characteristics were discussed in the previous section). In addition, the review identified a strong connection to DAP: use of NAYEC publications including Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6, and use of the NAEYC New Teacher Standards for the creating and evaluating professional

Table 5

Advisement Sheet Review

Detail from sheet	Pertinent information
Minimum graduation requirement to complete program	44 credit hours GE courses 23 credit hours of ECE course
Noted number of field hours required for each ECE course	EDEC 2620 4 observations EDEC 2300 10 hours EDEC 2500 15 hours EDEC 2610 20 hours EDEC 2620 20 hours EDEC 2700 90 hours
Graduation requirements	Minimum of 60 semester credits Overall GPA of 2.0 or above C- grade or higher in all program classes Residency hours-minimum of 20 credits through course attendance at the university Completion of all GE and specified departments requirements First aid/CPR certification, food handler's permit, portfolio review and acceptance by education committee.

Table 6

Syllabi Review

Syllabi detail	Pertinent information
Text books required for each course	EDEC 2300 Text book published by NAEYC EDEC 2500 Text book favorable to DAP EDEC 2600 Text book favorable to DAP; also required textbook: Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice : An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6 EDEC 2610 Text book favorable to DAP; also required textbook: Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice : An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6 EDEC 2620 no textbook listed; readings on course management system; also required textbook: Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6 EDEC 2700 Text book: Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6 EDEC 2720 Text book published by NAEYC
Description of field experiences and observation (Appendix J)	EDEC 2300 choice of classroom with pre-k children with special needs EDEC 2500 choice of settings-hours divided into four settings with variety of age groups: infants, toddlers, preschool and early elementary EDEC 2600 3 observations in partnership preschool; 1 in pre-K setting of choice EDEC 2610 choose a classroom setting for ages 3-5 EDEC 2620 choose a classroom setting for ages 3-5 EDEC 2700 partnership pre-K classroom in local district
Objectives for each course (Appendix L)	Objectives including the term Developmentally Appropriate Practices found on syllabi Objectives relating to one or more core DAP principles noted on all syllabi

Table 7

Professional Portfolio Review

Documents	Pertinent information
Professional Portfolio Grading rubric (Appendix N)	Identifies the professional portfolio is created following the NAEYC new teacher standards; includes all standards and key elements from the 2009 NAEYC position statement Details expectations for all overviews and reflections to be complete by preservice students
Professional Portfolio evaluation sheets on each study participant	Two independent evaluators scored all six overview and 12 artifact reflections for each student participant Student individual ratings described in the findings chapter.

portfolios, and course objectives that referred specifically to DAP or other principles related to DAP.

Summary of Contextual Factors

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into preservice teacher perception of skills and knowledge necessary to teach young children and to learn how they describe their professional development. It was necessary to gain a clear understanding of the program in which they are participating in order to better understand and evaluate their perspective. The theoretical lens through which this research study has been viewed is the philosophy of DAP. After reviewing the contextual factors of the ECE program under investigation, I conclude that the ECE teacher education program adheres to and promotes the principles of DAP.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate preservice teachers' perspectives of their growth and development during their participation in a two-year early childhood program. I used the philosophy of DAP as the theoretical framework for my study, and the lens through which to view my findings. This philosophy espouses a child-centered view, with a focus on child development and opportunities for children to explore and experience their environment, and to meet and attain challenging, yet achievable goals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006). In the presentation of my findings, I offer the voice of the preservice students in my desire to share their perspective. I also recognize how my own viewpoint of the early childhood field influenced the analysis. This chapter will review the coding procedures and the reduction of data into themes. I will describe the themes in greater detail, present archival data with its relevant analysis, and finish with an overall summary of my findings.

Identifying Themes

All interviews were transcribed. After repeated reviews of the audio recordings and their subsequent typed transcripts, I identified single words or brief phrases on the right side of the document to describe the respondents' statements (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The initial coding was compiled into lists and reviewed for themes and patterns. As I narrowed my codes into general themes, I identified seven areas that best describe student perceptions of the knowledge and skills needed for working with young children:

(a) child development, (b) learning environment, (c) guidance, (d) curriculum, (e) teaching, (f) assessment, and (g) experiences with children. I also identified themes that provided support for my second research question regarding students' overall perception of their professional development: (a) reflection, (b) NAEYC New Teacher Standards, and (c) becoming a professional. These categories, with their corresponding themes describing knowledge, skills and overall preparation, will be described in detail in the ensuing pages.

Findings

The first section of my findings addresses preservice teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills that are necessary to teach young children. Students were asked about courses that influenced their understanding of young children and how they learn. They also had the opportunity to share specific examples of experiences that influenced their knowledge or skill development in regards to working with young children. Since the lens for my research is the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices, I purposefully refrained from using direct questions about DAP to avoid leading any of the participants. All participants expressed thoughts and beliefs that either directly (by name) or indirectly stated beliefs involving DAP philosophy. This expression of student understanding of DAP occurred throughout the interview process.

Perceptions of Requisite Knowledge and Skills for Working with Young Children

In studying the perceptions of preservice students regarding skills and knowledge

gained through participation in the early childhood preparation program, several themes were identified. These are: *child development, environment, guidance, curriculum, teaching, assessment, and experiences with children*. Each of these themes helps describe student perceptions of skills or knowledge required for working with young children.

Child development. This sub theme was important to all of the participants. The preservice students felt it was important to understand what children are like at different ages, as this information helped them gain a clearer understanding of what a particular child's abilities or needs might be. Mary said she valued "learning about what they need at certain ages and what is developmentally appropriate at certain ages...and then again how all children are different and they all develop at different rates and levels." Anne thought about what she was learning in her child development course and compared it to her Head Start classroom.

Ok, he's about this age and that means he can probably do this and this and this, but not quite here. Having learned some of those things [in class] it's easier when you're working with a child and you can quickly assess some of those things, and then work with them and you get a better idea where he is and where you need to take him.

She also described an experience of looking at children's work in her classroom and thinking about child development.

All right, that's something that a 3 year old child did, because they're not quite there yet to put everything where it belongs. So having learned those things in Head Start, and then just seeing where the children are, and learning more [in the ECE class]; you know, this would be something typical that a 2 or 3 year old, or a 4 or a 5 would do, then when you look at a child's work you can say "Oh, wow." And in your mind you're already ticking off--he can do this, he can do letters, he's starting to write his name but the letters aren't really [there yet]. They look like letters but they're not the letters yet, but it's close; he's getting there.

Ashley described her new understanding of children from her child development course.

Birth through Eight [course name] was really interesting...mainly for that reason, of what I learned about understanding about children... and how they learn—the different ages—that one probably hits that the very most, because I was able to learn the different stages when they pick things up...oh, at this age this is the things they understand.

In responding to a question about coursework, Kathy said:

They understand so much more than we realize, and we take for granted. Like learning those things, I realized that they understand a lot, and they want reasons just like we do. And so I got a better picture of how children understand concepts and things like that.

Learning environment. Two students noted that the classroom environment needs to help children feel safe. Kathy and Mary both said that children need to feel emotionally secure, a condition that requires connectedness, structure, and a child-friendly atmosphere. When responding to questions about her understanding of how young children learn, Mary said:

I think for them to be able to function in a classroom at all they need to feel safe and secure. That's number one. And that's from environment to feeling that emotional connection that they're Ok with their teacher. You know, before any learning takes place, before they're able to make new friends, I think they have to feel safe in the classroom--emotional security.

She also said, "I think a lot of it has to do with the environment they're surrounded in, what they're encouraged to do; if they're encouraged to explore...if they're inhibited in some way."

Kathy noted, "When I teach, I will setup my classroom...not just how I prepare my lessons, but that [children] have to feel comfortable, but they also have to feel that that is a structured place and that learning is going to happen." She continued, "I guess

that is one specific thing that I definitely took from the program is that although the classroom needs to be very child-friendly—set up for the child—there has to be that structure.”

Guidance. Strategies for guiding children’s behavior was important to all of the students, and all referred to the child guidance course by name. In general, they described the importance of discipline, appropriate verbal interactions, the use of questions to engage the children, and the importance of developing mutual respect between teacher and child. Their responses strongly endorsed the value of developing relationships with children. Anne’s thoughts centered on what a child needs from the teacher. “Sometimes he just needs to be held a little bit, or praised—I don’t know if the word is praised—but complimented or said “Oh, you look wonderful today,” or “That is the best “S” I have ever seen.” Kathy responded, “I really liked the Child Guidance [course]. I learned a lot from that one, like about why you discipline in certain ways.” She also noted several strategies she learned:

Give them reasons for things; give them encouragement, not just the “no” all the time. But the “Thanks for doing that,” that was one that I do remember...Wow, it’s crazy how much different it is when you do follow these different steps of telling them...not just saying, “No we don’t do that,” or “You can’t touch that,” but treating them like little people and doing those things that we would want as well.

She also described some of her reflections about using guidance skills:

Oh, that child probably would have responded a little better to the fact that we have to leave now, if we’d given him just a little bit of warning, so he had finished what he had done...what he was working on, or to ask a question when we’re giving them opportunities to choose, but then respecting that if we’re going to ask them.

Mary explained that the guidance course was the first ECE course she enrolled in. She

was excited about what she was learning, and also anxious to try some of the guidance skills she learned with her own child:

In Child Guidance I really liked the different things we went over with, you know, just being able to “to guide them” per se, in disciplinary issues, and different techniques and ways you can implement in the classroom. And then also I was able to apply everything to my daughter that I liked...to take things from there and (use them)...that was wonderful, I really loved that class.

As Mary explored some of her classroom experiences, she talked about implementing some of the skills she learned in her guidance course. She found that she could develop stronger relationships with children when she tried positive guidance techniques:

And I found ways that I could help her—as a teacher, kind of regulate her behaviors that weren’t appropriate in a classroom, and then encourage her where she was shy, just by saying “Are you going to do this, or do you need my help to do it?” And she knew that I would make her follow through. And she kind of...you know, she would turn to me when she would just need that little bit of reassurance.

Ashley offered her awareness of the difficulty in being consistent in the classroom when employing guidance strategies:

They teach you all the techniques, like positive re-enforcement obviously, and then also just how to ask questions and things like that, and how to talk to children. I love that [course] because I could find myself—and I still do—I find myself doing the opposite of what they teach; just asking yes or no questions instead of open-ended questions and stuff like that, and I’ll catch myself doing that and it’s great because I can see the difference, now, that it makes sense, those techniques, and really, children open up so much more and it just seems like they develop so many more skills when you use those techniques.

Ashley also reflected on the importance of physical proximity when interacting with children:

There was a lot of emphasis on getting down on the child’s level and making sure...like physically you’re down on their level, and I think just making sure you’re connecting with them and meeting them where they are. And so I think that that’s just respect in general.

Ashley further described the importance of respect: “I just feel like that is really the most important thing, that there is respect in your classroom and that the kids know that you respect them and that you expect them to respect each other and to you as well.” She also said, “I loved how we were taught to really just praise what they are doing, and then they’ll have the confidence to learn more.” She also explained, “...just knowing how to talk to the children and how to interact with children” was important for her to understand effective interactions with children.

Curriculum. In general, all students reported increased confidence and skill in writing lesson plans and creating learning experiences for children. They were able to describe the creation of lesson plans that are relevant to what children need. They noted the necessity of creating learning opportunities where children can explore, and play, and learn through their senses. Comments centered on the importance of creative lesson planning, but did not focus on any specific content areas. Ashley attempted to describe her learning process in creating curriculum for children:

And just...yeah, learning how to write a lesson, and where do you begin. Like the very first lesson we had to write; it just seemed so overwhelming. But then by the end of it, it was like “Writing a lesson, oh, no big deal, whatever, mapping a curriculum plan; no big deal.”

She also indicated her belief that a child centered curriculum supports skill building:

It’s the same thing for like art projects versus craft projects, like where you have a set outcome that you’re wanting. But an art project is open, just whatever they want to do. And I love that because they are exploring and they’re building so many different skills, like even small and large motor skills doing things like that. And like it’s not just about the craft, because really, getting the craft done...who cares? But seeing more about what the child is like through the process, and what they’re able to do in the process is so much more important than how it turns out.

Mary connected to the value of play when creating learning experiences for children:

And then in curriculum, [the curriculum class] of course, we talked a lot about different ways to do lessons, you know, using all of the senses and letting them learn through play. You know, setting up these amazing centers so they can go in and it's "Oh, wow" it's this whole new world for them just to go and enjoy, and they're learning; and they're learning through interacting... they're learning through their play, and how play is essential for their education, and especially at this age.

Kathy responded to the amount of time and effort involved in creating curriculum for children:

I didn't realize how much structure went into those lessons; (what) went into each day, or even just the one little part of that one little lesson; how much preparation that took; how much thought that teacher had put into making that run smoothly. And I really enjoyed learning about those different things and how keeping that structure actually gives you more freedom-children get more freedom if there is structure.

Anne described some trial and error experiences in her Head Start classroom about implementing curriculum in general:

Oh my, can I really do this and put it in a classroom? But having done it reversed—well, actually I wish I'd had this at the same time I started in the classroom, because I wouldn't have been as frustrated on some things, thinking "What do I do now?" Fortunately though, we had Creative Curriculum books [a prepared commercial curriculum] and we had things that I could go to and look at. But, if you can do both at the same time [have a pre-K classroom and take courses in the ECE program], then you're taking everything that you're learning one day and plugging it in...instead of feeling like "What do I do now?"

Teaching. Students discussed a variety of teaching experiences throughout the interview, often embedded in their opportunities to interact with children and implement their own lessons. They noted the value of reflecting on their teaching as a way to improve their teaching skills. Some expressed value in "connecting to children" and "closing the gap" to indirectly refer to teaching in ways that meet the needs of the

children in the classroom, or aligning teaching opportunities with children's needs and interests. Connections to specific teaching strategies were limited. While one student noted the importance of *modeling* as compared to *demonstrating*, other teaching strategies were described as "styles" or "techniques" without additional clarification.

Kathy describes trying to teach with just a beginning understanding of various teaching strategies:

The first lesson I taught with the kids, I wasn't really familiar with where these specific children were in their literacy, so I kind of just took a stab at the dark. And they were, I think, as I got to know them a little better I think they were probably ready for it, but I think the experience wasn't very engaging to them. And so I learned from that one; I kind of realized that I needed to alter maybe the way went about teaching—not that I needed to necessarily change what I was trying to teach because I had based it off of specific goals that we had talked about in class and things—but the way I went about it, I think I didn't engage them enough that they were interested. I'd lost their attention really fast. And so I realized that in larger groups I needed to do a similar thing. And it helped me throughout the semester that experience, to go back and realize 'Ok, how am I going to engage all of the children?

She also described trying different strategies generally:

I was able to see a huge difference in the styles (teaching strategies) that they had taught us that seemed to—I don't know the right word—the children were able to learn better through those, and then I kept their attention because they were involved. I think when they're engaged they learn better, and then they'll remember those things because they were paying attention and they did learn. And learning those tricks in the class that taught me how to teach in the way that they understood; that they accepted, made it easier, and I felt like the children understood better what I was trying to teach by using those skills.

Ashley specifically described a teaching strategy that was important to her. "The modeling instead of demonstrating, because demonstrating is just kind of showing and modeling is, getting down and meeting them where they're at." Ashley also noted that she made adjustments in successive teaching opportunities:

Each lesson that I taught, like the very first lesson really didn't go well at all, and then each lesson I just felt like it went a little bit better each time...and so being able to look back on each lesson and kind of assess myself as I was assessing the children, I was able to make adjustments in how I taught, and therefore be able to teach better and be able to connect with the children better. Because the first lesson was kind of just me; and then gradually the gap between me and the kids just came together.

Her overall belief was summed up in these words: "It's so important that you're teaching the students, not just teaching a lesson."

Assessment. Several students noted that assessment was important to gain a better understanding of children and where they are developmentally. They described the importance of gathering information about children, using a variety of ways to gather information, and then using the information to inform lesson planning. Mary described her basic understanding of assessment. "You know, you need to get to know them a little bit before you know which ways to help them, and what they need as a student...to help them develop the skills that they personally need. She clarified by describing her assessment assignment while in the practicum experience. "We were assigned two students; we had to keep track of their portfolios and things the whole semester, you know, and take pictures and listen to things they said, and take notes and see if they're meeting their goals." While completing this assignment, she made the connection that as she observed and got to know a child better, she could provide individual support to that child.

Kathy felt that it was valuable for the assessment class to be taught concurrently with the practicum course in the Pre-K classroom. She made the connection that assessment and lesson planning go hand in hand:

I was grateful that we had that assessment class at the same time as the practicum because I learned what to look for so that I could figure out how to build my lessons. So having those together, the assessment class seemed to remind me to continually assess and keep track of them [children], and the different ways to assess as well; you can't just do it in the one way and get a total picture of each child. And so, being able to have that assessment class, where I was learning about that; it kept me watching while at the same time I was learning about the lessons and how to teach, so that I was able to meet the children where they were. And so I felt that really gave me a better picture of the children and where they were.

Anne's following comments about child development were previously noted; in addition they provide insight into her understanding of the connection between what she learned in the child development course and the importance of assessment. She described her thinking when observing children in her Head Start classroom:

Ok, he's about this age and that means he can probably do this and this and this, but not quite here. And having learned some of those things [in class] it's easier when you're working with a child and you can quickly assess some of those things, and then work with them and you get a better idea where he is and where you need to take him, and where you need to setup your emphasis on lesson plans or activities, things that will meet some of the assessments that they have, [be]cause we know where we want to get them to.

Experiences with children. All participants discussed their experiences with children, many of which related to their classroom experiences within the ECE program. Other participants reflected on experiences with their own children or other family members. Prior experiences provided a schema for understanding what they were learning in the program. Participating in field and practicum classrooms provided a useful model for the students and opportunities to try out what they were learning in concurrent courses. All students expressed increased understanding about some aspect of child development, appropriate interactions, or teaching practices from their time spent with children.

Prior experiences. Two of the four participants had prior classroom experience with young children. Anne was a part time teacher for Head Start while she completed her ECE degree. She often drew from her own classroom experience, and indirectly noted the connection between what she was learning in the ECE program and how she applied it to teaching the children in her class:

Actually, everything that I've been able to learn from the classes I've been able to incorporate right away and use. I don't know what it would be like to not have been in the classroom first [at Head Start], and then come and take the [ECE] classes and then just say "Oh my, can I really do this and put it in a classroom?" But having done it reversed—well, actually I wish I'd had this at the same time I started in the classroom, because I wouldn't have been as frustrated on some things, thinking "What do I do now?"

While Mary had prior classroom experience (before having her own child), she referred to her own daughter several times during the interview, making connections between what she was learning and trying things out with her own child. "I love setting up dramatic play things at home for my daughter.... I have so much fun with her and with it, and she just eats it up." The other two students made indirect comments about experiences with siblings or nieces and nephews. Kathy noted, "I'd spent time around children—but I didn't know how to teach them in the most effective way."

Field experiences. All required early childhood courses have a field or observation component (as noted on the ECE advisement sheet). Students spent approximately 60 hours completing these experiences before completing the practicum. Kathy particularly noted the value of observing or participating in early childhood classrooms, and noticed some new knowledge or skills learned from several classrooms she attended. She noted:

Then I went out in the field [early childhood classrooms] and saw the different things; I think going out and teaching, having to spend the hours in the classrooms, teaching the different lessons, was one of the greatest specific experiences. The difference it makes when sitting in a classroom—and I sat in a lot of different classrooms—I think that one of my favorite things to do was watch the teachers; watch how they would interact with the children and watch the response they would get, and then try to mimic or avoid that response because of the different things that would happen.

She continued:

We were sitting in a classroom, and they [children] were having kind of their ‘free choice’ time, exploring centers and things, and I remember one of them was... one of the children was doing something—I can’t remember exactly what they were doing—but I kind of stopped them and told them, instead of just saying ‘No, you can’t do that’, I tried to explain it and things. And I think—if I remember it correctly—they seemed to listen better.

Practicum. As a culminating experience, all of the respondents completed 90 hours in a pre-K classroom through a partnership with a local school district. The head teacher in this classroom is also an adjunct instructor in the VU ECE program. She has a teaching K-3 teaching license and a MS in Family Sciences. Students wrote and implemented large and small group lesson plans, created a variety of center experiences, and completed observations and a variety of authentic assessments with children in the classroom (syllabi for EDEL 2700/2720). Ashley reflected “each lesson that I taught, like the very first lesson really didn’t go well at all, and then each lesson I just felt like it went a little bit better each time.” Mary described one of her experiences in the practicum:

I think being with lots of different children, and different personalities, has really helped and influenced me; there was this one particular little girl who, when I first met her she really came across as this... I just thought she was just kind of a ‘stinker’ to tell you the truth. She just kind of had this attitude and she was just one to just kind of cause chaos wherever she was at. Gradually, as I spent more time with her—just the one-on-one time—I got to know her more; she actually had more of a shy personality, but it would come out; her personality came out more when she was being rambunctious.

Kathy explained that when she observed children and other teachers in the practicum classroom, she improved her skills in suitable interactions with children:

Because I think that that is one thing that I learned watching the children, is that if they are interested in it they want to learn it. And when they want to learn, they will [be] more willing to try, and a lot of the time they will learn it because they want to; and as I watched the teachers that I was observing, to [really] observe the teachers [cooperating teacher and classroom aides], I think I learned a lot about how to interact with children.

She also expressed feeling comfortable trying different strategies and techniques in the practicum setting: “When I was in practicum this [strategy] worked; so maybe with this child I’ll try that, and if it doesn’t work, my other teacher tried this, and that seemed to work.” Not only was she willing to try different strategies, but she was willing to learn from others in the classroom.

Ashley reflected on her practicum classroom and how she changed her opinion of a noisy classroom. “A noisy classroom is OK as long as everything is under control; I really saw that in practicum. That classroom was never quiet. Well, maybe during story time or something like that. But for the most part, it was very organized chaos.” Ashley also viewed the practicum setting as an opportunity to practice what she had learned in her course work, and to try her hand at teaching:

I think that it’s one thing to learn in a [college] setting the techniques and...they had you practice them in each of the classes, but really getting in the [preschool] classroom and doing all the lesson planning and actually teaching the lessons and everything like that, that was so great. Before that I really didn’t know that I could teach a lesson; I just felt really overwhelmed by that thought. But those [teaching opportunities] are great to get that practice in and be in with the kids and really, every day that you’re in there you’re practicing all of those techniques.

She also perceived her own development as her teaching improved:

I think that each lesson that I taught, like the very first lesson, really didn’t go

well at all. Then each lesson, I just felt like it went a little bit better each time [and] everything is under control still; I really saw that in Practicum.

Perceptions of Professional Preparation

This section describes the themes that best support the students' descriptions of how they developed professionally from participating in the ECE teacher education program. These themes include *Reflection*, *the NAEYC New Teacher Standards*, and *Becoming a professional*.

Reflection. Reflecting on what one learns, or on direct experiences, is a valuable tool for increasing understanding. The students in this study were able to think about what they had learned in the program, and how that learning caused them to think about what they were observing and experiencing. The consensus was that reflection helped them improve both understanding and teaching skills. Kathy noted her concerns about some of the classrooms she attended during her field experiences:

I went to some awful classrooms, at least after seeing the classrooms; after being taught [in ECE courses], I felt like they were awful classrooms because they weren't following the guidelines and they weren't—like they were so focused on 'well you didn't do this right or you didn't do this right', and I just felt like 'wait, no, no, stop....' So, I think, just being able to contrast or compare.

Several students recalled reflecting about their observations of children and their own teaching. Kathy said, "As I would watch the different ways [children] would interact, I would think back to things that I had learned in class and be like 'If that happened in my classroom or with my own children, how would I go about that differently?'" Ashley describes her thought process, "And so being able to look back on each lesson and kind of assess myself as I was assessing the children, I was able to make

adjustments in how I taught, and therefore be able to teach better.” She also pondered on the “chaos” she sometimes observed in the classroom:

They (the children) just responded really well and it was a noisy classroom, so I figured that’s probably pretty important—for me, where I had gone from rules, rules, rules—I thought maybe this is more important for me to remember because I am so like “everything needs to be organized,” but it’s Ok, it’s ok if it’s loud.

The ability to reflect became an important skill as students began to learn about the NAEYC teaching standards and the reflections they would need to complete in each course. The next section identifies the students’ thoughts on reflecting and writing about these standards.

NAEYC New Teacher Standards. All students were able to articulate their understanding of the NAEYC new teacher standards. In general, they saw the standards as a useful framework for reflecting on the many assignments, lessons plans, assessments and activities that they completed during the program. As they reflected, and made connections to how their assignments or experiences helped them develop new skills, it helped them feel grounded and confident in their approach to teaching young children.

Anne described a very favorable opinion of the standards:

We’ve done NAEYC reflections, we’ve done overviews, and we’ve looked at them, and we’ve dissected them, and that, for me, has been really good. To know that there are specific standards, because a lot of times when you tell people “its preschool,” they go “Oh, it’s just a daycare.” And I thought, “No, there’s more to it than just a daycare.” The same thing with Head Start: “Oh your babysitting thing.” I said “It’s not a babysitting, it’s a Head Start program, and we have curriculum and we have certain guidelines that we look toward, and assessments, and screenings and all these things that are done.” And the fact that we have those NAEYC guidelines, to me, has been really helpful, because I can say “You know what, this is what we look at, and this is what we do, and this is why we do it.” “And when I first read them I thought “Ok, that’s good.” But it’s been in these last couple of years that I’ve really said “Oh, you know, this is really wonderful.” When I had doubts or questions before—you know, in the last couple of years—I

should have gone back to this, because this very specifically gives me guidelines, and strategies, and things to use...and on the Internet I've also looked up the new ones [2009 standards] and they also have some summaries different people have written, and it's been nice to go and to read what some of these other people have said about it, and then, you know, that just gives me more insight and to [think] "You know, I've never looked at it from that point of view." Oh ok, now let's apply an artifact to the reflection and what did I learn? I did this in class; it was helpful, but you first do them in Intro, it's an assignment, and you get it done. It's not until later that you go "Oh man, this is wonderful," And you do like a literacy lesson plan, and you go "Oh, you know, that could go with like NAEYC number 3," and now you're piecing the pieces together of the puzzle. But then as you keep going through the program, then it means more and it has, well it has meaning. You understand why you did that.

She then summarized her feelings about the standards:

[I] love them; they're wonderful. I think they give me some good guidelines, and they give me things to help me become more professional in what I'm doing so I can really explain to people "It's more than just daycare."

Mary also offered a clear understanding of meeting the standards as a

professional:

Overall, it's what you're trying to accomplish as a teacher. You know, those things—everything from being a professional to having an understanding of the curriculum and young children and what they need. All of those things are what they represent; kind of our beliefs per say, what we're about; and our goals, our objectives. And then being able to say "I've had these experiences that prove that I am this way;" that I will be successful in the classroom—in these different areas. I was talking to a girl about [this] the other day in one of my classes; and she's like "Oh it [reflecting on the standards] all just goes on and on and on," and I just didn't feel that way about them. I thought they were quite inspirational. I think just by being able to write the reflections and things in the classes that you're in, and have it relate to something doing; whether it's a teaching experience or you're going into the classroom to help where you're incorporating one of your lesson plans, it really helps to get nitty gritty and into the detail of that standard or that overview, and see how it does relate to you, and how you can implement it, and how you're using it. And I think that was a big part of it too, because it wasn't just on a piece of paper, it was something you're actively doing; you're actively trying to do these things. So you're living them; you're actively doing it. I like it...kind of looking at it like it's our belief; it's what we're basing, you know, what we're about as teachers.

Kathy specifically noted several standards by name, and explained her thinking about them:

We had to write (reflections), one or two for each class; looking back from practicum when we had to write all of them, seeing the different ones [standards], interacting with the children, and the things that I learned from the classes, really helped keep the important things in mind. I think to describe them, why each one is important, you'd have to go through each one individually. For example, the first one, of 'promoting child development in learning'; a classroom should be educational. It should be prepared and set up so that they can learn, just like we talked about the environment. I felt that that had a huge impact on the things that I had already kind of thought were important as I went through the courses, I realized, like I said, why there were so important and how they had an impact. Building Meaningful Curriculum, where it's not just about 'Oh, we're going to learn about colors this week', there's reasons behind everything that you teach. And I really liked the way that the program taught me to use those skills. In—oh I don't know which class— they all kind of helped with that one—building the different parts of how to make it meaningful to the children, but also marking off things that were important for them to learn so they're ready to move on.

Ashley simply stated:

They [NAEYC Standards] really helped more than anything, like especially becoming a professional; [in] every single class you needed to write a standard overview and then in Practicum [all of them]. The NAEYC standards [are] just important.

Becoming a professional. In response to a line of questions exploring how ready students felt to teach in an early childhood classroom upon completion of the ECE program, all participants expressed positive comments about their preparation. Each one identified personal growth and the development of professional skills as a result of their participation in the ECE program. They also noted an increased confidence in their own abilities and their readiness for the classroom. They claimed that the program/coursework as a whole provided them with the tools they needed to be teachers of young children.

During the discussion of professional standards, other general thoughts about

professional behavior were expressed. Kathy hypothesized:

If I were applying something in a classroom and a parent asked ‘Why do you do this certain thing?’ I could back it up. I’ve learned, I guess the ‘science’ behind the theory. And [the] ‘why’ I guess, how to be a professional and apply that in a professional manner; what I kind of already believed, and what was definitely strengthened throughout the program; I definitely grew throughout the program.

She also said “Every day I felt like I learned so much that I’m grateful that I chose [the ECE program], because it really was exactly what I needed to become what I feel is a professional in this area.” Ashley noted: “[I] feel like [I am] a professional and not just a preschool teacher; [I am] a professional and [I] have been trained in this.” Anne noted that her preparation changed her views about how she sees herself as a professional; she now believes she can demonstrate to others that her job is a professional one:

[Some say] Oh, it’s just a daycare.” And I thought, “No, there’s more to it than just a daycare.” The same thing with Head Start: “Oh, your babysitting thing.” I said “It’s not babysitting, it’s a Head Start program, and we have curriculum and we have certain guidelines that we look toward, and assessments, and screenings and all these things that are done... You know what, this is what we look at, and this is what we do, and this is why we do it.”

While this quote from Anne was previously noted in relation to meeting professional standards, it also speaks to her beliefs that she sees herself as a professional.

Confidence. Several students described their feelings about their abilities at the completion of the ECE program. Kathy mused: “I guess [if I was] going in a classroom now...not only would I go in there more confident and more ready to teach those children, I feel like I would also be more consistent.” She also described her passionate feeling about the program:

I loved it! I tell everyone who asks me what I went into [my major], how much I enjoyed VU’s program. I guess maybe because I came in with similar beliefs to begin with, and I was able to learn about them and learn so many new things to

help that; and that I came out feeling like I had learned from it.

Ashley described her new awareness of her own skills and knowledge:

But I do feel like just because I took the courses, even my interactions...like I'm not nervous...I've never been nervous interacting with my nieces and nephews obviously, but I now notice what I'm saying and I feel like in each of my interactions with them I feel like I can teach them. Even if it's just a quick five-minute interaction, I feel like I can help them learn something.

Mary stated: "I feel very confident in [what I learned in the program]...and I do feel very confident and ready to be out there and to do those things I need to do."

Prepared to teach. Kathy considered her preparation as cumulative: "The more lessons I had written, the more I had implemented them, the more we talked about it in class; As I stepped into a classroom, or just being around children, I felt more capable, more prepared." Mary was enthusiastic about her preparation. "I feel prepared. I feel revved up and ready to go. I'm ready to do my detail in my own curriculum." She also described her current application of her knowledge and skills. "I've been able to do like even little play groups where we've talked about things as moms, and [I have been] able to help with behavior problems...just because of things I've learned from the program." When Mary was asked about her preparation for the position of a head teacher or aide, she was emphatic: "Oh, not an aide...I'd open up my own program...(as the head teacher)."

Ashley noted that "as far as planning a lesson or teaching children in a formal setting, I haven't done it since graduating, but I feel like I could. I feel like the first time might be a little bit rocky, but I definitely feel like I could." Anne was not asked about her preparation to enter the field. Rather, she was asked to explore any additional

thoughts about how the program may have helped her in her current Head Start classroom. She articulated: “Actually, everything that I’ve been able to learn from the classes I’ve been able to incorporate right away...and use...[I’m] actually able to put everything that [I’m] learning right in to practice.”

Overall perceptions of their ECE program experience. When students responded to questions exploring their learning in the ECE program, they also offered their overall thoughts about the classes they had taken. All expressed strong opinions of the value they placed on all they had learned in the ECE program. Most concluded that the courses on whole had provided them the necessary knowledge and skills in their preparation to be preschool teachers. Kathy noted:

I don’t think any one class could have completely given me the picture of what a child needs to learn and how they learn. It definitely took all the ones we talked about and the many more that we had to take on the side, that I feel really and truly gave me a picture of how children learn.

Kathy also added:

I definitely grew throughout the program; the different things...going in, even just to observe a teacher I felt kind of out of place at first, whereas, the more I did the more I learned. The more lessons I had written, the more I had implemented them, the more we talked about it in class; as I stepped into a classroom, or just being around children. I felt more capable, more prepared.

Mary offered her summary of her course work experience:

These college courses have been incredible, and have really helped me and influenced me. I love the knowledge of my professors. I love to have discussions with them and, you know, ask them different things, or if they have their own opinion that’s outside of the (text) book, or their own experiences or something.

Anne noted how she directly benefitted from her participation in the ECE program, through the application of skills and principles in her Head Start classroom:

Actually, everything that I've been able to learn from the classes I've been able to incorporate right away...once you have these building blocks (course work), then you go "Ok, now I know why he's doing that, so let's redirect; let's give him something else, you know, let's do an activity and let's get the wiggles out, and then let's go back and start over again."

Ashley added:

I felt like I was very open to what the teachers had to teach here, so I don't feel like they had to work very hard to, like, penetrate any blinders or anything like that. But I do feel like just because I took the courses, even my interactions—like I'm not nervous—I've never been nervous interacting with my nieces and nephews obviously, but I now notice what I'm saying and I feel like in each of my interactions with them I feel like I can teach them.

Ashley's final comments about her preparation in the ECE program was: "A year or two in college can make someone change completely, and I feel like I did that."

Analysis of Archival Documents

A number of documents were available for review and provided additional insight into the preservice teachers' experiences in the ECE program. The documents included a philosophy paper completed by each student the last semester of their program; a set of three Q-sorts (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2006) rating DAP beliefs, a digital copy of the students professional portfolio, and a completed evaluation rubric with the rating/score for each participant's professional portfolio. These documents were reviewed for pertinent information that could add to a better understanding of the participants' beliefs and thinking regarding their preparation in the ECE program.

Philosophy paper. This writing assignment (noted from the syllabus in EDEC 2720) required students to respond to the following prompts: What is teaching? What is learning? What is the role of the teacher in the classroom? What is the role of the learner?

What theoretical foundation represents your beliefs? A review of the philosophy papers from three of the four respondents (one student's paper was missing from her file), the following key ideas were noted:

- Children are precious and unique
- Children should direct learning; teachers are guides
- Discovery, hands on exploration is important
- Independence and self-regulation are important
- Children need to feel safe and secure in the classroom
- Children need positive relationships with adults
- Adults should model appropriate behaviors
- Children need opportunities to make choices
- Respect is important between teacher and children
- Teachers need to meet children individually
- Theoretical framework specifically referred to as “DAP” or “Constructivist”

These key concepts describe a child-centered viewpoint that: children are active learners; children require hands-on exploration and opportunities for choice; adults provide a safe environment and guide children's learning. All of the above principles are representative of the philosophy of DAP.

Professional portfolios. The ECE program requires a teaching portfolio at the completion of coursework. This portfolio is framed after the six NAEYC New Teacher Standards that are described as follows:

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning
2. Build Family and Community
3. Observing, Documenting and Assessing Children Development
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches
5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Effective Curriculum
6. Becoming a Professional. (NAEYC, 2009b)

For a complete description of these standards, see Appendix B. All ECE program courses included a requirement for students to reflect on two key assignments, previously selected by the ECE program committee (Appendix M). This required reflection provides

students the opportunity to practice writing about two standards at a time, in order to become familiar with them. During their last semester—as a capstone assignment—students are instructed how to complete the professional portfolio, by reflecting on all six standards as they complete the practicum experience. They then select an additional artifact and reflection from prior courses to complete the portfolio. They will include two artifacts and reflections for each standard in their portfolio binder. These twelve “papers” are part of the evaluation for the final graduation interview. All participants in this study completed the professional portfolio. A review of the participants’ binders showed that each binder included all of the required documents.

The overview was a one-page statement that described what the preservice students understood or believed about the meaning of the standard. In the portfolio binder, this was followed by an artifact (an assignment or work sample that demonstrated knowledge or skill for that specific standard). The students then completed a reflection about the artifact, making a connection to how that assignment demonstrated knowledge or skills developed in regards to the standard. The artifacts included papers, lesson plans, assessments and observations and other assignments completed during the program.

Two ECE professors rated the portfolios independently. Scoring for the professional portfolio reflected the student’s degree of ability to accomplish the tasks outlined on the evaluation form. The rubric defined what the score of 1-4 looks like. The descriptors shown in Table 8 are taken from the grading rubric. The complete rubric is found in Appendix N.

The evaluators agreed on a rating of 4 (proficient) for all overviews and

Table 8

Rating Scale for ECE Professional Portfolio Rubric

Level	Description
Level 1: Skills need improvement Score 1	Skills need improvement: Student's performance needs improvement. Student displays limited knowledge and/or is not able to perform the task. Think of the performance as being appropriate less than 69% of the time.
Level 2: Emerging skills Score 2	Student demonstrates emerging skills. Student partially meets the indicator and/or accomplishes the task(s) only part of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate approximately 70-79% of the time.
Level 3: Basic skills Score 3	Student demonstrates basic skills. Student generally meets the indicator and/or accomplishes the task most of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate approximately 80-94% of the time.
Level 4: Proficient Score 4	Student demonstrates proficient skills. Student consistently meets the indicator. He/she accomplishes the task almost all of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate approximately 95%-100% of the time.

Note. Scoring for the professional portfolio reflects the student's degree of ability to accomplish the tasks outlined on the evaluation form.

reflections for Anne. All of her reflections consistently demonstrated clear and thoughtful connection between her assignments and her understanding of the standards. Ashley and Mary received a four (proficient) on all standards from one evaluator, while the second evaluator rated both students with fours (proficient) in all areas except Standard 4, *Using Developmentally Effective Approaches* and Standard 5, *Using Content Knowledge to Build Effective Curriculum*. Ashley and Mary received threes (basic) for these two standards. Both evaluators scored Kathy's portfolio with fours, with the exception of a score of three (Basic) in Standard 4, *Using Developmentally Effective Approaches*, Standard 5, *Using Content Knowledge to Build Effective Curriculum*, and Standard 6 *Becoming a Professional*. In regard to professional preparation, the review of the

portfolio evaluations demonstrated the participant's overall proficiency in meeting the new teacher standards. The rating of three (basic) describes an 80-94% performance rating in the areas related to teaching approaches and building curriculum, and identified areas of somewhat weaker preparation.

Q-sorts. At the end of the final semester, prior to the exit interview, a set of three Q-Sorts were completed by all AS degree seeking students (Rimm-Kauffman et al., 2006). For each of the three sorts, 20 statements were listed. Respondents are asked to rank each statement from 1-20. These three scales allow students to prioritize their beliefs ordinarily on a scale of 1-20. They must rate all beliefs with a new number, and all 20 numbers must be used (i.e., they cannot give more than one statement the number 1). The three scales survey the following beliefs: Q-sort 1, characteristic of my approach of beliefs about students guidance and social development; Q-Sort 2, those practices that are essential and/or characteristic of my teaching; and Q-Sort 3, general characteristics of my belief system. Each scale uses similar terms: *very, characteristic, somewhat, hardly or least characteristic of their beliefs*. The top of the survey looked this this (see Table 9). For example, the bolded numbers in the scale (very, 1 2 3 4) represent the statements that were selected by the respondents as the four top beliefs. These top four beliefs were

Table 9

Q-Sort Rating Scale

Rating scale																			
Very				Characteristic				Somewhat				Hardly				Least			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

reviewed for this study. The statements that were assigned as 1, 2, 3, and 4 are detailed in the Tables 10-12, with the first belief listed as the top belief. The following three tables describe these top beliefs.

In regards to guiding students and their social development, all students reported beliefs that were identified by one of the others; five beliefs from the list of 20 are found overlapping between participants. Nevertheless, the overall focus for each denotes some subtle differences. Anne's approach to guidance had a strong focus on rules and teacher expectations. Mary focused on relationships and engaging children to prevent problems in the classroom. Kathy identified both relationship beliefs and the need for rules and

Table 10

Q-Sort 1: Top Four Responses—Characteristic of Approach or Beliefs About Student's Guidance and Social Development

Anne	Mary	Kathy	Ashley
Rules should be discussed and posted	If treated with respect, kindness and concern, there are less behavior problems	Students engaged in interesting problems and challenging activities tend to have few discipline problems	Monitoring students can prevent problematic situations
A classroom runs smoothly when there are clear expectations for behaviors	Students engaged in interesting problems and challenging activities tend to have few discipline problems	If treated with kindness and respect, concern, there are less behavior problems	Rules for students behaviors need to reinforced consistently
Self-monitoring behaviors are important for students to develop	Praise is an effective way to change student's behaviors	Self-monitoring behaviors are important for students to develop	A classroom runs smoothly when there are clear expectation for behavior
Rules for students behaviors need to reinforced consistently	A classroom runs smoothly when there are clear expectation for behavior	Rules for students behaviors need to reinforced consistently	A noisy classroom is okay as long as all the students are being productive

Table 11

Q-Sort-2: Top Four Responses—Those Practices that are Essential and/or Characteristic of My Teaching

Anne	Mary	Kathy	Ashley
Welcoming each students by name to class	Welcoming each students by name to class	Welcoming each students by name to class	Welcoming each students by name to class
Having a Morning routine	Having a Morning routine	Encouraging student's/providing feedback on processes of student's creations, not outcomes	Conducting business of the classroom following a set routine
Having a few students share something that has happened to them	Having a few students share something that has happened to them	Using a theme-based approach to instruction	Introducing new objects of new activities in the room through demonstration
Talking about our plan or schedule for the day	Permitting students to choose from a variety of activities	Reflecting on the content of an academic lesson and talking about what we learned	Permitting students to choose from a variety of activities

Table 12

Q-Sort 3: Top Four Response—Characteristic of My Belief System

Anne	Mary	Kathy	Ashley
Students need to feel safe and secure in the classroom	Students need to feel safe and secure in the classroom	Students learn beset when they have good role models for their behavior	Students need to feel safe and secure in the classroom
Students learn best when they have good role models for their behavior	Almost all students are equally likeable and enjoyable	Students need to be met where they are in terms of their ability	Students should feel as though they are known and recognized in the classroom
Students should feel as though they are known and recognized in the classroom	Students cannot be understood without knowing something about their families	Students learn best by being actively involved in lessons	Students meet challenges best when they feel their teachers care about them
Students need to have their strengths recognized to promote learning	Students should feel as though they are known and recognized in the classroom	Students need to feel safe and secure in the classroom	Each one of my students teaches me something

monitoring as a way to guide children. Ashley emphasized the need for teacher control through rules and expectations, but also expected a noisy classroom if children were actively engaged. The results from a review of the top four guidance beliefs demonstrates the student's desire for some control while recognizing children's needs.

In describing characteristics relating to teaching, all students chose "welcoming each student by name to class" as their number one belief. Several beliefs were overlapping between students, including having a routine, student sharing, and allowing for student choice in activities. Less agreement was found in other teaching approaches. This indicates a strong desire to connect to children. Their other choices still demonstrate some practices that are strongly connected to DAP (sharing experiences and allowing for student choice).

Again, students all agreed on a statement from the general belief section of the Q-Sorts. All chose a DAP principle "students need to feel safe and secure in the classroom"; this was the number one belief for three of the students, while Kathy noted it as fourth in her top four. Two other beliefs—those regarding good role models and positive recognition of children—were shared between students. Other selected beliefs—those related to a child-centered view—demonstrated a high regard for children, and connected to DAP principles.

In summary, these Q-Sorts required students to review all 20 of the statements in the survey to identify those that represented their strongest beliefs. Generally, their choices were similar to the other respondents and usually centered on the needs of children. Overall, their choices reflected beliefs that connected to the DAP philosophy.

Focus on Developmentally Appropriate Practices

In order to check my own beliefs as a researcher, I purposefully chose to avoid the term DAP in the interview questions. However, the philosophy of DAP was openly explored if and when the respondent broached the topic. This last section of findings reports the results of a second coding of the interview transcripts, specifically in relation to DAP. When originally coding the transcripts, I noted that I used DAP as an initial code for a variety of comments. I determined to use the textbook that the students read and review in three courses: *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6* (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). A list was created with the key principles of DAP as described in the first three chapters. (See Appendix O for a brief description of the nine guidelines.) The transcript was coded with the numbers 1-9. The number in Table 13 represents the number of times the DAP idea/principle was mentioned by the student.

The purpose of this coding was to visually observe the connections made to this philosophy. This coding revealed that the study participants responded favorably regarding DAP principles and referred to most of the nine principles repeatedly. Two students (Anne and Kathy) did not use the term “developmentally appropriate practice” during the course of the interview, however, their numbers reflect that the philosophy was embedded in their responses. Mary and Ashley freely used the term in describing their beliefs and understanding.

Table 13

Frequency of DAP Responses

Participant	Participant identified a DAP principle specifically	Number used in coding								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Age appropriate	Individually appropriate	Socially and culturally appropriate	Responsive relationships	Active learning environment	Meaningful experiences	Construct own understanding	Challenging and achievable goals	Meet children individually and as group	
Student 1	no	3	5	3	7	2	6	2	1	1
Student 2	yes	6	5	1	2	6	3	0	0	4
Student 3	no	7	9	5	8	9	7	0	1	2
Student 4	yes	3	12	2	9	3	4	0	0	0

Summary of Findings

The findings presented here reveal preservice students who favorably viewed their participation in an early childhood teacher education program. They identified a variety of skills and knowledge learned through coursework and experiences with children. Students described their own professional development, both in terms of understanding the NAEYC New Teacher Standards, and the assignments that they created to meet the standards. They identified this connection as a part of their professional development.

Archival evidence also contributed to a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge that are strongly held beliefs of the participants. A review of their teaching philosophy confirmed many of the interview comments and their mostly child-centered beliefs. The Q-Sorts showed mostly child-centered beliefs and a strong agreement between many of the statements by participants. A review of the evaluations each participant received for the completed professional portfolio showed mostly proficient skills in meeting the NAEYC New Teacher Standards, and is evidence of the development of professional skills.

As the theoretical lens for this study is DAP, I coded the written transcripts a second time to identify specific evidence of these beliefs. A review of this procedure clearly demonstrates that regardless of whether they used the term DAP in their discussion, or whether they specifically identified and discussed the philosophy, all study participants demonstrated a clear understanding of most of the DAP principles and regarded them as part of their own belief system. These findings are more fully discussed in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate early childhood preservice students' perspectives of their professional growth and development during their participation in a two-year early childhood program. The theoretical framework for my study, and the lens through which I viewed the findings, was the philosophy of DAP. This philosophy adheres to child development as the foundation from which to understand children. From this foundation, the focus on the needs of individual children is a dominant belief. Teaching practices that support the child as an active learner are endorsed. When teachers apply DAP principles, they promote opportunities for children to explore and experience their environment and to meet and achieve challenging, yet achievable goals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). As I presented my findings, I offered the voices of the preservice students sharing their perspectives. I also recognized how my own viewpoint of the early childhood field may have influenced the analysis.

This chapter will begin with a brief review of the study results and my research questions. The review will be followed by a presentation of my interpretations of the findings. I will conclude with a discussion of the study's value in understanding the ECE preservice students and the implications for future research.

Review of Study Findings

After analyzing interviews and documents from faculty and students in a specific early childhood teacher education program, I was able to answer to the following

questions.

1. What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills necessary to teach young children?
2. How do they describe their professional preparation resulting from participation in their Early Childhood Teacher Education Program?

Question 1

In answering the first question, seven themes were identified that represent the knowledge and skills that students described as necessary to teach young children: *child development, learning environment, guidance, curriculum, teaching, assessment, and experience with children*. All themes represent both knowledge about the topic and skills the students may have reported developing in each of the areas.

Students described the importance of understanding what children are like at different ages, and how that information can assist them in lesson planning, and in their interaction with children. Two participants felt strongly about the responsibility of the teacher to create a learning environment that meets emotional needs of children and provides safety and security. They believed that classrooms for young children should be child-friendly, and set up with the child's needs in mind. They also mentioned the value of a structured environment so that learning can take place effectively.

All preservice students noted the importance of positive guidance in their interactions with young children. This included positive discipline, appropriate verbal interactions and mutual respect. They believed that when appropriate guidance techniques were employed, they would be able to meet individual needs.

Students identified the importance of exploring, experimenting, and play as a way for children to best learn. They related their own experiences with learning to write lesson plans, a challenging experience at first, but easier and better with time and experience. Students also noted that children's *experiences* are more valuable than *products*. Additionally, they indicated that some structure in preparing curriculum can also lead to more freedom for children.

Students reflected on observations of other teachers and their own teaching experiences, and they noted improvement with additional experience. They viewed teaching as an opportunity to connect to children; when the needs of the children are met, the teaching (and planning) becomes less about the teacher and more about the child. In connection to teaching, students described the value of assessment for gaining a better understanding of children, and then using the assessment information to plan curriculum.

Whether through prior experiences, or within the field or practicum settings, all students noted increased learning and understanding from their interactions with children. They also reported that their learning in ECE courses was more deeply understood and internalized when actually applied in a classroom setting, whether guidance strategies, lesson plans, or general knowledge about children.

In summary, students were able to identify knowledge they believed was necessary to work with young children. They described the necessity of knowing and understanding child development, guidance strategies, and how to create a nurturing environment. They generally understood the value of writing appropriate lessons, and were able to identify skills learned that would benefit them in a classroom setting:

applying guidance strategies, creating lessons to engage and promote learning for children, using assessments appropriately, and reflecting on their experiences to improve skills.

Question 2

To answer the second question, three themes were identified that best describe students feelings about their professional development: *Reflection, the NAEYC New Teacher Standards and Becoming a Professional*. All themes provided insight for how the students perceived their professional development.

Students noted the importance of thinking about what they had learned, observed, or practiced. Reflection helped to clarify understanding about different aspects of their ECE experience, providing growth, and allowing for increased understanding and improved teaching. Developing the skills of reflection was also a benefit when completing the various elements of the professional portfolio.

All students reported value reflecting on the NAEYC standards. Developing the ability to reflect on course assignments and connect their learning to a set of professional standards (linked to a national accrediting body) increased their feelings of being part of the teaching profession. They were able to use their reflections as “proof” that they were ready for the classroom, and in their portfolio, they were able to see the evidence of all they had accomplished through their participation in the program. Additionally, meeting professional standards gave credence to their beliefs that teaching young children is important and has value.

All participants reflected about professional development generally and reported

that they grew professionally from their participation in the ECE program. They described increased confidence in their teaching abilities, and in their new understanding about children and teaching. With this increased confidence, they described themselves as “not just a preschool teacher...I am professional,” or “it is not just “babysitting.” This confidence was also expressed in feeling of being ready to be in the classroom, ready to teach children, ready to tell others what they will do in a classroom, and why. Their final responses emphasized that the ECE courses as a whole provided them the knowledge and skills that they would need to be successful. In summary, one participant stated: “A year or two in college can make someone change completely, and I feel like I did that.”

Discussion

Student and Faculty Perceptions

Generally, perspectives offered by the faculty also appeared in the students' responses. Both faculty and students were adamant regarding principles of child development and the importance of knowing children individually. Isenburg (2001) identified teaching preservice students child development as one of the most important responsibilities an early childhood teacher educator has. She also noted that to build this strong knowledge base, students need to be immersed in observations and field opportunities. The ECE program coordinator designed a variety of ways for students to learn about young children, particularly in the Birth to 8 course. Students responded favorably to the field opportunities they participated in and made connections to their new understanding about children.

The ECE faculty discussed the importance of creating an appropriate environment in terms of being warm and inviting, and even labeled the environment as the *third teacher*, with the implication that the environment serves as a teaching tool. Student responses showed that these beliefs from the faculty were accepted. They most strongly connected to the emotional tone of a classroom, and agreed that children should feel safe and secure. They believed that this security was essential for learning to occur.

The ECE faculty agreed that children benefitted from teachers who use teaching approaches that include consistent expectations, positive verbal and nonverbal interactions, and other teacher behaviors that create a classroom community. Students were similarly united in regarding appropriate interactions with children as important teacher skills. Students connected readily to the training on guidance practices and accepted this instruction as an important part of their newly gained knowledge. Students internalized these positive guidance principles while interacting with children during their classroom fieldwork. As they reflected on what they learned from their experiences with children and felt success from implementing positive techniques, they identified positive guidance as a new part of their teaching persona.

The ECE faculty also expressed the importance of hands-on, concrete experiences as best for young children. Additionally, they noted that children's interests can drive curriculum. Similarly, students seemed to readily adopt these methods of teaching children. As they reflected on experiences planning and implementing lessons with children, they began to see the importance of engaging children in the lesson, and adjusted their plans in ways that encouraged children to be involved and engaged.

The ECE faculty believed that the NAEYC new teacher standards were important to the program and served to signify that the program operates under professional guidelines. They also felt these standards helped students develop professional skills. Some of the faculty understood the standards that were connected to their courses, but they did not necessarily conceptualize the overall portfolio process. However, because the students were immersed in the complete process of developing their portfolios, they displayed a fuller understanding of the NAEYC new teacher standards, and viewed the standards as a mark of professionalism that identified them as part of an important professional organization.

Neither faculty nor students articulated a clear understanding of teaching strategies. Faculty made brief references to the use of strategies when they mentioned a continuum of teaching strategies taught in the program, although they did not delineate any of them. Faculty defined one approach as using open-ended materials so children could explore and learn by trial and error. A student noted the value of modeling as a strategy, but little description was offered about any other specific teaching strategies. Students used vague terms like *techniques* and *styles* without further clarification.

Also related to teaching is the content of the lesson instruction. Faculty briefly touched on content areas (math, science, etc.), whereas, students did not address content areas when exploring their experiences with lesson planning or teaching. This interesting finding has been noted by other researchers. Bornfreund (2012) reported concerns about a dilemma sometimes seen in preservice students preparing for the early primary grades. She noted that many preservice teachers can demonstrate their knowledge about how

young children learn but lack content knowledge necessary for the early grades. Other preservice students have a strong understanding of the knowledge and skills that need to be taught, but they lack the understanding of how to impart this information to children.

The preservice students in this study appeared to have a solid understanding of how children learn and develop, but they reported less knowledge about what should be taught. This could be due to an actual deficit in the students' understanding of content areas because there is limited course time spent in content areas. EDEC 2620 *Early Childhood Curriculum* covers all content areas with the exception of literacy (which is addressed in EDEC 2640). This allows three credit hours to address math, science, social studies, large and small motor skills and the arts. Each content area offers only an overview of information, lacking the depth that may be necessary for students to feel confident regarding content. Maxwell and colleagues (2006) noted that approximately 50% of programs offering associate degrees ($n = 741$) devote an entire course to separate content areas, such as literacy, math, science, physical development. This particular study (Maxwell et al., 2006) did not separate AAS/AS programs; AAS programs had fewer GE requirements, thereby allowing time for additional program courses. It is possible that given additional time in content areas, preservice students may cover this topic more fully, and perhaps describe it as important knowledge. Another possible explanation is a failure to adequately explore content knowledge during the interview process.

Assessment was important to both faculty and students. One of the program's requirements is to complete the assessment course concurrently with the practicum experience, which was a deliberate program decision (see Appendix J). This connects to

the importance of ECE program faculty thoughtfully planning learning opportunities for their students (Isenburg, 2001). Additionally, faculty noted that assessment should guide planning. One student also noted the value of learning about assessment while interacting with children. She learned to use her assessment data to create lesson plans that met the needs of individual children, which led to additional data collection. Other students also addressed assessment in terms of gaining a better understanding of children individually in order to appropriately plan instruction.

The faculty discussion did not directly address the importance of early childhood classroom field assignments. However, program documents identified field experiences in all required ECE courses (65 hours) and the practicum (90 hours). This communicates the faculty's belief in the importance of interactions with children. An adjunct faculty member was also the practicum cooperating teacher for all practicum students. Classroom interactions and modeled behaviors by this instructor reflected DAP practices. The purposeful decision to place all practicum students with an adjunct faculty member in her pre-k public school classroom links to the importance of carefully choosing field settings (Isenburg, 2001). Students had high regard for the experiences they had while completing the practicum. This final teaching opportunity fortified many of the beliefs and practices they had learned and developed.

In summary, the students understood and accepted most of the strongly held beliefs of the ECE faculty. Some areas (strategies, content, diverse learners) that received less attention from the students during the interview could be the result of a lack of sophistication or not enough time spent in the early childhood field to fully value some of

the content presented to them. Time and experience often provide the perspective necessary for greater understanding or to enhance appreciation for previous training or knowledge. Sometimes the “Ah ha” moments come much later when applying newly learned skills. When students or faculty offered a less detailed view of their knowledge or perceptions (for example content areas), a deficit in instruction (faculty) or understanding (students) may be indicated. Another explanation could be that the concept was not fully explored during the interviews.

Connection to DAP

The philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice has enjoyed prominence in the early childhood profession for over 25 years (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). While the principles originated from the need to define professional standards (Seefeldt, 1988) for the development of ECE teacher accreditation, they grew into a set of ideals that are practiced beyond the accreditation needs and into early childhood classrooms, not only nationwide but in early childhood settings throughout the world: Taiwan (Lee & Lin, 2013), Beijing (Hu, 2012), Greece (Sakellariou & Rentzou, 2011), and Jordan (Abu-Jaber et al., 2010).

Approximately 77% of early childhood teacher education program in the US find the DAP principles valuable to their programs (Hyson et al., 2009).

In this section, I will explore connections between the philosophy of DAP, the ECE teacher education program, and the preservice students. To frame the discussion, I will employ the key principles used in the NAEYC text most widely used in this specific ECE program: *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for*

Teachers of Children 3-6 (Bredekamp & Copple, 2006). I condensed the key principles from pages 3-17 to identify the main beliefs taught to students in the ECE program (Appendix O).

The core considerations were as follows:

1. Consider what is age appropriate-that is based on what we know about the development and learning of children within a given age.
2. Consider what is individually appropriate-that is, attuned to each child in all of his or her individuality.
3. Consider what is appropriate to the social, cultural context in which children live. (pp. 9-13)

These three considerations were taught/reviewed in several ECE courses. From the interviews and documents, students most often identified with the first and second core considerations. They often expressed the necessity of understanding what children are like before being able to adequately teach them. Along with describing *ages* and *stages* as important, they also frequently identified practices that focused on the individual child's needs. Developing skills of assessment appeared to enhance their understanding of the child individually, and the assessment data led to lesson plans that better met individual needs. The students did not mention much about children in relation to their background and cultural contexts (core consideration three).

The course EDEC 2300 *Young Diverse Learners* addressed cultural context specifically, but this class or course content was not addressed or explored by any of the students. Again this could be the result of a lack of sophistication, or students not fully appreciating the importance of the topic. Whitebook and colleagues (2012) noted the value of diversity topics being included in a variety of ECE program courses. If diversity

topics had been embedded in multiple courses, as Whitebook suggested, students likely would have considered this core consideration during the interviews. Another aspect to note is that both the students and faculty in this ECE teacher education program represent a predominately white, middle class, female group. This “advantaged” group may not recognize cultural issues as being different than the second core consideration, which is to understand children individually. This could lead to a diminished understanding or valuing of children’s cultural context. It is also possible that faculty failed to instruct students adequately about this topic or the subject was not adequately explored during the interview. This particular aspect of DAP was identified as a concern by critics that challenged the philosophy of DAP as not inclusive and lacking in understanding of children from diverse backgrounds and cultures (Edwards, 2003; Lubeck, 1998; O’Brien, 1996; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2006).

The second set of DAP principles described how children learn (Bredekamp & Copple, 2006):

- Relationships with responsive adults
- Active hands-on involvement
- Meaningful experiences
- Constructing their understanding of the world (pp. 15-18)

Students made the strongest connection to the first three principles. They strongly identified with the importance of developing relationships with children through positive guidance strategies. They believed that these relationships with children were the foundation for teaching. They also understood that as a teacher, they would need to plan experiences that allowed for children to be actively engaged. It was viewed as a measure of teaching success if children were ‘involved’ in the lesson. Meaningful experiences

again connected to understanding individual children; it related to a child's prior knowledge and experiences. The idea of helping children construct understanding of their world did not emerge from the interviews. Again, the student's novice level of understanding could have hindered their ability to internalize this concept. From my own experience with students in the ECE program, I have found that many struggle with the concept of *constructing knowledge*. This finding could demonstrate a lack of understanding of how children can construct knowledge or a failure of faculty to instruct students adequately on this principle. Exploring this topic further with students would likely provide added insight.

The last two DAP concepts to address from Bredekamp and Copple (2006) are:

- Meet children where they are, as individuals and as a group
- Help children reach challenging and achievable goals that contribute to his or her ongoing development and learning (p. 3)

Students strongly connected to the first principle, "meeting children where they are individually and as a group." As previously discussed, students highly valued an understanding of child development and individual children's needs. They also recognized that they need to meet group needs when constructing lessons—activities that will engage all the children they are teaching. They identified using assessment information to meet children needs and plan lessons that would support their development. This understanding of assessment connects to the principle of "helping children meet challenging and achievable goals." Students understood the notion of helping children develop and improve skills, but they did not explore the concept of "challenging or achievable goals," nor what this would look like when planning lessons.

It is likely that as preservice students with beginning skills in creating and implementing lesson plans, the concept of *challenging and achievable* may be a bit beyond their grasp. Again, this could also be related to a weakness in program delivery or not exploring the topic in the interviews.

In summary, the program under consideration in the current study describes itself as an advocate of DAP. After a thorough review of program documents and interviews with students and faculty, both faculty and students identify strongly with most precepts of DAP. The faculty's responses about their ECE program and ECE program documents confirm a purposeful and thoughtful implementation of DAP throughout course work, textbooks, and field experiences with children. Students who participated in the ECE program either explicitly or implicitly identified a positive connection to the principles expressed by DAP. Any weaknesses in understanding DAP principles (as previously described) could be valuable topics for the ECE faculty in future program discussions.

Voice of the Student: How I Became A Professional

In this last section, I wish to finish with my overall impressions of the students' experiences. What were the experiences that they described as being most supportive in their professional development?

Value of field experiences. The number and type of clinical experiences vary in ECE teacher education programs, and the terms *fieldwork*, *practicum* and *student teaching* have been used interchangeably (Whitebook et al., 2012). Maxwell and colleagues (2006) noted that only 4% of ECE associated degree program do not require a

practicum experience. This reveals the value a majority of programs place on preservice students interacting with children. Isenburg (2001) identified classroom experiences as one of the top measures of a high quality ECE teacher education program.

The opportunity to participate in early childhood classrooms and interact with young children greatly impacted the preservice students' development of professional knowledge and understanding. They learned appropriate teaching methods from skilled teachers in high quality classrooms. They also observed poor examples of classroom environments and inappropriate teaching behaviors, which allowed them to reflect and evaluate what they would do differently. They valued the opportunity to practice principles learned in their ECE courses. They discovered firsthand how to interact with children and how to implement instruction. They reflected on their own interactions with children and their individual attempts to construct and implement learning opportunities. These experiences provided a safe opportunity to develop the confidence and skills that they identified with becoming a teacher. At the completion of their coursework and experiences, they recognized themselves as professionals.

Their words. One of the best ways to gain a better understanding of another individual is to listen to them. Listening to my students describe their experiences in the ECE teacher education program has been gratifying and instructional. The general consensus from students was that the ECE program courses as a whole influenced their understanding of young children and teaching. Each participant described acquiring positive experiences as they gained new knowledge. They described enjoying a variety of courses and gaining useful knowledge applicable to the classroom. They also noted

personal growth, and that views about teaching young children evolved. The general feeling of the students regarding their participation in the ECE program was that they believed the combination of course content and field opportunities gave them the skills they believed they needed to be teachers of young children. Consequently these beliefs, gave them the sense of becoming a professional.

Impact of the Research Study

The findings of this research study have the potential to provide the greatest value to the program under investigation. I have identified several benefits of this investigation to the early childhood teacher education program: the value of meeting periodically as a faculty to discuss program philosophy and goals, sharing student professional portfolio documents with faculty, and using student responses to review strengths and weakness of course objectives and delivery.

Participating in the faculty focus group and reviewing all aspects of a program that I was already intimately familiar with was both revealing and satisfying. I gained a clearer understanding of my colleagues' beliefs and opinions regarding children, ECE, and our teacher education program. The meeting was an opportunity for the faculty to engage in a lively discussion, and those that attended expressed their pleasure in meeting with others and sharing their opinions and ideas. This was the first time in the fourteen years of my employment at the university that we met as faculty to discuss our thoughts and beliefs. Periodic meetings as a faculty to discuss our courses, our experiences with students, and challenges and successes could be beneficial in maintaining program goals

and objectives. Often faculty meetings address pressing issues and topics of immediacy; meeting every few years for a discussion of philosophy and beliefs could be valuable in staying abreast of faculty perceptions and could help us avoid becoming stagnant or feeling isolated.

The professional portfolio is an integral part of the ECE program, and students responded that it was important in their development as a professional. One finding from the faculty focus group was that most of the ECE instructors' knowledge and understanding about the New Teacher Standards focused on their own individual assignments. There was some lack of knowledge about the project beyond what each instructor taught in his or her individual courses. Currently two professors review the completed portfolios. Sharing the completed portfolios with the entire faculty would provide the all instructors with the big picture; they would see how their contribution in teaching the individual assignments in each course leads to a completed binder of which most students are proud. This review all of the assignments could provide insight and could strengthen their contribution when teaching this important task.

An additional benefit from the research is the opportunity to use student responses to review strengths and weakness of the ECE program. The major themes were: *child development, environment, guidance, curriculum, teaching, assessment, and experiences with children*. Each of these themes helped describe student perceptions of skills or knowledge required for working with young children. These themes could be a starting place to begin discussions about course content and delivery. A conversation about the topics students *did not* discuss or reflect on would also be a valuable discussion,

particularly regarding content areas, the use of specific teaching strategies, and diversity issues, as was uncovered in the findings. In addition, the students' strong opinions of their overall perception of their professional development could be reviewed to maintain and strengthen program components that lead to students positive feelings about their participation in the ECE teacher education program.

Implications of the Research Study

This research study focused on a single ECE teacher education program and the small sample of participants were purposefully selected. These findings are not generalizable to other ECE teacher education programs. This study has value to the program under investigation, giving a closer personal view of their students' learning experience. This data can benefit the specific program in evaluating their own goals for their preservice students. While there has been a decrease in research regarding DAP, gaining a greater understanding of the preservice teacher experience can be valuable to other teacher preparation programs, regardless of the program philosophy. Gaining an understanding of the students' perspectives can aid individual ECE program efforts to adjust requirements, content, or assessments to meet the needs of individual students.

Conclusion

Little information is available regarding ECE associate degree-seeking students. Upon graduation, many of these new teachers are employed in a variety of programs that serve young children (Maxwell et al., 2006). Additional research on this group of

preservice teachers could add to the body of knowledge about the associate degree seeking students. As interest in promoting early childhood/pre-K programs for young children continues to be discussed nationwide, the need for trained individuals to support these classrooms will also increase. Teacher educators are often interested in finding ways to improve program delivery, and student voices can provide an intimate look at how students perceive their professional development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

DAP: Guiding Principles that Inform Practice

DAP: Guiding Principles that Inform Practice

1. All the domains of development and learning—physical, social and emotional and cognitive—are important, and they are closely interrelated. Children’s development and learning in one domain influence and are influenced by what by what takes place I other domains.
2. Many aspects of children’s learning and development follow well documented sequences, with later abilities, skills and knowledge building on those already acquired.
3. Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of a child’s individual functioning.
4. Development and learning result from a dynamic and continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience.
5. Early experiences have profound effects, both cumulative and delayed, on a child’s development and learning; and optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning to occur.
6. Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation and symbolic or representational capacities.
7. Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive relationships with peers.
8. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
9. Always mentally active in seeking to understand the world around them, children learn in a variety of ways; a wide range of teach strategies and interactions are effective in supporting all these kinds of learning.
10. Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence.
11. Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery, and ski when they have had many opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.
12. Children’s experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning, such as persistence, initiative, and flexibility; in turn these dispositions and behaviors affect their learning and development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 11-15).

Appendix B

NAEYC New Teacher Standards

NAEYC STANDARDS for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

Standard 1 *Promoting child development and learning*

Students prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children=s characteristics and needs, and of the multiple interacting influences on children=s development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

Standard 2 *Building family and community relationships*

Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children’s families and communities. They know about, understand and value the importance and complex characteristics of children=s families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children=s development and learning.

Standard 3 *Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families*

Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.

Standard 4 *Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and families*

Students prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending in children’s ages, characteristics and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundations for their work with young children and families. Students know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child’s development and learning

Standard 5 *Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum*

Students prepared in early childhood programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every child. Students understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in an early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their

understanding. Students use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula that promote comprehensive development and learning outcomes for every child.

Standard 6 *Becoming a professional*

Students prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

Key Elements of NAEYC STANDARDS for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2009)

Standard 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning

- 1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs
- 1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
- 1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments

Standard 1 Building Family and Community Relationships

- 2a. Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
- 2b. Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful reciprocal relationships
- 2c. Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning

Standard 3 Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young children and Families

- 3a. Understanding the goals, benefits and uses of assessment
- 3b. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues
- 3c. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches
- 3d. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child

Standard 4 Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families

- 4a. Understand positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundations of their work with children
- 4b. Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education
- 4c. Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches

4d. Reflecting in their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child

Standard 5 Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

5a. Understand content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines

5b. Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools and structures of content areas or academic disciplines

5c. Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design implement and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child

Standard 6 Becoming a Professional

6a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

6b. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

6c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

6d. Integrating knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives in early education

6e. Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

Appendix C
Teacher Education Survey

5. Please list any **Paid** work experience with young children.

Age of children (0-8 years)	Type of employment: Nanny, daycare, preschool, Head Start, public school, etc.	length of employment months/years

6. List any **volunteer** experiences with young children:

Age of children (0-8 years)	Type of setting: daycare, preschool, Head Start, public school, etc.	length of service months/years

Appendix D
Q-Sort Surveys 1, 2, and 3

Q-sort 1

UV ID# _____

THE ITEM IS: (very, characteristic, somewhat, hardly, least) TYPICAL OF MY APPROACH OR BELIEFS ABOUT: STUDENT GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

You are ranking the items --most to least--from 1 to 20 in the shaded column.

VERY	CHARACTERISTIC	SOMEWHAT	HARDLY	LEAST
← 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20 →
a. The primary goal in dealing with students' behavior is to establish and maintain control.				
b. A noisy classroom is okay as long as all the students are being productive.				
c. Students must be kept busy doing activities or they soon get into trouble.				
d. When students are engaged in interesting problems and challenging activities, they tend to have very few discipline problems.				
e. Proper control of a class is apparent when the students work productively while I am out of the room (either briefly or when a substitute is present).				
f. Monitoring students can prevent problematic situations.				
g. Peer interactions are best left to recess and snack time.				
h. The curriculum and class schedule need to be prioritized over students' specific interests.				
i. A classroom runs smoothly when there are clear expectations for behavior.				
j. Classroom rules should be discussed and posted.				
k. Self-monitoring behaviors (or self-regulation) are important skills for students to develop.				
l. It is important to respect students' autonomy and expect them to act in a responsible manner.				
m. Students should try to solve conflicts on their own before going to the teacher.				
n. Rules for the students' classroom behavior need to be reinforced consistently.				
o. Praise from me is an effective way to change students' behavior.				
p. Students learn best in primarily teacher-directed classrooms.				
q. If I treat students with respect, kindness, and concern, there are less behavior problems.				
r. Verbal punishment is an unacceptable means of controlling students' behavior; I believe it is more important to use only positive management techniques.				
s. If I anticipate problems before they happen and discuss them with students, I have fewer discipline problems.				
t. Extrinsic rewards for desirable behaviors (e.g. stickers, candy bars, etc.) undermine students' motivation; it is better not to give such rewards at all.				

Q-sort 2

UV ID# _____

THOSE PRACTICES THAT ARE *(most, essential, somewhat, less, least)* TYPICAL AND/OR CHARACTERISTIC OF MY TEACHING

You are ranking the items—most to least—from 1 to 20 in the shaded column.

MOST	ESSENTIAL	SOMEWHAT	LESS	LEAST
← 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20 →
a. Having a morning routine.				
b. Talking about our plan or schedule for the day.				
c. Welcoming each student by name to class.				
d. Doing an activity to create a sense of community.				
e. Talking about current events.				
f. Using hand signals.				
g. Having at least a few students share something that has happened to them.				
h. Discussing a written announcement or message created by the teacher.				
i. Conducting the business of the classroom (e.g. collecting lunch or milk money) following a set routine.				
j. Reflecting and talking about something, such as a social interaction, that “worked” or “didn’t work” in our class.				
k. Reflecting on the content of an academic lesson and talking about what we learned.				
l. Using drill and recitation for factual information (math facts, etc.).				
m. Modeling behaviors for students.				
n. Introducing new objects or new activities in the room through demonstration.				
o. Using work sheets.				
p. Permitting students to choose from a variety of activities.				
q. Encouraging students and giving feedback that focuses on the processes of students’ creations or thinking, not the outcomes or the solution.				
r. Using whole group instruction.				
s. Using a theme-based approach to instruction.				
t. Working on group projects.				

Appendix E
Interview Guidelines for Students

Guided interview questions: Preservice students

1. Tell me about yourself and why you chose early childhood education as your major.
2. Describe any early childhood courses that have influenced your understanding about young children and how they learn.

Probing statements might include “tell me more about that” “give me a specific example”

3. Can you share any examples of specific experiences that influences your knowledge and skill in working with children?

Probing statements: “tell me more about that” “give me a specific example”

4. What is your understanding of NAYEC New teacher standards? How did you develop this understanding?

Define only if necessary: handout available for prompt

5. When you began you early childhood program (Intro to Early childhood Education) you completed 3 q-sort ratings on various aspects of teaching. You rated the following as very important. (Example.) Now that you have finished most of your coursework, what are your views now about teaching, philosophy, guidance)

Probing questions--Explore why choices were “very” important
Possible follow up with any written responses on q-sorts)

6. How has you college experience influence your view about working with young children?

Possible probing questions---Explore any specific class experiences

Possible follow-up questions: How prepared do you feel you are to work in a classroom with young children? As a head Teacher? As an aide?

7. How would you describe your overall preparation (from your college experience) to become an early childhood classroom teacher?

Possible probing question---What do you believe/understand now that you did not believe/understand before beginning program?

Appendix F

IRB Form for Student Participants



Page 1 of 3
*Date Created: 11.15.2010

INFORMED CONSENT (student)
A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

Introduction/ Purpose: You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in the study, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted, and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear, or if you need more information.

Professor Martha Dever and graduate student Tracy Sermon in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about AS degree seeking preservice teachers in Early Childhood Education. The purpose of this study is to discover how preservice teachers perceive their own professional preparation. Of particular interest are individual explanations of how they have developed towards acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach young children. You have been asked to take part because you are a preservice teacher in the Early Childhood Teacher education program at Utah Valley University. Approximately 15 students/5 faculty will be invited to participate. There will be approximately 6 preservice student participants and 5 faculty staff participants selected. There will be approximately 11 total participants in this research.

Procedures If you agree to be in this research study, the following will happen to you. .

1. Tracy Sermon or Genan Anderson will conduct a one hour interview with you concerning your experience as a preservice teacher in Utah Valley University's early childhood education program. If needed for clarification or additional insight, a second follow up interview of approximately one-half hour could occur about 2-4 weeks later later. The interviews will be audio taped for later transcription.
2. You will be asked questions such as: *Describe any early childhood courses that have influenced your understanding about young children and how they learn* and *What is your understanding of the NAEYC New Teacher Standards?*

New Findings During the course of this research study, you will be informed of any significant new findings (either good or bad), such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participation in the research, or new alternatives to participation that might cause you to change your mind about continuing in the study. If new information is obtained that is relevant or useful to you, or if the procedures and/or methods change at any time throughout this study, your consent to continue participating in this study will be obtained again.

Risks: Participation in this research study may involve some added risks or discomforts.



Page 2 of 3
*Date Created:11.15.2010

INFORMED CONSENT (student)
A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

This study is considered of minimal risk. These risks are similar to those you experience when disclosing work related information to others. You may feel a certain amount of discomfort during the interview because the researchers ask that the interview be audio taped for eventual transcription. Your privacy and confidentiality is extremely important and every precaution will be taken to ensure that the data collected will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

Benefits : There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from these procedures. The investigator, however, may learn more about the perceptions of preservice teachers and how they describe their own professional development. In addition, the field of educational research and society will benefit from gaining a better understanding of the AS degree seeking preservice teacher.

Explanation & offer to answer questions: Tracy Sermon has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Tracy Sermon at 801-863-8575, or Professor Martha Dever at 435-797-2225.

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence: Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits. You may be withdrawn from this study without your consent by the investigator if the interviews are not completed.

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigator and Genan Anderson will have access to the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet in Tracy Sermon's locked office. Your privacy and safety are a primary responsibility of the researchers in this study. Your name will only be known to the researchers and Genan Anderson. When the audio tape is transcribed, you will be assigned a pseudonym so that those transcripts will not contain your name. Personal, identifiable information including the audiotapes, transcripts and any other identifiable information, including the pseudonym, will be kept for one year will be destroyed.

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at USU has approved this research study. If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email irb@usu.edu. If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator to obtain information or to offer input.



School of Teacher Education
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2805 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-2805
Telephone: (435) 797-2225



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INFORMED CONSENT (student)
A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

Copy of consent You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Investigator Statement "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Signature of PI & student researcher

Principal Investigator
Dr. Martha Dever, EdD
435-797-2225
Martha.dever@usu.edu

Student Researcher
Tracy sermon
801-863-8575
tracy.sermon@uvu.edu

Signature of Participant By signing below, I agree to participate.

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix G
Contact Summary Form

Contact Summary Form

Student Interview
 Student: _____

Date: _____
 Interview # _____

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?
2. Summarize the information you got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions; impressions.

ECE courses that influenced understanding about young children/how they learn	
Examples of specific experiences that influenced knowledge/skill	
NAEYC new teacher standards-understanding	
Q-sort response	
How college experience influenced views	
Any follow up questions	

3. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact? (Including informant’s manner, behavior, ability to respond to questions during interview, etc.).
4. What new or remaining questions do you have in considering any additional contact with this informant?

Appendix H

IRB Form for Faculty Participants



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INFORMED CONSENT (faculty)
A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

Introduction/ Purpose: You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in the study, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted, and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear, or if you need more information.

Professor Martha Dever and graduate student Tracy Sermon in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about AS degree seeking preservice teachers in Early Childhood Education at Utah Valley University. The purpose of this study is to discover how preservice teachers perceive their own professional preparation. Of particular interest are individual explanations of how preservice teachers have developed towards acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach young children. You have been asked to take part because you are a member of the Early Childhood department at Utah Valley University. A one-hour faculty/staff focus group will be conducted. This will consist of semi-structured questions about the program philosophy, courses, assignments, and knowledge of how NAEYC professional standards are incorporated into the ECE program. This data will provide an understanding of the faculty/staff perspective of the early childhood program. Approximately 15 students/5 faculty will be invited to participate. There will be approximately 6 preservice student participants and 5 faculty staff participants selected. There will be approximately 11 total participants in this research.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this research study, the following will happen to you.

Tracy Sermon will facilitate a one hour focus group with the Early Childhood faculty and staff. You are invited to share experiences as a member of the ECE department in Utah Valley University's early childhood education program. The focus group discussion will be audio taped for later transcription. The discussion will focus on the philosophy of the early childhood program--what are our beliefs about children, teaching, guidance, curriculum and the classroom learning environment?

Possible questions could include:

How do we incorporate NAEYC new teacher standards into our individual courses?

How do the experiences we provide in our courses help our preservice teachers develop skills and knowledge to be teachers of young children?



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INFORMED CONSENT (faculty)
A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

New Findings: During the course of this research study, you will be informed of any significant new findings (either good or bad), such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participation in the research, that might cause you to change your mind about continuing in the study. If new information is obtained that is relevant or useful to you, or if the procedures and/or methods change at any time throughout this study, your consent to continue participating in this study will be obtained again.

Risks: Participation in this research study may involve some added risks or discomforts. This study is considered of minimal risk. These risks are similar to those you experience when disclosing work related information to others. You may feel a certain amount of discomfort during the interview because the researcher asks that the interview be audio taped for eventual transcription. Your privacy and confidentiality is extremely important and every precaution will be taken to ensure that the data collected will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

Benefits : There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from these procedures. The investigator, however, may learn more about the perceptions of preservice teachers and how they describe their own professional development. In addition, the field of educational research and society will benefit from gaining a better understanding of the AS degree seeking Early Childhood preservice teacher.

Explanation & offer to answer questions: Tracy Sermon has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Tracy Sermon at 801-863-8575.

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence: Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits. You may be withdrawn from this study without your consent by the investigator if the interviews are not able to be completed.

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigator will have access to the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet in Tracy Sermon's locked office. Your privacy and safety are a primary responsibility of the researchers in this study. Your name will only be known to the researcher. When the audio tape is transcribed, you will be assigned a pseudonym so that those transcripts will not contain your name. This pseudonym will be used on all other research notes and documents. Personal, identifiable information, including the audiotapes, transcripts and any other identifiable information, including the pseudonym will be kept for one year and then destroyed. Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this



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Page 3 of 3
*Date Created:11.15.2010

INFORMED CONSENT (faculty)

A Case Study of Preservice Teachers
in an AS Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program:
Perceptions of Professional Preparation

study and any publications that may result from this study. All participants involved in this study will not be identified and their anonymity will be maintained in any final publications.

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at UVU has approved this research study. If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights, you may contact the IRB Administrator at IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email irb@usu.edu. . If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator to obtain information or to offer input.

Copy of consent You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Investigator Statement "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Signature of PI

Principal Investigator
Dr. Martha Dever, EdD
435-797-2225
Martha.dever@usu.edu

Student Researcher
Tracy sermon
801-863-8575
tracy.sermon@uvu.edu

Signature of Participant: By signing below, I agree to participate.

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix I
Faculty Questions

Initial questions for the early childhood Faculty Focus group.

1. Begin with a discussion of the philosophy of the early childhood program: what are our beliefs about children, teaching, guidance, curriculum and the classroom learning environment?
2. Possible questions regarding NAEYC standards:
How do we incorporate NAEYC new teacher standards into our individual courses? How do the experiences we provide in our courses (classroom instruction, use of text and reading, assignments field experiences) help our preservice teachers develop skills and knowledge to be teachers of young children? To meet the NAEYC New Teacher Standards?
3. How do we view our responsibilities in supporting the preservice teacher? What types of interactions do we have with students in and out of the classroom?
4. If time: How challenging is the curriculum we provide to our preservice teachers?

Appendix J
Advisement Sheet

Advisement Sheet

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE DEGREE

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CR	PREREQUISITES CO-REQUISITES
CORE COURSES			
ENGL 1010 and (CC)	Intro to Writing: and	3 cr.	ENGL 1010
ENGL 2010 or	Intermediate Humanities/Social	3 cr.	
ENGL 2020 (CC)	Science or		
	Intermediate Writing:		
	Science/Technology		
MATH 1050 (MM)	College Algebra	4 cr.	MAT 1010
POLS 1000 or	American Heritage or American	3 cr.	
HIST 1700 or (AS)	Civilization or	6 cr.	
ECON 1740 or	US Economic History or American		
POLS 1100 or (AS)	National Gov.		
HIST 2700 and 2710 (AS)	or complete both:		
	US History to 1877 and US History		
	since 1877		
PHIL 2050 (IH)	Ethics and Values	3 cr.	ENGL 1010
HLTH 3100* (TE)	Health Education For Elementary	2 cr.	ENGL 1010
	Teachers		
DISTRIBUTION COURSES			
HUMANITIES (HH)	Choose course listed under	3 cr.	
	Humanities		
	(recommend COMM 1020)		
FINE ARTS	Choose course listed under Fine Arts	3 cr.	
	(recommend *ART 3400/*MUSC		
	3400/*DANC 3400/*THEA 3713)		
PSY 1100 (SS)	Human Development (“C” grade or	3 cr.	
	higher)		
BIOLOGY (BB)	Choose 1 course listed under Biology	3 cr.	
PHYSICAL SCIENCE (PP)	Choose 1 course listed under	3 cr.	
	Physical Science		
BIOLOGY or PHYSICAL SCIENCE	Choose 1 course listed under Biology	3 cr.	
	or Physical Science		
General Electives	(<i>Math 2010 & 2020 highly</i>	1 cr.	
	<i>recommended- required for 4-yr</i>		
	<i>professional program)</i>		
ECE PRE-PROFESSIONAL EMPHASIS			
EDEL 2200 (F/SP/SU)	Computer Technology in Education	2 cr.	
EDEC 2300** (F) [10 hrs. of field]	Including Young Diverse Learners	2 cr.	PSY 1100
	(Contact advisor for approval)		
EDEC 2500** (F) [15 hrs. of field]	Child Development, Birth–8 (Contact	3 cr.	PSY 1100
	advisor for approval)		
EDEC 2600** (F/SP) [4 observations]	Introduction to Early Childhood	2 cr.	
	Education (“B-” grade or higher)		
EDEC 2610** (F/SP) [20 hrs. of field]	Child Guidance	3 cr.	
EDEC 2620** (SP) [20 hrs. of field]	Early Childhood Curriculum	3 cr.	
EDEC 2640** (F/SP)	Literacy and Literature for Early	3 cr.	
	Childhood		

EDEC 2700 (F/SP) (approx.90 hours field) and EDEC 2720 (F/SP)	Early Childhood Practicum (Completed at Orem Elem.) and Early Childhood Assessment	3 cr. EDEC
		2 cr. 2600/2610/2620 EDEC 2700 co-req.

Total Credits Required for AS Degree

Graduation Requirements

1. Completion of a minimum of 60 semester credits.
2. Overall GPA of 2.0 or above. C- grade or higher in all program classes.
3. Residency hours- minimum of 20 credits through course attendance at UVU.
4. Completion of GE and specified departmental requirements.
5. First aid/CPR certification, food handler's permit, portfolio review, and acceptance by Education Committee.

60 Credits

*24 credits and 2.0 GPA required to register for these courses
 **ACT 21+ or ENGL 1010 "C-" or higher to register for these courses

Appendix K
Course Descriptions

Course Descriptions

EDEC 1640 Children's Music and Movement

For Early Childhood majors and those interested in teaching music to children on early childhood settings. Covers childhood music, past and present, strategies for teaching music and movement. Explores music appreciation, creative and structured music and movement activities for young children. Introduces musical instruments and their use. Examines music and movement curricula and learning environments.

EDEC 2300 Including Young Diverse Learners

Introduces ECE majors to the implications of diversity and exceptionality in young children. Emphasizes positive impact of diversity in children's educational environment, birth to age eight. Introduces anti-bias strategies to address diversity. Emphasizes inclusive and adaptive strategies for supporting young children with exceptionalities. Ten hours field experience is required.

EDEC 2500 Child Development Birth to 8

For Early Childhood students. Emphasizes growth in all domains. Covers milestones of development, supportive parental and care giver behaviors, influence of out-of-home care, role play, and creating a supportive environment. Includes 15 hours of structured observations, assessment and interaction with young children.

EDEC 2600 Intro to Early Childhood Education

For all Early Childhood students. Introduces early childhood programs requirements and the field of early childhood education. Focuses on the historical and philosophical foundations of early childhood education emphasizing developmentally appropriate practices, constructivism and integrated, child-centered curricula. Introduces students to components that identify quality programs for children birth to age eight.

EDEC 2610 Child Guidance

For all Early Childhood majors. Studies development of positive self-concept, social behaviors, empathy, independence, responsibility and effective communication in children. Includes 20 field hours of structures observation, assignments and interactions with young children.

EDEC 2620 Early Childhood Curriculum

A core course for Early Childhood students and other interested on working with young children. Covers integrated developmentally appropriate activities, particularly Math, Science, Creative Arts, and Play. Emphasizes lesson plan development, routines, and schedules, curriculum philosophies, presentation skills and resource file development. Uses in class demonstrations, group interaction, and hands-on application. Includes curriculum planning to facilitate integration of state core curriculum standards on K-3.

EDEC 2640 Literacy and Literature for Early Childhood

For Early Childhood students. Introduces practical aspects of fostering literacy development in young children. Focuses on emerging and early literacy on the home, early care and education settings (infancy through age eight), with an emphasis on ages four through six. Studies strategies for holistic integration of the various literacy processes. Addresses the role of children's literature, the relationship between early language development and literacy opportunities and methods for developing language and positive attitudes toward books.

EDEC 2700 Early Childhood Practicum

A core course for Early Childhood Education Certificate and Associate Degree majors. Provides support teaching experiences in the Teacher Education Preschool. Includes planning and implementing learning plans, interactions with and guidance of children individually, and in small groups, parent education opportunities, preparation of literacy bag and application of technology.

EDEC 2720 Early Childhood Assessment

Implements assessment with children in the Teacher Education Preschool including anecdotal notes, checklists, event sampling and logs. Connects daily child and program assessment to preschool curriculum planning and implementation. Prepares child portfolio assessment and use in conference with child and parents. Includes personal professional portfolio assessment.

Appendix L

Early Childhood Education Course Objectives

Early Childhood Education Course Objectives

EDEC 2300

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Describe special education federal and state laws, and how they apply to policies and best practices for educating young children with special needs, including service coordination, child find, evaluation, and ongoing assessment;
2 -	Describe state and federal laws and how they apply to policies and best practices for educating young children of various linguistic and ethnic heritages;
3 -	Describe and create an anti-bias, inclusive early childhood environment;
4 -	Demonstrate awareness of inclusive, anti-bias classroom strategies and adaptations for supporting learning and development;
5 -	Describe variations of development and disability and their implications for the early childhood classroom;
6 -	Assess and monitor the development of young children who are evidencing or who are at risk for developmental delays and be able to participate in an IFSP or IEP meeting;
7 -	Find resources for teaching young children of any ethnic background or having any special need;
8 -	Describe the effects of various cultures of atypical development on infant/care giver and other family interactions;
9 -	Describe the developmental contributions of culture, ethnicity, and race.

Trait: Upon successful completion, students should have the following attitude(s)/traits:

1 -	Feel confident in caring for children having a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and developmental needs;
2 -	Develop sensitivity to the needs of culturally and socially diverse families whose children have special needs;
3 -	Develop an inclusive, anti-bias attitude toward children and families.

EDEC 2500

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Demonstrate knowledge of growth and development of infants to 8 years across cognitive physical, social, emotional, moral, and creative domains;
2 -	Recognize significant milestones and variations of early development;
3 -	Demonstrate supportive care giver behaviors;
4 -	Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of out-of-home care, early schooling, the role of play, peer socialization, nutrition, feeding and toilet routines, and child guidance;
5 -	Demonstrate competence in focused observation and assessment.

Traits: Upon successful completion, students should have the following attitude(s)/traits:

1 -	Demonstrate ethical behavior in relationships with young children, care givers, and early childhood professionals;
2 -	Appreciate the individuality of young children and their families;
3 -	Identify behaviors that fall beyond normative range.

EDEC 2600

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Critically evaluate the question, “Why do I want to be a teacher of young children?”
2 -	Explain programs, philosophies, and historical backgrounds of early childhood education to assist them in formulating their personal belief about how children best learn and how they should be taught;
3 -	Understand the value of early childhood education and the importance of the role of teacher, parent, family, and community in the child’s educational process;
4 -	Distinguish between different curriculum models that meet the diverse needs of children, including cultural, gender, socioeconomic and special needs for children 0-8 years of age;
5 -	Discriminate measures of quality found in early childhood programs and develop skills in evaluating programs;
6 -	Become familiar with the term “Developmentally Appropriate Practice” and describe how it applies to the 0-8 age population;
7 -	Understand the role that early childhood professionals encounter including, ethics, public policy, and working with other agencies and businesses to promote children;
8 -	Examine and collaboratively discuss early childhood issues and have field experiences.

Traits: None Defined

EDEC 2610

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Come to understand that guiding children’s learning is largely based upon a knowledge of child development principles (cognitive, social, emotional and language);
2 -	Be acquainted with techniques of observing and recording children’s behavior for the purpose of creating learning environments, assessing development and guiding behavior;
3 -	Be introduced to environments (physical and verbal) conducive in meeting the developmental and diverse needs of all children; including, cultural, gender, socioeconomic, and special needs;
4 -	Be exposed to developmental principles and techniques that assure inquiry,

	independence, divergent thinking, and choice making skills in young children;
5 -	Be actively involved in forming their own philosophy of guiding, managing, and directing. and influencing children's behavior in accordance with NAEYC guidelines;
6 -	Appreciate the adult's role in the guidance process; understanding that practices can facilitate or impede social and emotional growth of children;
7 -	Discover that child guidance is partially technique and largely attitude.

Traits: None Defined

EDEC 2620

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Explain why the following areas are important to children's development: a. Play, b. Physical environments and learning centers, c. Math, d. Science, e. Developmentally appropriate practice, g. Creative arts;
2 -	Demonstrate scientific inquiry and methodology with young children;
3 -	Explain the role of a teacher in implementing curriculum;
4 -	Map a full year of state core curriculum for purposes of integration, individualization, and mastery for all students;
5 -	Develop, demonstrate, and participate in hands-on DAP activities in specific curriculum areas;
6 -	Apply information on how children learn to the development of lesson plans;
7 -	Write appropriate curriculum lesson plans with clear developmental objectives and concepts, present activities to children, evaluate presentations.

Traits: Upon successful completion, students should have the following attitude(s)/traits:

1 -	Ability to plan, write, and implement and evaluate activities with young children;
2 -	Use a large and interesting assortment of math, art, science, creative arts, and play activities;
3 -	Commitment to the creative process and the scientific process for young children.

EDEC 2640

Objective: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Implement instructional strategies appropriate to young children through grade three;
2 -	Demonstrate an understanding of the practical aspects of fostering literacy;
3 -	Recognize the major theorists and theories of language and literacy development;
4 -	Demonstrate understanding of emergent and early literacy behaviors in children ages 0-8 years;
5 -	Demonstrate understanding of the role children's literature and environmental print play in early literacy development;
6 -	Assess young children's literacy development.

Traits: None Defined

EDEC 2700

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Serve as support teacher implementing learning plans of lead teachers;
2 -	Contribute to planning and implementing age/individual appropriate learning plans for early childhood curriculum;
3 -	Serve as lead teacher with responsibility for full classroom including leadership of support teachers;
4 -	Utilize several techniques that enhance social/emotional development of young children;
5 -	Display professional conduct with children, co-workers, and parents;
6 -	Implement appropriate positive guidance techniques in helping young children self-regulate and be independent learners;
7 -	Implement appropriate ways to involve parents in the education of their child.

Traits: Upon successful completion, students should have the following attitude(s)/traits:

1 -	Desire to support young children's development through curriculum;
2 -	Awareness of the interplay of environment, curriculum, and positive guidance techniques on classroom management;
3 -	Insight into the role early childhood educator's play in supporting parents as a child's most important teacher.

EDEC 2720

Objectives: Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

1 -	Write objective anecdotal assessment of young children's learning in the domains of physical, social, language, literacy, cognitive (math and science) development;
2 -	Include checklist assessment in curriculum learning plans;
3 -	Implement event sampling and center logs to guide curriculum;
4 -	Prepare child portfolio assessment to include anecdotal assessment, artifacts, and photos;
5 -	Connect daily assessment to curriculum;
6 -	Prepare personal professional portfolio assessment.

Traits: None Defined

Appendix M

EDEC Professional Portfolio Assignments by Course

EDEC Professional Portfolio Assignments by Course

NAEYC Standard	Description	EDEC 2300 Diverse Learners	EDEC 2500 Birth to 8	EDEC 2600 Introduction to ECE	EDEC 2610 Guidance	EDEC 2620 Curriculum	EDEC 2640 Literacy	EDEC 2700 Practicum	EDEC 2720 Assessment
1	Promoting child development and learning		x Over-view		x			x	
2	Building family and community relationships	x Over-view						x	x
3	Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families		x	x					x Over-view
4	Using developmentally appropriate practices to connect with children and families				x	x Over-view		x	
5	Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum					x	x Over-view	x	
6	Becoming a professional			x Over-view	x	x		x	

NAEYC Standards 1-6

Standard 1: EDEC **2500**—overview and research paper; **2610**—Field: physical environment; **2700**—center or lead teach lesson plan

Standard 2: EDEC **2300**—overview and assignment – diversity assignment; **2700**—parent newsletter; **2720**—parent conference outline

Standard 3: EDEC **2720**—overview and anecdotal notes/child portfolio; **2500**—Portage; **2600**—child observation

Standard 4: EDEC **2620**—overview and center or large/small group lesson plan; **2610**—Field: verbal reflections; **2700** center or lead teach lesson plans

Standard 5: EDEC **2640**—overview and read aloud or presentation; **2620**—curriculum mapping week outline; **2700** center or lead teach lesson plans

Standard 6: EDEC **2600**—overview and ethics review; **2700**—journal entries; **2610, 2620**—final field reflections

Philosophy-written in EDEC 2720

Additional Portfolio Requirements**Additional Exit Interview**

Philosophy	ECE program survey
Resume	Q-sort
Evaluations	Contact information
Food handler permit/first aid	CD of all portfolio overviews and reflections
Certificates	

Appendix N
Professional Portfolio Rubric

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RUBRIC
Graduation portfolio

Scoring for the professional portfolio reflects the student's degree of ability to accomplish the tasks outlined on the evaluation form.

TERMS:

Level 1: Skills Need Improvement

Score: 1

Student's performance needs improvement.

Student displays limited knowledge and/or is not able to perform the task.

Think of the performance as being appropriate less than 69% of the time.

Level 2: Emerging Skills

Score: 2

Student demonstrates emerging skills.

Student partially meets the indicator and/or accomplishes the task(s) only part of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate

approximately 70-79% of the time.

Level 3: Basic Skills

Score: 3

Student demonstrates basic skills.

Student generally meets the indicator and/or accomplishes the task most of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate approximately 80-94% of the time.

Level 4: Proficient Skills

Score: 4

Student demonstrates proficient skills.

Student consistently meets the indicator. He/she accomplishes the task almost all of the time. Think of the performance as being appropriate approximately 95%-100% of the time.

Scores can range from 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5....to 4.

Early Childhood Professional Portfolio Rubric Graduation Portfolio

	Skills Need Improvement	Emerging Skills	Basic Skills	Proficient Skills
Score	1	2	3	4
Layout	Not professional or clear; poorly organized, sections not well defined; appears messy Table of Contents missing, or is not helpful; unorganized	Not professional and/or clear; poorly organized or sections not well defined; appears messy Table of Contents is not helpful or unorganized	Generally professional and clear; organized into sections with Table of Contents, appropriate headings and tabs	Professional and clear; well organized with Table of Contents, appropriate headings and tabs; original, visually appealing
Grammar & Style	Many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Writing is not appropriate for a teacher	Some errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Writing is not appropriate for a teacher	Proofread; standard English; spelling, some minor errors in punctuation, grammar or style	All writing is well constructed with few or no errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar & style
Philosophy	Missing	Missing	Included	Included
Resume	Not well organized and lacks information about education and experience; contains many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar	Not well organized or lacks information about education and experience; contains errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar	Organized professionally, includes education, experience, achievements, and appropriate personal information, no errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar	Original, well organized but not cute; includes education, experience, achievements and appropriate personal information, visually appealing, no errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar
Teaching evaluations	Missing	Missing	Included	Included
Transcripts	Some or all are missing	Some are missing	Included	Included
Certificates	Some or all are missing	Some are missing	Included	Included
STANDARD 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning				
Overview Key Elements	Less than 1 page and demonstrates inadequate understanding of the following areas: young children's characteristics and needs, influences on learning & development, and how to create optimal learning environments	Less than 1 page in length, Statement demonstrates a beginning understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, influences on learning & development, and how to create optimal learning environments	1 page in length; demonstrates a general understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, influences on learning & development, and how to create optimal learning environments	1 page in length; demonstrates clear understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, influences on learning & development, and how to create optimal learning environments
1. Understand what young children are like				
2. Understand what influences their development				
3. Use this understanding to create great environments where all children can thrive				

	Skills Need Improvement	Emerging Skills	Basic Skills	Proficient Skills
Score	1	2	3	4
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifacts. <i>Reflective statements do not adequately</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 1	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 1	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements generally</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 1	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements clearly</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 1
STANDARD 2 Building Family and Community				
Overview Key Elements	Less than 1 page and demonstrates inadequate understanding of value, importance and complexity of the role of families and communities in children's learning	Less than 1 page and demonstrates beginning understanding of value, importance and complexity of the role of families and communities in children's learning	1 page in length; demonstrates general understanding of value, importance and complexity of the role of families and communities in children's learning	1 page in length; demonstrates clear understanding of value, importance and complexity of the role of families and communities in children's learning
1. Understand and value children's families and communities				
2. Create respectful and reciprocal relationships				
3. Involve families in child's development and learning				
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifacts. <i>Reflective statements do not adequately</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 2	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 2	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 2	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements clearly</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 2
STANDARD 3 Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families				
Overview Key Elements	Less than 1 page and demonstrates inadequate understanding of goals, benefits, and uses of assessment; systematic observation; and other effective assessment strategies; use assessment to influence development and learning	Less than 1 page and demonstrates beginning understanding of goals, benefits, and uses of assessment; systematic observation; documentation; other effective assessment strategies; use assessment to influence development and learning	1 page in length and demonstrates general understanding of goals, benefits, and uses of assessment; systematic observation; documentation; other effective assessment strategies; use assessment to influence development and learning	1 page in length, demonstrates clear understanding of goals, benefits, and uses of assessment, systematic observation, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies; use assessment to influence development and learning
1. Understand the purposes of assessment				
2. Use effective assessment strategies				
3. Use assessment responsibly to positively influence children's development and learning				
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifacts. <i>Reflective statements do not</i> adequately connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 3	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 3	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements generally</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 3	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements clearly</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 3

	Skills Need Improvement	Emerging Skills	Basic Skills	Proficient Skills
Score	1	2	3	4
STANDARD 4 Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families				
Overview Key Elements	Less than 1 page and demonstrates inadequate understanding of relationships with children and families; effective, developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning	Less than 1 page and demonstrates beginning understanding of relationships with children and families; effective, developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning	1 pages in length, Statement demonstrates general understanding of relationships with children and families; effective, developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning	1 pages in length, Statement demonstrates clear understanding of relationships with children and families; effective, developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning
4a. Understand positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundations of their work with children				
4b. Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education				
4c. Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches				
4d. Reflecting in their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child				
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifacts. <i>Reflective statements do not adequately</i> connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 4	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 4	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements generally</i> connect the artifact to a connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 4	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements clearly</i> connects the artifact to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 4
STANDARD 5 Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum				
5a. Understand content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines	One page or less and demonstrates inadequate understanding of content knowledge, inquiry tools, and resources to design and implement meaningful and challenging curriculum	One page or less and demonstrates beginning understanding of content knowledge, inquiry tools, and resources to design and implement meaningful and challenging curriculum	One pages in length, Statement demonstrates general understanding of content knowledge, inquiry tools, and resources to design and implement meaningful and challenging curriculum	1 pages in length, Statement demonstrates clear understanding of content knowledge, inquiry tools, and resources to design and implement meaningful and challenging curriculum
5b. Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools and structures of content areas or academic disciplines				
5c. Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design implement and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child				

	Skills Need Improvement	Emerging Skills	Basic Skills	Proficient Skills
Score	1	2	3	4
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifacts. <i>Reflective statements do not adequately</i> connect the artifact to a key element in Standard 5	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element in Standard 5	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements generally</i> connect the artifact to an appropriate to a key element in Standard 5	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements clearly</i> connect the artifact to appropriate to a key element in Standard 5
STANDARD 6 Becoming a Professional				
Overview Key Elements				
6a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field	Less than 1 page and demonstrates inadequate understanding of ethics, professional standards, collaboration, reflective practice advocacy, and professional development	Less than 1 page and demonstrates beginning understanding of ethics, professional standards, collaboration, reflective practice, advocacy, and professional development	1 page in length and demonstrates a general understanding of ethics, professional standards, collaboration, reflective practice, advocacy, and professional development	1 page in length, and demonstrates a clear understanding of ethics, professional standards, collaboration, reflective practice, advocacy, and professional development
6b. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines				
6c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice				
6d. Integrating knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives in early education				
6e. Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession				
Artifact and Reflections (2)	Missing or inappropriate artifact. <i>Reflective statements do not</i> adequately connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 6	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a beginning ability to connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 6	Relevant artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a generally connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 6	Exemplary artifacts. <i>Reflective statements</i> demonstrate a generally connect the artifact to a key element of Standard 6

Appendix O

NAEYC Principles from DAP Textbook

NAEYC Principles from DAP Textbook (Coople & Bredekamp, 2006)

Principles of Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3-6 by Carol Copple and sure Bredekamp (2006) National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC. Pages 3-17

Core considerations

1. Consider what is age appropriate—that is, based on what we know about the development and learning of children with in a given age.
2. Consider what is individually appropriate—that is, attuned to each child in all of his or her individuality.
3. Consider what is appropriate to the social and cultural context in which children live.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) means teaching young children in ways that:

- Meet children where that are as individuals and as a group
- Help each child reach challenging and achievable goals that contribute to his or her ongoing development and learning.

How children learn best:

Relationships with responsive adults
 Active hand-on involvement
 Meaningful experiences
 Constructing their understanding of the world

The following number scheme was using when coding the student's transcripts.

Coding 1-9

1. Consider what is age appropriate.
2. Consider what is individually appropriate
3. Consider what is appropriate to the social and cultural context in which children live.
4. Relationships with responsive adults
5. Active hand-on involvement
6. Meaningful experiences
7. Constructing their understanding of the world
8. Meet children where that are as individuals and as a group
9. Help each child reach challenging and achievable goals

CURRICULUM VITAE

TRACY E. SERMON

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EDUCATION

<u>University</u>	<u>Field of Study</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Year</u>
Utah State University	Curriculum and Instruction	PhD	2014
	<i>Dissertation: A Case Study of Preservice Teachers in an Associate of Science Degree Early Childhood Teacher Education Program: Perceptions of Professional Preparation</i>		
Brigham Young University	Family Sciences Early Childhood Education Emphasis	MS	1986
	<i>Master's Thesis: Men's and Women's Perceptions of Nurturing and Non-Nurturing Behaviors Towards Young Children</i>		
Virginia Tech	Child Development and Elementary Education Teaching Certification Nursery –7 th grade	BS	1982

PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

State of Utah Professional Educator License	Level 1 Early Childhood Education (K-3) Elementary Education (1-8)	Expires 06/30/2016
Utah Early Childhood Career Ladder Certification	Level 10 Certification	No expiration

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Year</i>
Utah Valley University	School of Education Elementary Education Senior Lecturer	2014
Utah Valley University	School of Education Elementary Education Lecturer-- full time	2001-2013
Utah Valley University	School of Education ECE Lab Head Teacher AM/PM Pre-K Classroom teacher AM Pre-K Classroom Teacher	2000-2006 2006-2009
Utah Schools for the Deaf/Blind	Parent Advisor Early Intervention Specialist	1990-1995
Self Employed	Private Preschool Teacher	1988-1990
Brigham Young University	Part-Time Faculty: ECE Lab Head Teacher	1986-1987

COLLEGE COURSES TAUGHT

Institution: Utah Valley University

<i>Course number</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Years Taught</i>	<i>Total Sections</i>
ECFS 1700	3	Early Childhood Practicum I	2000-2001	4
EDEC 2600	2	Intro to Early Childhood Education	2003- 2009	11
EDEC 2610	3	Child Guidance	2001, 2009-2014	7
EDEC 2620	3	Early Childhood Curriculum	2008-2014	8
EDEC 2700	3	Early Childhood Practicum	2000-2009	60
EDEC 2700	3	Field Supervisor	2009-2010	4
EDEC 2720	2	Early Childhood Assessment	2006-2009; 2013	8
EDEC 3620	3	Advanced Curriculum Foundations: Pre-Primary	2002-2007	16
EDEC 3800	1	Pre-primary Assessment	2006-2008	5

EDEC 3820	3	Pre-K, K Assessment New course-replaces EDEC 3620 and 3800	2013	1
EDEL 2330	3	Children's Literature	2009-2014	22
EDEL 3100	2	Kindergarten Classroom	2010-2014	18
EDEL 3050	2	Foundations of American Education- Online course	2013	1

COMMITTEES

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Committee Type</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Year</i>
Utah Valley University	School of Education	Early Childhood Committee Co-chair	2001-Current
Utah Valley University	School of Education	Service Learning Committee co-chair	2010-current
Utah Valley University	University	Service Learning Rep. for the School of Education	2010-Current
Utah System of Higher Education	Major's Meeting	UVU School Education Rep. for Early Childhood Education	2011-current
Utah Valley University	University	Exploratory Tracks Committee Rep. for School of Education	2010-2011
Utah Valley University	University	Faculty Senate, Faculty Senator Rep. for the School of Education	2007-2010

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Institution

Utah Valley University

For the Early Childhood Education Program:

- Currently creating online professional development courses for UVU China initiative and Utah State Office of Child Care, Fall 2014
- Completed all documentation for EDEC Service Learning Designated Department 2012, 2013, 2014
- Practicum coordinator for Early Childhood Education 2009-present
- Each semester: Co-conduct Graduation Interviews (review/score all professional portfolios for ECE graduates, 20 minute individual interviews) 2005-present
- Mentor adjuncts for the following courses: EDEC 1640, 2610, 2600, and 2720; 2006-present
- Created new rubric, updated standards for ECE Professional Portfolio; Spring 2010
- Assisted in interviewing and hiring of ECE adjuncts; Fall 2010

- Mentored preservice teachers for conference presentation; Spring 2008
- Co-developed EDEC 2720 Early Childhood Assessment; Spring 2005, Fall 2005
- Created all lectures/assignments for EDEC 2720; Fall 2005
- Co-developed a Professional Portfolio for ECE 2-year graduates; Spring 2003

For the Elementary Education Program:

- Supervised ELED students in elementary classrooms: field settings for juniors/seniors; 12 week student teaching experience (seniors). Completed formative and summative evaluations. 2010-current
- Taught EDEL 2330 Children's Literature for Distance Education: live classroom with 3 distance sites-live interactions; Fall 2013, Fall 2014
- Facilitated online course EDEL 3050 Foundations of American Education; 2013
- Co-developed course objectives/outline for EDEL 3100 in UVU's curriculum system (COMET) Kindergarten Classroom, 2008; personally revamped course summer/fall 2011
- Completed assignment from School of Education Curriculum Committee for UVU's curriculum system (COMET): updated course objectives and created new course outline for EDEL 2330 Children's Literature, spring 2011
- Completed Service Learning Fellowship, Fall 2011
- Assisted committee in completing documentation for EDEL Service Learning Designated Department, 2010-2013
- Co-conducted 16-hour, weekend workshops on Kindergarten Guidance, spring 2009

GRANTS

Fall 2014 UVU Service Learning Grant EDEL and ECE \$2000
 Fall 2013 UVU Service Learning Grant ELED and ECE \$2000
 Fall 2012 UVU Service Learning Grant ELED and ECE \$2000
 Fall 2011 UVU Service Learning Grant ELED \$1000
 Fall 2010 UVU Service Learning Grant ELED \$1000
 Fall 2009-Perkin's Grant, \$1305
 Fall 2008-Perkin's Grant, \$5502
 Fall 2007 Perkin's Grant, \$1827
 Fall 2006-Perkin's Grant, \$7338
 Fall 2005-Perkin's Grant, \$2234
 Fall 2004-Perkin's Grant, \$1215
 Fall 2003-Perkin's Grant, \$7615

SCHOLARLY WORK

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Anderson, G.T. & **Sermon, T.E.** (2004). Putting children in charge of reading. *Texas Child Care Quarterly*, 28: 38-42.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

National

Sermon, T. E & Anderson, G.T. (June 2013). What is DAP anyway? Elementary education preservice teachers learning about the kindergarten classroom: Introducing DAP as

foundational knowledge. Presented at the NAEYC's 2013 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, San Francisco CA.

- Anderson, G. T. & **Sermon, T.E.** (November 2012). Teaching with absolute clarity: The foundational knowledge, understandings, and skills requisite for preservice kindergarten teachers. Presented at the National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators annual conference, Atlanta GA.
- Anderson, G. T. , **Sermon, T.E.** & Spainhower, A. (November 2009). Community partnerships for field placements. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Anderson, G.T, **Sermon, T.E.**, Arnsion, B., & Tanner, B. (December 2005). Play-based assessment: Referencing child portfolio assessment to learning continuums in emergent literacy, cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Sermon T. E.**, Anderson G. T., & Taylor, D. (December 2005). Scaffolding independent literacy behaviors using music, props and manipulatives. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference, Washington D.C.
- Sermon, T.E.**, Anderson, G.T., Myntti, A., & Argyle, K. (November 2004). Building professional portfolios as preservice candidates: Focus on becoming a professional by documenting mastery of the NAEYC standards. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference, Anaheim, CA.
- Anderson, G.T., **Sermon, T.E.**, & French, K. (November 2003). Providing training that addresses the varied learning modalities of special needs adult learners. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Regional

- Sermon, T.E.** & Anderson, G.T. (October 2008). Connecting literacy assessment to curriculum: Making teaching intentional. Presented at the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Reno NV.

Local

- Nelson, G. Morris, C. Cannon, A. & **Sermon, T. E.** October, 2014. Best of Children's Books. Forum on Engaged Reading: For the Love of Reading Conference. Park City, UT
- Sermon, T.E.** (February 2013) Immersion in the elementary school: Service learning opportunities for pre-elementary education students at Utah Valley University. Poster session. Annual Utah Campus Compact Moab Faculty Retreat, Moab UT.
- Sermon, T. E.** (November 2012). Math and science learning in child directed play. Utah Early Childhood Conference. Provo Utah.
- Sermon T. E.** & Sahlin, B. (March 2006). Professional portfolios: Documenting teaching experiences using NAEYC standards. Utah Early Childhood Annual Conference, Orem UT.

Sermon T. E. (March 2005). Take home literacy kits: Providing literacy experiences for the home. Utah Early Childhood Annual Conference, Orem UT.

Sermon T. E. (2004 March). Learning center ideas: Expanding the play experience during free selection/center time. Utah Early Childhood Conference, Orem UT.

SERVICE

Boy Scouts of American, Family Camp (July 2011) Co-Facilitator for children's activities (5 year olds). Mt Pleasant, UT

Volunteer Facilitator. (March 2010). Utah Early Childhood Conference, Orem UT.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Member: National Association for the Education of Young Children

Utah Association for the Education of Young Children

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Name: Genan T. Anderson, Professor, Early Childhood Program Coordinator
Office phone: 801-863-8057
Institution: Utah Valley University
Address of Institution: 800 W. University Parkway, MS 126, Orem, Utah 84058

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Name: Parker Fawson, Dean, School of Education
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