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Kinder Habitats: Teacher Perspectives and the Results of a Professional Development on Managing Kindergarten Literacy Environments

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Kinder Habitats: Teacher Perspectives and the Results of a Professional Development on Managing Kindergarten Literacy Environments

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Allyson Laura Miller

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Kinder Habitats: Teacher Perspectives and the Results of a Professional Development on Managing Kindergarten Literacy Environment

by

Allyson Laura Miller

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor William A. Sandoval, Chair

Kindergarten teachers are being asked to deliver differentiated small-group literacy instruction. The problem is managing the independent work being done by the rest of the class during the literacy period. Research on early childhood development and literacy indicates that the classroom environment plays an important role in supporting student engagement in literacy activities. This study involved a 6-week professional development with twelve kindergarten teachers. Teachers met weekly to learn about strategies and discuss how they could best manage their room environments to support student independence in literacy activities. Both teacher perceptions and changes to classroom literacy environments were examined.

Data collection methods included: pre- and post-intervention photographs of classroom environments, surveys of beliefs and practices, written reflections, a closing survey, and an anonymous course evaluation. Results indicate a significant change in the print-richness of

classroom environments and increases in alignment with developmentally appropriate practices. Data also indicated that teachers understood that students were not solely responsible for their independence. Rather, by making appropriate management decisions: selecting appropriate activities and materials, clarifying procedures, and modifying expectations, teachers recognized that they could promote independence. The salary point course was well-received by participants who found that the content was closely aligned to their needs and presented in a collaborative environment.

The dissertation of Allyson Laura Miller is approved.

Alison L. Bailey

Linda P. Rose

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2013

DEDICATION

This dissertation would not have been possible without the love and support of my ridiculously wonderful family and friends. You were there for me even when I wasn't able to fully reciprocate. In particular:

Mom, Dad, and Steve: You have helped me so much over these last three years. The next three, it's my turn to have *your* backs!

Greg, Nelly, and Jill: Thank you for being an AWESOME team. I never could have made it through without you.

The Owl Nation: Thanks for all of your support. Hoot! Hoot! Hooray!

Adam: You have been so patient! I love you. On to the next adventure!

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge some elementary school teachers. The work you do is incredibly important and I am so grateful.

To the teachers who participated in this study: Thank you for your participation and your dedication to our future. It was an honor to work with you. Let's keep it going!

Mrs. Higuchi: You inspired me when you were my kindergarten teacher and continue to motivate me to be a better teacher and a better person.

Mom: You are (of course) the most brilliant teacher I know! I learn from you every day.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Statement of the Problem

Although many factors contribute to student success in school, teacher effectiveness is among the most important (Darling-Hammond, 2000; McDonald Connor, Son, Hindman, & Morrison, 2005). One of the major challenges for kindergarten teachers is managing a large group of children who are not yet independent in the classroom, a critical prerequisite to meeting children's varied instructional needs (Pianta, La Paro, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2002). This challenge is compounded by the desirability of providing literacy environments that meet the needs of young learners (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1990; La Paro et al., 2009; Pianta et al., 2002). Kindergarten teachers need to manage classroom environments that support targeted, individualized instruction. Unfortunately, they are struggling to provide developmentally appropriate classrooms where the literacy needs of children are met. There is a need to investigate how classroom environments and teachers' perceptions are impacted by professional development.

Background on Classroom Management

A Definition

It's important to define the term *classroom management*. The term has acquired surplus meaning, some of it having a decidedly negative connotation. Some conflate *classroom management* with *discipline*; for others, the term may conjure thoughts of an authoritarian teaching style in which order is valued over creativity. Evertson and Weinstein (2006), editors of the *Handbook of Classroom Management,* broadly define classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and

social-emotional learning" (p. 4). Brophy (2006) more clearly defines the term, "*classroom management* refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities)" (p. 17), further clarifying that, "classroom management is not an end in itself but a means for creating and maintaining a learning environment that is optimal given the intended curriculum" (p. 18).

The maintenance of a productive environment that supports learning is a constant concern and one of the biggest challenges teachers say they face. Teacher attrition and job dissatisfaction are frequently attributed to frustration over management issues (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Paradoxically, classroom management has received very little attention by educational researchers and teacher educators (Brophy, 2006; Carter & Doyle, 2006; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

Several factors may explain why few have concentrated on a topic that's critical for teacher success. Technically, classroom management is difficult to study because it is so closely intertwined with everything else that's expected to affect student outcomes (e.g., curriculum, pedagogy, content knowledge). For this reason, it is usually not feasible to isolate classroom management strategies in order to apply classical experimental methods or test the impact of management interventions on student outcomes. Investigators typically work inductively, using interviews and observations to formulate best practices (Brophy, 2006). Another, more critical, consideration that may explain why classroom management is not a mature area of study, is that "it has been fundamentally a practical matter that exists primarily at the point of service in

schools, among mostly women and children far from the towers of academe" (Carter & Doyle, 2006, p. 373).

Perhaps resulting from a lack of academic focus, teacher preparation programs frequently fail to provide a coherent study of the principles of classroom management. There is some confusion about where this topic "fits" in the pre-service curriculum. As Evertson and Weinstein (2006) explain, "Because classroom management is neither content knowledge, nor psychological foundations, nor pedagogy, nor pedagogical content knowledge, it seems to slip through the cracks" (p. 4).

Without much foundational knowledge, experience becomes the teacher. Classroom teachers develop management practices through trial and error. This process is part of the daily lived experience of all classroom teachers. It is messy and challenging work. Carter and Doyle (2006) recommend that researchers interested in early childhood and classroom management avoid trying to isolate and prove the effectiveness of classroom management because classroom management is so context specific that most recommendations are more general that useful. Rather, Carter and Doyle recommend that future studies make use of narratives that describe the decisions teachers must make to create successful environments that support context-specific curricular goals. This recommendation relates to the present study, as I intend to ask kindergarten teachers about how they manage their literacy environments.

Evidence of the Problem in a Local Context

Pacific Coast Unified (a pseudonym) is a large school district that educates over half a million students. In the 2011-2012 school year, there were approximately 57,344 kindergarteners enrolled in this district. According to 2011-2012 data, 75.5% of students' families met the economic criteria to receive free or reduced priced meals. A majority of the students enrolled

(63.9%) did not speak English as a first language; about half of these students (36%) met district criteria for determining proficiency in English or were *Fluent English Proficient* (FEP). Ethnically, the majority of Pacific Coast Unified's students are Hispanic or Latino (72.3%). The next two ethnic groups represented are White (10.1%) and African American (9.6%). Across all of the grades taking California Standards Test (CST), which excludes kindergarten and first grade, about half of students score proficient or advanced in English Language Arts. Fifty-five percent of second graders, the youngest students to take the test scored proficient or advanced (California Department of Education, 2012a).

Since only about half of the district's students appear to meet the state standards on standardized tests, Pacific Coast Unified has been implementing programs in pursuit of improved student achievement. During the 2011-2012 school year, three major changes impacted the way the district's elementary school teachers were asked to manage their classrooms. First, there was a major shift in literacy pedagogy, from a primarily whole-group, scripted curriculum to the adoption of a new literacy program, MacMillian/McGraw-Hill's *California Treasures* (August et al., 2010), which is based on small-group differentiated instruction. Second, Response to Intervention (RtI) is a strategy, new to many classroom teachers, that requires teachers to provide additional direct instruction to students who need more help (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Third, the adoption of a new benchmark assessment and progress monitoring system, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), also recommends that teachers provide additional, targeted, small group instruction (Hall, 2006).

District administrators are insisting on instruction that is tailored to the individual needs of each student. Clarifying the message, the district announced on its website that the primary grades are a focus area for improvement. The site stated, "[b]uilding effective differentiated

instruction in Kindergarten and First Grade will support the [district] Performance Meter by laying the foundation for increased Proficiency Rates by 2nd Grade"[1]. The district's stance on targeted small group instruction makes it impossible not to focus on managing the literacy environment.

Changes in Kindergarten Policy and Goals Impact Classroom Management

This section provides a discussion of how policy changes have impacted, and will continue to impact, the goals and purposes of kindergarten in Pacific Coast Unified. Increasing academic outcomes in kindergarten has been a consistent district goal for most of the last decade.

Historical Perspective

In 2004, the school district moved to increase rigor by installing full-day kindergarten[2]. Research on kindergarten programs generally prefers a six hour day to a shortened day when looking at academic outcomes, especially among at-risk populations (Clark & Kirk, 2000; Plucker et al., 2004). Small class sizes of under 20 students have also been shown to improve academic outcomes, especially for at-risk students in the primary grades (Finn & Achilles, 1990; Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 2000). Since 1996, California's Class Size Reduction program has tried to meet student needs in grades K-3 by keeping student-to-teacher ratios at around 20 to one (California Department of Education, 2011a).

Although the benefits of smaller classes are well documented (Chetty et al., 2011; Pianta et al., 2002), kindergarten class sizes throughout the district have been on the rise. First, the implementation of full-day kindergarten eliminated the half-day team-teaching model through which two teachers shared a classroom and a portion of the instructional responsibilities for their partner's class, effectively halving the student-to-teacher ratio for large portions of the school

[1] Information obtained from the website of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.
[2] Information obtained from a newspaper article that reveals the name of the participating school district and is therefore confidential.

day. More recently, budget shortfalls forced the district to abandon the Class Size Reduction program.

Current Policy

Currently, the union contract allows for an average of 29.5 kindergarteners in each classroom[3]. However, state funds are being used to keep numbers close to 24 students in each class. As many school budgets are not able to afford teacher's assistants, kindergarten teachers may be the only adult in the classroom for most or all of the day. It is a challenge for teachers to manage differentiated small group instruction when they are the only adult in a large classroom of very young children.

Professional demands for kindergarten teachers are set to increase. The Common Core Standards will set learning goals for students in grades K-12 across 45 states (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). These standards are scheduled to be fully implemented by the 2014-2015 school year. However, Pacific Coast Unified kindergarten and first grade teachers are designated vanguards of the standards and were directed to implement them during the 2012-2013 school year.

Reviewing the alignment of the Common Core Standards with the California State Standards, which were adopted in 1997, it is clear that kindergarten will become more rigorous. Essentially, all of the 1997 standards are addressed in the new Common Core Standards. But, there are nearly a dozen new English Language Arts skills included in the new standards which were not previously addressed until first or second grade (Sacramento County Office of Education, 2010).

The academic shifts in kindergarten coincide with California legislation that increases the age requirement for enrolling in elementary school. Senate Bill 1381 changes the eligibility age

[3] Information obtained from the website of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

for children to enroll in kindergarten from five years old by December 2 to September 1. This legislation was motivated by the concept that, "[c]hildren who are older when they start kindergarten tend to perform better on standardized tests" (Simitian, 2010, p. 2).

When the structure and goals of instruction change, teachers must respond by modifying the way they manage the classroom. A transition period and some amount of professional support might help kindergarten teachers to successful adapt to the new curricular and pedagogical expectations. However, during the time of this dissertation project, Pacific Coast Unified did not offer professional development that specifically addressing kindergarten issues. In fact, during the 2012-2013 school year, the district did not openly offer professional development on the Common Core Standards at all, and the only courses available concerning elementary English Language Arts were scheduled during school hours[4]. However, district administrators remain focused on the district's previously mentioned goal to improve instruction in the primary grades.

In October 2011, a district administrator observed kindergarten and first grade classrooms at my elementary school site. After visiting about a dozen classrooms, the administrator communicated a desire to see greater differentiation in kindergarten writing and increased rigor in independent literacy activities. At my site, frustrated teachers have responded by leaving kindergarten. Over the last three years, kindergarten has experienced turnover rate above 55%. Of the current six kindergarten teachers, only one has remained at the grade level for three years.

Project Rationale

I suggest that there is value in providing kindergarten teachers with professional development opportunities on classroom management strategies that support new curricular and pedagogical goals. Through participating in a course with other kindergarten teachers working

[4] Information obtained from the website of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

in a similar context, I hoped that teachers would gain management competencies that improve their work and professional experience. I felt that this time of transition provided an opportunity for kindergarten teachers to make their classrooms into literacy environments that engage all students in enriching, authentic, appropriate literacy activities. Print-rich classroom environments can offer a variety of learning opportunities that engage students at their individual literacy level and can help teachers deliver targeted direct instruction (Inan, 2009; Morrow, Reutzel, & Casey, 2006).

This project engaged kindergarten teachers in a 6-week salary point class entitled Kinder Habitats. Kinder Habitats was designed from an ecological perspective, which considers the importance of literacy-rich classroom environments (Morrow et al., 2006; Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Fawson, 2004). The course provided an opportunity for teachers to learn about and discuss how the arrangement of the classroom and the management of materials can support independent engagement in literacy activities. I assessed the perceptions of teachers and looked for physical changes in classrooms after kindergarten teachers participated in the 6-week professional development. Teachers were recruited to participate in the study from the set of teachers who voluntarily enrolled in the Kinder Habitats course. Some teachers participated in the course, but not the study.

This is a mixed methods study. The intent was to learn about classroom literacy environments and teachers' perceptions. The quality of each participating teacher's literacy environment was measured using an observational rating instrument before and after a 6-week professional development intervention. Data collection methods also included: a pre- and post-course survey of beliefs and practices, written reflections, and surveys. This study describes the literacy materials and spaces that teachers feel are most beneficial in promoting independent

engagement in literacy activities. This study also reports on the teachers' experiences with the course. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. Based on the Classroom Literacy Environmental Profile (CLEP) Tool, as applied to photographic evidence of kindergarten classroom environments before and after the salary point class intervention, was there a change in:
    a. Provisioning of the classroom with literacy tools? (CLEP subscale 1)
    b. Arranging classroom space and literacy tools, gaining students' interest in literacy events, and sustaining students' interactions with literacy tools? (CLEP subscale 2)
2. What literacy tools and props do kindergarten teachers perceive to be:
    a. Engaging for students?
    b. Supportive of literacy skill development?
    c. Appropriate for independent use without adult support?
    d. Difficult to implement?
3. What arrangements of physical spaces/centers with literacy tools do kindergarten teachers perceive to be:
    a. Engaging for students?
    b. Supportive of literacy skill development?
    c. Appropriate for independent use without adult support?
    d. Difficult to implement?
4. To what extent do kindergarten teachers feel that participation in the professional development course helped them to:
    a. Manage literacy environments in which students could be more independent?

b. Supply literacy tools and props that encouraged student engagement in independent literacy events?

5. To what extent did participating in the class impact teachers' perceptions of student independence?

Significance of the Research

Findings describe the changes teachers made to their literacy environments. Information about how teachers arrange the physical classroom environment and what tools and props they supply in those environments helps to inform best practices. Findings on enactment challenges provide information about how kindergarten teachers can be supported. Results of the professional development series may be used to inform practice, policy, and the design of future professional development courses for teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is concerned with classroom management strategies that support independent literacy engagement in kindergarten. This chapter is divided into four main sections. Following a brief overview of classroom management, the first three sections will address issues pertaining to classroom management: (a) an introduction to the ecological perspective, (b) a discussion of management strategies relevant to literacy instruction, and (c) a consideration of classroom management in kindergarten. It should be noted that these three management topics are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they intersect in complex ways in kindergarten classrooms. Fourth, at the end of this chapter, I will explore how appropriate professional development could help teachers to integrate what is known about managing literacy environments into their own classroom practice.

Overview of Classroom Management

As explained in Chapter One, classroom management is central to the work of classroom teachers, yet it is infrequently studied, rarely addressed in a comprehensive manner for pre-service or in-service teachers, and sometimes difficult to define. Throughout this project, I will use Jere Brophy's (2006) definition: "*classroom management* refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities)" (p. 17). To be clear, classroom management is *not* curriculum or instruction. Rather, classroom management *supports* curriculum and instruction.

Part 1: An Ecological Perspective on Classroom Management

An *ecological perspective* on classroom management emerged in the late 1960s. As the term *ecology* implies, this approach has a lot in common with the biological sciences, especially animal behavior (Tinbergen, 1963). The central idea is that the *habitat*, the physical context, has significant consequences for the participants in that setting (Doyle, 2006). Roger Barker (1968) is known for his pioneering work in *ecological psychology*. Barker observed people in a variety of *behavior settings*, including stores, sporting events, museums, and offices. He found that settings prompted people to behave in predictable ways. In accordance with Barker's work, even preschoolers know what behaviors should be used to participate in common settings. In a seven month observation of preschoolers ($N = 30$), 3 and 4-year-olds demonstrated their knowledge and ability to adopt appropriate roles and use relevant tools to interact in play environments that mimicked authentic settings, such a post office or a doctor's office (Neuman & Roskos, 1997).

Jacob Kounin (a student of Barker) and Paul Gump (a colleague of Barker) worked together, and separately, to establish a foundation for an ecological perspective on classroom management (Doyle, 2006; Roskos & Neuman, 2001). From an ecological perspective, classroom management is about establishing order in the environment so that activities can successfully occur. According to ecological tradition, behavior settings are comprised of eco-behavioral units called *segments* or *synomorphs* (Doyle, 2006; Gump, 1974). Segments are activities. Reading circles, snack time, and spelling tests are all considered segments. Segments are bounded by space and time. For example, students read books in the library corner (space) from 10:15-10:30 a.m. (time; Gump, 1974).

Ecological studies typically examine activity segments and analyze changes to: patterns for arranging students (e.g., whole group vs. small group), materials used during the segment,

actions students need to take to complete the activity (e.g., read, write, talk), and rules governing behavior (Doyle, 2006). Changes to any of these factors can change student behavior.

Ecological Management Strategies: Looking at the Physical Environment

The physical design of the setting can support and prohibit different kinds of behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Brophy, 2006). For example, the arrangement of student desks in groups might support collaboration, while putting desks in rows might prohibit talking. The term *synomorphy* refers to the matching of the physical aspects of the setting with the intended activity (Brophy, 2006; Gump, 1974; Moore, 1986).

The physical environment is a common concern for those working from an ecological stance (Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Morrow et al., 2006; Roskos & Neuman, 2001; Wolfersberger et al., 2004). Research establishes a link between the classroom environment and student behavior. Day and Libertini (1992) coded the behavior of elementary students in a variety of instructional settings. Behavior within each environment was consistent; behavior across environments was different. Twelve of the eighteen behavior variables "achieved a level of significance equal or greater than .10 in the across-lesson analysis" (Day & Libertini, 1992, p. 20).

As it pertains to this study, classroom environments can be intentionally designed to encourage positive attitudes toward reading and writing as well as literacy engagement. Cunningham (2008) determined that preschoolers (N= 201) with the best attitudes toward reading and writing came from classrooms with the highest rated literacy environments. Morrow and Weinstein's (1982) experiment found that the addition of appealing library areas stocked with books significantly increased kindergartener's use of literature during free choice time. Literacy engagement extended beyond reading library books in the library corner to include other activities around the room such as: listening to books on tape and telling stories with a felt

board. Additional studies confirm the impact of the availability of print on student literacy engagement in and out of the classroom (Cunningham, 2008; Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman & Roskos, 1993).

Environments certainly influence behavior, but the behavior setting is of particular importance during the transition to kindergarten, which portends a significant ecological shift in the life of a young child. Entrance into formal schooling is typically abrupt and ushers in a multitude of changes in children's environments. First, kindergartens are typically located on elementary school campuses; children must learn to negotiate these large, complex sites. Within the classroom, kindergarteners are expected to adjust to higher adult-child ratios compared with preschool, childcare, or home settings. At the same time, these children will be expected to meet more stringent academic and social standards (Ladd, 1996).

Ladd (1996) writes that, "It is also likely that major environmental shifts, such as the transition to kindergarten, precipitate important transformations in the child" (p. 365). School adjustment, which is defined as "the degree to which students become interested, engaged, comfortable, and successful in the school environment" (p. 371), determines student perceptions of school. Students who have positive attitudes about school will be more likely to draw value from the school experience. Kindergarten teachers should consider ways to design the environment to provide resources that help students "cope with changing demands and challenges" (p. 383).

Thoughts on the Importance of an Ecological Approach and the Physical Milieu

Little has changed within the ecological framework in the last twenty years. This begs the question: is this framework still relevant? The fact that educational research has not furthered the ecological approach may be a reflection of broader trends in research. Echoing a general

decline in classroom research since the 1970s and 1980s, educational research has turned instead toward teachers, teacher education and culture. As a result of its relative age, two potential limits of the ecological perspective are that it does not address cognition or cultural factors (Doyle, 2006). However, looking at relevant literature and research, it is clear that the physical milieu of elementary and early childhood classrooms has long been, and continues to be, a salient consideration for practitioners.

Early childhood pedagogues have long emphasized the importance of the physical environment in supporting learning. Friedrich Froebel, who developed the concept and coined the term *kindergarten* in 19th century Germany, supported the establishment of places for young children to gather and learn (Graue, 2006). Maria Montessori (1967) wrote that, "The teacher's first duty is…to watch over the environment, and this takes precedence over all the rest" (p. 277). Provisioning the school environment with tools and props that met the special needs of children was one of Montessori's main goals. She designed child-sized tools and furniture. She even altered the architecture of buildings to make them more accessible to young children (Mooney, 2000).

Today, educators remain focused on classroom environment. Many of the major "brand-name" early childhood education programs, such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, High Scope and The Creative Curriculum, emphasize the design of interest areas, learning centers, and the arrangement of materials (Roskos & Christie, 2007a). An ethnographic study of a Reggio Emilia inspired program found that the environment can function as the *third teacher*, providing opportunities that satisfy young children's interests, trigger inquiry and support development and learning in relation to literacy (Inan, 2009). Author and consultant Debbie Diller (2008) writes to a large audience of elementary teachers about designing *spaces and places* to create

productive classroom literacy environments. Diller (2003) also recommends ways of provisioning these spaces with literacy tools and props. Classroom environment is a primary concern for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which advocates for the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice in classrooms serving children from birth through age eight (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The California Treasures language arts program makes classroom design recommendations that support differentiated instruction, including a how-to guide that details the number of literacy workstations teachers should create (Gibson & Fisher, 2007) and flip charts that describe activities that are appropriate for these workstations (August et al., 2010; Gibson & Fisher, 2007).

Even when teachers have a proscribed curriculum, they maintain at least some control over the physical environment. Teachers can arrange furnishings and materials in order to promote and prohibit behaviors. It is clear that an ecological approach to classroom management is relevant to teachers who want to manage enriched literacy environments that support differentiated instruction. Purposeful consideration of the classroom habitat may improve teachers' work and professional experiences.

Part 2: Managing Literacy Programs

Throughout this project, *literacy engagement* refers to participation in communicative activities involving reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking. The organization and management of teaching language arts should support the instructional and curricular goals of the literacy program. In the context of this study, Pacific Coast Unified teachers seek to deliver small group differentiated reading instruction to kindergarteners. This section looks to relevant literature in order to answer two questions regarding classroom management and literacy:

1. How does the design and arrangement of the physical classroom environment impact literacy behavior?
2. What is known about managing small group differentiated literacy instruction?

The Impact of the Physical Environment on Literacy Behavior

In line with an ecological perspective, evidence supports the impact of the physical environment on children's literacy experiences. I will now explain what is known about the design and organization of the physical space and the literacy materials supplied in the environment. I will then discuss how the environment can be reliably measured and analyzed.

The design and organization of space. Space is the primary physical element of the classroom environment. The quantity and use of space impact student behavior. Students need to have sufficient space, at least 25 square feet per child, in order to have quality interactions (Roskos & Neuman, 2001). Children in classrooms with limited space and crowding exhibit aggressive behavior (Smith & Connolly, 1977). Open classroom spaces may imply freedom of movement and the centrality of the student and student choice in the environment (Gump, 1974).

Allocating spaces within classrooms for different types of learning has been seen to increase literacy engagement across learning formats. Educators recommend that the classroom be intentionally organized and divided in to spaces in order to facilitate the types of work that should be done in those areas (Arndt, 2012; Day & Libertini, 1992). Organizing the environment in ways that are clear and purposeful appears to support learning (Roskos & Neuman, 2001). In one study, systematic naturalistic observations of 14 child care centers found greater sustained student engagement in spaces with clearly defined architecture when compared with classrooms with poorly defined spaces (Moore, 1986).

Organizing the classroom into discrete areas may improve learning. From a neurobiological perspective, children feel calm and safe when the environment is organized to meet their needs (Arndt, 2012). Brain research indicates that changing location introduces novelty and interest, and also helps the brain to remember (Ackerman, 1992). Kindergarten practitioners make use of this concept, as well as the understanding that it is counterproductive to ask young children to sit still for extended periods of time, by planning for student movement about the room (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Activity-based centers are often used in kindergartens.

Common suggestions for literacy areas that should be established in early childhood and elementary classrooms include: libraries and writing centers. In one experimental study of 13 kindergarten classrooms, engagement in literacy activities increased after library corners were added (Morrow & Weinstein, 1982). Writing centers are recommended in order to give young students an opportunity to develop writing skills concurrently with reading skills (Katims & Pierce, 1995). Managing writing activities that acknowledge the developmental needs of young children encourages productivity and enjoyment of writing (Lysaker, Wheat, & Benson, 2010). Widely used teacher resources, including district-adopted language arts programs, recommend establishing places in the classroom for reading and writing (Boushay & Moser, 2006; Diller, 2003).

When it comes to addressing the management of space in elementary and early literacy environments, it's a challenge to find a book written for practitioners that does not prominently feature learning centers. Lesley Mandel Morrow's (2012) *Literacy Development in the Early Years*, now in its seventh edition, provides descriptions of literacy centers, illustrations of elementary classroom configurations, and a checklist to help teachers evaluate their centers and

literacy environments. The fifth edition of *Elementary Classroom Management: Lessons from Research and Practice* (Weinstein, Romano, & Mignano, 2011), which is currently used as a textbook in the University of California Los Angles (UCLA) Teacher Education Program (TEP), has a chapter entitled *Designing the Physical Environment* which includes diagrams of classroom configurations as well as an adapted version of Morrow's checklist. Another book, written for elementary teachers, *Literacy Workstations: Making Centers Work* takes a deep dive into literacy centers, devoting chapters to specific types of literacy centers teachers create and offering numerous diagrams, photos, and resources (Diller, 2003). Books devoted solely to teaching kindergarten also have chapters devoted to the arrangement of the environment that features centers (Gullo, 2006; Jacobs & Crowley, 2010).

The organization and availability of literacy materials. Literacy materials include any physical object that supports student engagement in literacy activities. The literature refers to these objects as: *materials, tools, props,* or *manipulatives.* Literacy materials include books and print, as well as objects that support writing, listening, and speaking. Access to literacy objects that support language development is a generally considered a basic indicator of the richness of the environment (Neuman & Celano, 2001, 2012). The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (2012), which monitors education in nations across the globe, identifies the availability of literacy materials as an issue that calls for committed action.

Proximity to print has been shown to have a positive effect on literacy acquisition. Many researchers have described the print-richness of classroom settings, at least in part, based on the availability of books (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, & Teale, 1993; Hoffman, Sailors, Duffy, & Beretvas, 2004; Morrow et al., 2006; Wolfersberger et al., 2004). In one experimental study, over 330 childcare centers were flooded with high-quality books. A random sample of 400

children showed that students in the experimental group scored significantly higher on measures of early literacy skills, which included: concepts of print and writing, letter naming, receptive language, environmental print, and narrative competence. These gains were still evident six months later when students were in kindergarten (Neuman, 1999). In addition to books, other materials should also be furnished.

A study of elementary school teachers ($N = 17$) who taught cooperative learning lessons found that the use of manipulatives encouraged peer engagement. Fifty-six lessons were reviewed. Nine of the 12 most successful lessons incorporated some type of manipulatives (e.g., props for demonstrations and role plays, construction materials, and tactile math supports; Emmer & Gerwels, 2002).

Similar to recommendations for center design, as previously mentioned, it is easy to find lists of materials that are suggested to support literacy activities. These lists may be subsections of other checklists (Morrow, 2012; Weinstein et al., 2011). Or, materials suggestions may be exhaustive, describing nearly every material imaginable that can support literacy work (Diller, 2003).

No one would argue against the idea that an environment rich in literacy resources is helpful for literacy engagement. However, observational studies indicate that many classrooms are not adequately furnished. In a study of 183 diverse elementary classrooms in (grades K-5), 44.3% had classroom libraries, and only nine percent of these classrooms were of *good* quality or better. Twelve percent of classrooms were found to have no trade books at all (Fractor et al., 1993). Another study compared access to print in low-income and middle-income communities and found that children living in low-income neighborhoods had inadequate access to print in the school environment (Neuman & Celano, 2001). Neuman and Celano's (2001) project was part

of a larger, 3-year study that looked at the impact of the community on early childhood literacy. This study looked at four neighborhoods in Philadelphia: two low-income and two middle-income. As part of the project, preschool and school libraries were analyzed. Analyses of variance indicated statistically significant differences in the availability and quantity of book collections in preschools and even greater gaps in school libraries. Some middle-income school libraries had twice as many books as lower-income school libraries. They also had more computers and trained school librarians with an average of 12 years of experience and master's degrees. Lower-income school libraries did not have trained staff. In fact, staffing was so short, that low-income school libraries were frequently closed.

Measurement and analysis of the literacy environment. Reliable measures of classroom effectiveness have been developed and validated for use by practitioners and researchers. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) measure, the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation tool (ELLCO), and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) are three reliable instruments that are widely used to describe classroom environments and literacy programs. Each of these three instruments was designed to measure a different aspect of classroom effectiveness. The CLASS is an observation tool that focuses on the quality of teacher-student interactions (Pianta, 2006). The ELLCO measures five key literacy elements: classroom structure, curriculum, the language environment, books and reading, and print and writing (Smith, Brady, & Clark-Chiarelli, 2008). The SACERS[5] looks at many categories including: space and furnishings (indoor and outdoor), health and safety, activities, interactions, program structure, staff development, and special needs (Harms, Vineberg Jacobs,

[5] An early childhood version of the SACERS has also been developed: the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R). Either version may be applied in kindergarten.

& Romano White, 1996). From these categories, a broad definition of effectiveness is established.

Although the CLASS, ELLCO, and SACERS have been widely used, they are not designed to look deeply at the physical aspects of the literacy environment. The Classroom Literacy Environmental Profile (CLEP) Tool, however, is an observational measure that looks explicitly at the physical arrangement of the classroom space and the provisioning of literacy tools and props. During the initial phase of development, Wolfersberger et al. (2004) reviewed 223 articles, chapters, and books examining the implementation of *print-rich* of classroom environments, carried out observations of 53 elementary classrooms, and conducted teacher focus groups ($N = 34$). They found that the physical arrangement of the classroom space and the provisioning of literacy tools and props impact student interest and engagement in literacy activities. They then created the model depicted in Figure 1 to show the interactive relationship between student behavior and aspects of print-rich literacy environments.

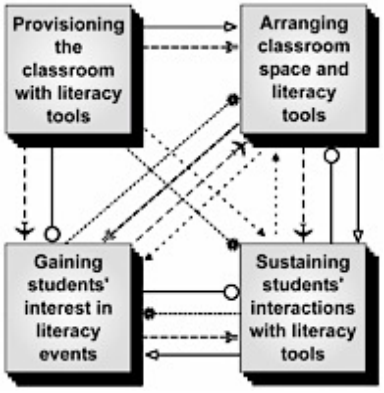

Figure 1. Interactive relationship among the four dimensions of print-rich classroom literacy environments.

Based on their understanding of how spaces and literacy tools influence student engagement, Wolfersberger et al. (2004) developed and validated an observational rating instrument. The CLEP Tool assesses the print-richness of elementary classrooms along two

subscales: (a) *provisioning of the classroom with literacy tools* (CLEP subscale 1), and (b) *arranging classroom space and literacy tools, gaining students' interest in literacy events, and sustaining students' interactions with literacy tools* (CLEP subscale 2).

Differentiated Instruction and Small Groups

Differentiated instruction: benefits students, is required by Pacific Coast Unified, and presents a management challenge for teachers. This section reviews what is known about differentiated instruction and managing classrooms with instructional groups.

Differentiated instruction is nothing new. In a one-room schoolhouse filled with children of various ages, it was necessary for the teacher to tailor instruction for students. Differentiated instruction is a natural aspect of teaching. Look at parents. When parents realize that what worked for their first child doesn't work for their second, they simply try a different approach. Teachers understand that children, even when they have been pre-sorted into classrooms by chronological age, do not need the same things at the same time (Rogoff, 2003).

Carol Tomlinson has written 15 books on the topic of differentiated instruction and curriculum for practitioners (Curry School of Education, 2013). She explains, "Differentiation stems from the research-based perspective that students will engage more fully with learning and will learn more robustly when teachers proactively plan with their differences—as well as their similarities—in mind" (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 87). Recently, Tomlinson co-authored a book with David Sousa to explain how new discoveries in brain research support differentiated instruction (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). There are several neurological understandings that make differentiated instruction especially worthwhile. First, every brain is organized differently, which results in learning preferences. For example, a student might have a preference for learning in a group or alone. These preferences can be provided for with instructional

adjustments. Second, when students are working at an appropriate level, they will have greater opportunity to engage in higher-level thinking, which builds cognitive networks. Third, learning is emotional and social. When a student is given appropriate goals and she is able to achieve these goals, she feels validated. Chemicals that stimulate the brain's reward system are released, and the student remains motivated. Learning that occurs in a constructive social group is even more rewarding. A supportive classroom and peer group can enhance self-concept and contribute to the development of executive function.

In addition to differentiated instruction, research also favors small groups. A meta-analysis examined data from 145 sources in order to understand within-class groupings and student achievement. An average achievement effect size of +0.17 was found, favoring small group learning (Lou et al., 1996). In a follow-up study, even greater favor was given to small groups. Under optimal conditions (which included the manner in which groups were composed and assessed), small group instruction had a "large positive effect (*E*= about 1) for elementary students of all ability levels" (Lou, Abrami, & Spence, 2000, p. 108). Another study made use of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), which is conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). From these data, which used a nationally representative sample, the effects of within-class ability grouping on kindergarten reading growth were examined. Teachers' use of ability groups was positively correlated with student reading growth during the kindergarten year (McCoach, O'Connell, & Levitt, 2006). A somewhat related study targeted kindergarten students who were at risk for reading failure ($N = 83$). Students who participated in small groups with direct, explicit intervention out-performed students in the comparison group (Kamps et al., 2008). Small

groups, within-class ability grouping, and extra attention for struggling students all appear to support literacy development.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to argue with the idea that students benefit from instruction that meets their needs. In Pacific Coast Unified, the reading program, McGraw-Hill's *California Treasures* (August et al., 2010), the progress monitoring system, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and the Response to Intervention model (RtI) *all* require that students receive instruction, in small groups, that meets their literacy needs. The problem is, it's quite a challenge to manage small group differentiated instruction (Barker, 1968; Cambourne, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002; Kamps et al., 2008). First, the teacher needs to use a system for measuring and evaluating the needs of students and matching those needs with appropriate instruction. She then creates flexible groups, schedules, and lessons; organizes materials and keeps records (Diller, 2007). What the teacher does with the small group during differentiated instruction is actually the lesser concern for many teachers, and for this project. The greater concern is: what is the rest of the class doing while the teacher is working with a small group (Cambourne, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002; Morrow, 2012)?

Student independence during small group instruction. An Australian study, aptly entitled *What Do I Do with the Rest of the Class? The Nature of Teaching-Learning Activities*, collected observational data from nine elementary classrooms over the course of nine years (Cambourne, 2001). The author characterizes successful independent literacy activities as: tied to other class content (not isolated events), clear in purpose, collaborative, involve multiple modes of language, encourage transfer of meaning, open-ended, cost-effective and developmentally appropriate. Interestingly, similar independent activities enjoyed different levels of success across classrooms. The author concluded that the expertise of the teacher is a

crucial part of the success of independent activities. He suggests that teachers need, "time, opportunity, and support to develop such professionalism" (p. 135).

Small group differentiated instruction is on the rise and students are spending a substantial amount of time away from the teacher. According to Ford and Opitz (2002), teachers are wondering how to make independent time as rigorous and engaging as teacher time. They suggest thinking critically about how centers can support literacy. Their suggestions include: teach students how to work successfully and independently at the center, choose activities that are deeply engaging, match activities to district goals, make success attainable, and establish routines that maintain order.

Differentiated small group literacy instruction appears to be fairly dependent on the design and organization of the environment. Centers seem to play an important role. There are, however, strategies for differentiating instruction that are less dependent on centers. Tiered assignments, modified content, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and independent study are a few such strategies (Tomlinson, 1999). Some of these strategies might work in upper elementary settings, but for the most part, kindergarteners have not achieved the emotional or academic independence to successfully engage in these types of complex activities without support (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

I will conclude this section on managing small group differentiated literacy instruction by describing a chapter from a commonly used pre-service textbook on classroom management. In *Elementary Classroom Management: Lessons from Research and Practice* (Weinstein, Romano, & Mignano, 2011), which is used by the UCLA TEP, there is a chapter entitled *Managing Independent Work*, which the authors say "almost didn't get written" (p. 252). The group of elementary teachers that contributed to the production of the book felt that *independent work* was

the same thing as *seatwork*, which has a negative connotation. Often, perhaps too often, students are given seatwork for the purpose of keeping them busy and seated. This kind of work may be unfulfilling, but gives the teacher uninterrupted time. The contributing teacher-authors felt that independent work was *not* a topic they wanted to present to novice teachers. However, the group eventually conceded that there are times, such as meeting with a small instructional group, that independent work would be needed. The chapter concludes with the idea that alternatives to worksheets should be used. Suggestions include: authentic reading and writing activities, listening centers, ongoing projects, and learning centers (Morrow et al., 2006). The unfolding of this chapter seems to illustrate a gap between what is presented in teacher training materials, and the reality of what is needed to successfully manage classrooms with considerable amounts of small group differentiated instruction.

Part 3: Classroom Management in Kindergarten

The previous two sections offered an explanation of the ecological perspective on classroom management as well as a discussion on how literacy programs are managed. Classroom management is intended to support the teacher's objectives. In this section, I will consider the goals of kindergarten and look to relevant literature and research to describe the extent to which these goals are being met.

The Purposes of Kindergarten

The purposes of kindergarten are in flux. Kindergartens were first introduced in the United States as play-based, nurturing programs to prepare children for the transition to school (Fromberg, 2006; Gullo, 2006). Similar to today's preschool, children participated in kindergarten before entering formal school. Today, 98% of children attend at least half-day kindergarten (Zill & West, 2001). Paradoxically, states don't have uniform policies that secure

kindergarten's position as the first year of school. In most states, including California, kindergarten is not compulsory (California Department of Education, 2013), eight states do not require school districts to provide kindergarten, 12 states do not have kindergarten standards (Kaurez, 2005). States also lack uniform guidelines establishing the length of the kindergarten school day and the age students should be to enroll (Kaurez, 2005). Lack of regulation should not be confused, however, with a lackadaisical attitude about kindergarten expectations, especially in California.

California has adopted the new, more rigorous Common Core Standards (Sacramento County Office of Education, 2010). One noteworthy change is that kindergarteners will need to generate more language. Kindergarteners will need to produce opinion pieces and informative/ explanatory writing, as well as participate in collaborative conversations.

The California Department of Education (2011b) suggests that students will be best prepared to succeed in kindergarten in light of these changes if they participate in a high-quality preschool program before entering kindergarten. Since universal preschool is not offered in California (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005), and kindergarteners and their teachers have little to no control over educational opportunities before the kindergarten year, prerequisite recommendations may be somewhat wishful thinking. One piece of recent legislation may help students to reach academic goals. Senate Bill 1381 changes the eligibility age for children to enroll in kindergarten from five years old by December 2 to September 1. This legislation was motivated by the idea that starting school at a slightly older age improves academic performance and social development (Simitian, 2010).

Concern over the pushing down of academic standards into kindergarten isn't new. Over 25 years ago, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) published

its first position statement describing developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood settings in order to provide guidance for teachers in part because of the, "growing trend to push down curriculum and teaching methods more appropriate for older children to kindergarten and preschool programs" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. viii). The concern is that a narrow focus on academic outcomes may be inappropriate for young children (Bryant, Clifford, & Peisner, 1991; Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, & Charlesworth, 1998; Burts et al., 1990; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Graue, 2006; Neuman & Roskos, 2005).

The NAEYC has become the nation's largest and most influential organization working to promote *developmentally appropriate practice* (DAP) in early childhood and elementary settings. DAP is grounded in theory of child development, which consider the biological, emotional, and psychological changes that occur as children mature (Crain, 2005). NAEYC makes use of current research to publish guidelines for early childhood practitioners. These guidelines appear in the book *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, which has been considered an essential resource in the field of early childhood since it was first published in 1987 (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). I will refer to these guidelines for recommendations on kindergarten classroom management later in this section.

Although academic expectations in kindergarten may be changing, children are not. A recent validation of the Gesell Developmental Observation-Revised and Gesell Early Screener determined that three to six-year-old children are still reaching important developmental milestones in much the same timeframe as they did when Dr. Arnold Gesell first collected and published his data in 1925 (Gesell Institute of Child Development, 2012). Let's take a look at a few things we know about kindergarteners.

Kindergarteners are in the process of acquiring the ability to regulate emotional behavior (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Ladd, 1996). Social-emotional development finds kindergarteners beginning to control their behavior in socially acceptable ways (Jacobs & Crowley, 2010). While kindergarteners frequently enjoy physical and social activity and sensory exploration, the motivation to learn in formal ways typically begins to develop later, in the primary grades (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Kindergarteners can be uncooperative or unwilling to work with district-adopted literacy materials such as workbooks because they are uninterested and because they cannot sit still for extended periods of time (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Still, kindergarteners have the capacity to learn to read and write. However, the delivery of reading and writing instruction should be developmentally appropriate.

It would appear that kindergarten has two main purposes. The first goal is to meet children where they are developmentally and help the youngest elementary students transition to a formal school environment, which may be quite different from their previous home, preschool, or childcare setting. The second goal is to provide instruction that results in kindergarteners becoming emergent readers and writers by the end of the school year. As discussed in Part 2 of this literature review, teachers are struggling to manage targeted literacy instruction. Unfortunately, evidence also indicates that kindergarten teachers are struggling with providing developmentally appropriate environments. Next, I will look at recommendations and research on kindergarten classroom management.

What's Happening in the Kinder Habitat?

The NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) guidelines urge practitioners to make decisions based on the needs of the individual children and the typical

needs of children of specified age groups (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). When it comes to managing the kindergarten classroom, specific suggestions are made. On the physical design of classroom space, guidelines suggest that teachers provide, "several discrete areas in the room where children can interact with peers and materials" (p. 221). Student desks should not be, "set up in rows, limiting children's interaction with peers" (p. 221). Rather, the environment should include, "a variety of spaces for working, such as learning centers and tables of different sizes; a comfortable library area and other quiet places for independent work or conversations with friends" (p. 221).

The DAP guidelines also recommend that "[t]eachers allocate extended periods of time in learning centers (60 minutes or more in full-day and at least 45 minutes in half-day kindergarten) so that children are able to get deeply involved in an activity at a complex level" and "[t]he classroom includes a dramatic play area to which all children have frequent access" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 222). Recommendations about learning tools and props are also made. Copple and Bredekamp (2009) suggest that

> Teachers provide a variety of engaging learning experiences and hands-on materials. Materials include books, writing materials, math-related games and manipulatives, natural objects and tools for science investigations, CDs and musical instruments, art materials, props for dramatic play, and blocks (and computers, if budget allows). (p. 222)

Kindergarten teachers struggle to manage developmentally appropriate classrooms. Research has found a lack of developmentally appropriate practice in kindergartens. A 1991 study of 103 randomly-selected kindergartens in North Carolina found that only 20% of classrooms met or exceeded standards for developmentally appropriate practice. This study found that too much time was spent in whole group didactic instruction and that not enough time was spent in small group or individualized instruction. Researchers also found that worksheets and rote exercises were overused, while hands-on, experiential learning was underutilized. A

combination of classroom observations and teacher and principal questionnaires found that the best predictor of developmentally appropriate practice in kindergarten was the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten teachers and principals about the importance of using DAP strategies (Bryant et al., 1991).

Another study of 223 kindergarten classrooms across three states found that children spent 44% of the day in whole group activities and only 18% of the day working in centers. This finding demonstrates a lack of developmentally appropriate practice. This study also found that teacher interactions with children and child-centered classroom climate were negatively impacted by the degree of poverty in the student population and by increased student to adult ratios. This study found a very wide variation in kindergarten instruction. The most important predictor of high-quality observational rating in this study was decreased student to adult ratio (Pianta et al., 2002).

A 2009 study of 730 kindergarten classrooms in six states used three observational measures to analyze the quality of teacher-student interaction, exposure to content areas, and instructional groupings. Again, students were found to spend too much time in whole group settings and not enough time in centers. According to the CLASS observational measure, 33% of children were exposed to high-quality Emotional Support. However, only 10% were exposed to high-quality Classroom Organization and none of the students had consistent exposure to high-quality Instructional Support. In this study, classrooms with more children-per-adult experienced lower quality programs overall. Teachers with more experience teaching kindergarten had more organized, well-managed classrooms. Teachers were also measured on levels of depression and attitudes. Higher levels of depression were negatively correlated with levels of support across all three CLASS domains. Teachers who reported traditional attitudes

rather than progressive, child-centered attitudes scored lower across observational measures (La Paro et al., 2009).

Child-centered classroom planning appears to impact student welfare. One study found that kindergartners who do not have their developmental needs met experience stress (Burts et al., 1990). Classroom observers used a Classroom Child Stress Behavior Instrument to measure over 50 indicators of stress. These indicators included a variety of behaviors, from nail biting to fighting. The researchers found that "[m]ore center, group story, and transition activities were found in the appropriate classroom, whereas there were more whole group and workbook/worksheet activities in the inappropriate classroom" (p. 407).

The developmental appropriateness of many kindergarten classrooms is impacted by a paucity of literacy tools in classrooms. After collecting data from 183 elementary classrooms, one study found that 89% of classrooms were inadequately stocked with books (Fractor et al., 1993). Classrooms most deficient in literacy materials tend to be those serving children who are at risk (Cunningham, 2008; Neuman, 1999; Pianta et al., 2002). A study of 201 five and six-year-olds from a large, urban, Midwestern school district, showed that economically disadvantaged children were most likely to experience classroom environments that were rated as *deficient* based on the ELLCO (Cunningham, 2008).

Another Way of Looking at Literacy in Kindergarten: Play and Language

In early childhood settings, the play environment and the literacy environment often overlap (Roskos & Christie, 2007a). In studying the behavior of preschoolers, researchers discovered that play not only supports speech, but that pre-readers pretend to read and write during play (Roskos & Neuman, 2001). How these experiences effect later academic achievements in not well understood (Roskos & Christie, 2007b). However, early playful

experiences with books, texts, and language support and motivate children to develop literacy skills. Creating opportunities for kindergarteners to be playful should be considered as a literacy strategy.

Some studies of play and literacy operate from an ecological framework. In one pre-school study, a classroom was re-designed to introduce three play theme areas: a restaurant, a post office, and a doctor's office (Neuman & Roskos, 1997). Once students were acquainted with the organization of each setting and the tools and procedures within the context of each setting, they engaged in a wide range of intentional literacy activities: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Another study found that play areas provided a catalyst for paper handling, reading, and writing in preschool settings (Morrow, 1990). The frequency of literacy engagement increased when play areas were stocked with literacy tools and when an adult encouraged literacy behavior. Even kindergarten classrooms with mandated literacy programs find it worthwhile to carve out time for play (Kontovourki & Siegel, 2009). In further support of play, neo-Vygotskians consider symbolic play and dramatic play to be meaning-making events, important to the development of language and literacy (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Lysaker et al., 2010; Roskos & Neuman, 2001).

Teacher Effects in Kindergarten

Kindergarten teachers, although working to bridge preschool and formal school, are, in California public schools, trained as elementary school teachers. *Early childhood* and *elementary* education are represented by two distinct traditions. Early childhood teacher education is child-centered and constructivist, wherein teachers strive to offer children experiences that meet their developmental needs (Carter & Doyle, 2006). Elementary school culture increasingly emphasizes achievement and academic outcomes (Ravitch, 2011; Rose, 2009). Even when

kindergarten teachers understand the principles of developmentally appropriate practice, they struggle to implement them (Bryant et al., 1991). In the final section of this chapter, I will look at how professional development could help teachers to manage literacy environments in kindergarten.

Part 4: Looking at Professional Development

A review of the literature clarifies some important aspects of managing kindergarten literacy programs. Children benefit from: enriched environments, small group differentiated instruction, and developmentally appropriate practice. It is also clear that implementation lags behind practice. In this section, I will first provide an overview of studies on professional development. I will then offer a discussion of professional development on classroom management with a focus on topics relevant to this study.

Studies on Professional Development: Managing Early Childhood Literacy Environments

Evidence supports professional development as a strategy for improving practice. An experimental study conducted in eighteen urban kindergarten classrooms found that professional development significantly impacted literacy programs. Teachers were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: 30 hours of training and provisioning of books, provisioning of books without training, or control (no books and no training). Students whose teachers participated in the training group had a significantly stronger understanding of concepts about print than the students in either of the other treatments. Training participants also had highly rated classroom environments. Unfortunately, the study design did not include a condition wherein teachers received training and no materials. Had this condition been included, we might better understand the impact of the professional development alone (McGill-Franzen, Allington, Yokoi, & Brooks, 1999).

Another study showed that professional development has a positive effect on the manner that preschool teachers support language and early literacy. Thirty Head Start teachers participated in the Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP), which provided professional development over the course of several months. These teachers were compared with a comparison group of wait-listed teachers who were interested but not permitted to enroll in the program. Multiple hierarchical regression analyses revealed moderate to large positive effects on literacy support and instruction (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007).

A later study's results conflict with Dickinson and Caswell's findings (2007). Neuman and Cunningham (2009) randomly assigned participants from 291 center- and home-based care sites to one of three conditions: 3-credit course in early language and literacy, course and ongoing coaching, or control (no course and no coaching). An analysis of covariance test indicated that there was no significant difference between the groups regarding teacher knowledge. However, there was statistically significant growth in literacy practices for study participants who received ongoing coaching. Neuman and Cunningham attribute their findings not to the course, which was of high quality, but to "linkage between theory and practice" (p. 558). A subsequent study described the "active ingredients" of coaching, "Our coaching model was designed to be diagnostic and prescriptive, highlighting careful planning, reflection, and goal-driven strategies to improve language and literacy instruction" (Neuman & Wright, 2010, p. 83).

Professional Development on Classroom Management

Pre-service and in-service instruction in classroom management both intend to help teachers develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for implementing organized classroom programs. Although this study is concerned with in-service professional

development, it's notable that students from pre-service programs, "frequently rate the attention given to classroom management as woefully inadequate" (Jones, 2006, p. 887). Classroom management is the most commonly expressed concern of new teachers (Allensworth et al., June 2009; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Jones, 2006; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Yet, teacher preparation programs often fail to provide students with a comprehensive and coherent study of the principles and skills of classroom management (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Jones, 2006). Any plan for in-service professional development should be conscious of the fact that some teachers may have received minimal training before entering the profession.

It is suggested that teachers go through three stages of classroom management development. First is a survival stage. Teachers may be able to explain how to conduct a smooth-running classroom, but they are unable to implement techniques. During the second stage, teachers focus on routines and procedures. In the third stage, teachers manage an orderly environment and are able to focus student needs (Jones, 2006; Kagan, 1992).

In a meta-analysis of 100 studies on classroom management, four aspects of classroom management were, when effectively employed, seen to decrease disruptions (Marzano et al., 2003). Effect sizes for each of these four aspects were averaged and a percentile decrease in disruptions was calculated: rules and procedures decreased disruptions by 28%, disciplinary interventions by 32%, teacher-student relationships by 31%, mental set by 40%. Marzano et al. (2003) recommend an in-service professional development program developed by Carolyn M. Evertson called the Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP).

COMP is an inquiry-based approach to staff development. Students of teachers who participate in this program benefit from increased time on task and academic performance

(Jones, 2006). COMP is based on four principles and the idea that, "Effective classroom management is proactive, not reactive. In effective classrooms, management and instruction are interwoven. Students are active participants in the learning environment. Teachers working together synergistically help one another" (COMP, 2012). COMP leads teachers to develop their own management plan. The COMP process asks teachers to: identify problem areas, examine related educational research, problem-solve by using hypothetical scenarios, and apply proposed solutions in their own classrooms (Jones, 2006). COMP received validation from the U.S. Department of Education's National Diffusion Network for three claims of effectiveness: gains in academic effectiveness as measured by standardized tests, improved classroom environments that are more supportive of student learning, and positive impact on student behavior (decrease in disruptive and inappropriate behavior, increase in on-task behavior; COMP, 2012).

The collaborative premise of COMP is echoed in the model of professional learning communities. The four characteristics of professional learning communities are: (a) shared mission, vision, and values; (b) collective inquiry; (c) collaborative teams; and (d) action orientation and experimentation (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Teachers can work together to address management issues pertaining to their similar contexts.

Conclusion

Kindergarten teachers struggle to implement both small group differentiated instruction and developmentally appropriate practice. The research clearly indicates that effective professional development in classroom management is needed to support kindergarten literacy programs. This project offered Pacific Coast Unified kindergarten teachers a course that

addressed their objective: managing appropriate literacy environments that support independent literacy engagement.

Carter and Doyle (2006) suggest that looking at the effectiveness of early childhood classroom management is a limited approach because techniques that might be effective in one context may not be effective in another. This idea is echoed by Cambourne (2001), who notes that activities that were successful in one classroom weren't in another. Rather, Carter and Doyle (2006) suggest that we can learn from the narratives of experienced teachers. In the *real world*, they suggest that the daily task of implementing classroom management strategies is complex and challenging work. Looking at teacher practice, as in this study, improves our understanding of how kindergarten teachers manage differentiated literacy programs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This project engaged kindergarten teachers in a 6-week salary point course entitled *Kinder Habitats*. Kinder Habitats provided an opportunity for teachers to learn about and discuss how literacy-rich environments can support independent engagement in literacy activities. Participants engaged with literature, examples, and peer discussions that promote literacy-rich environments. The logic model (Figure 2) illustrates this project's theory of change.

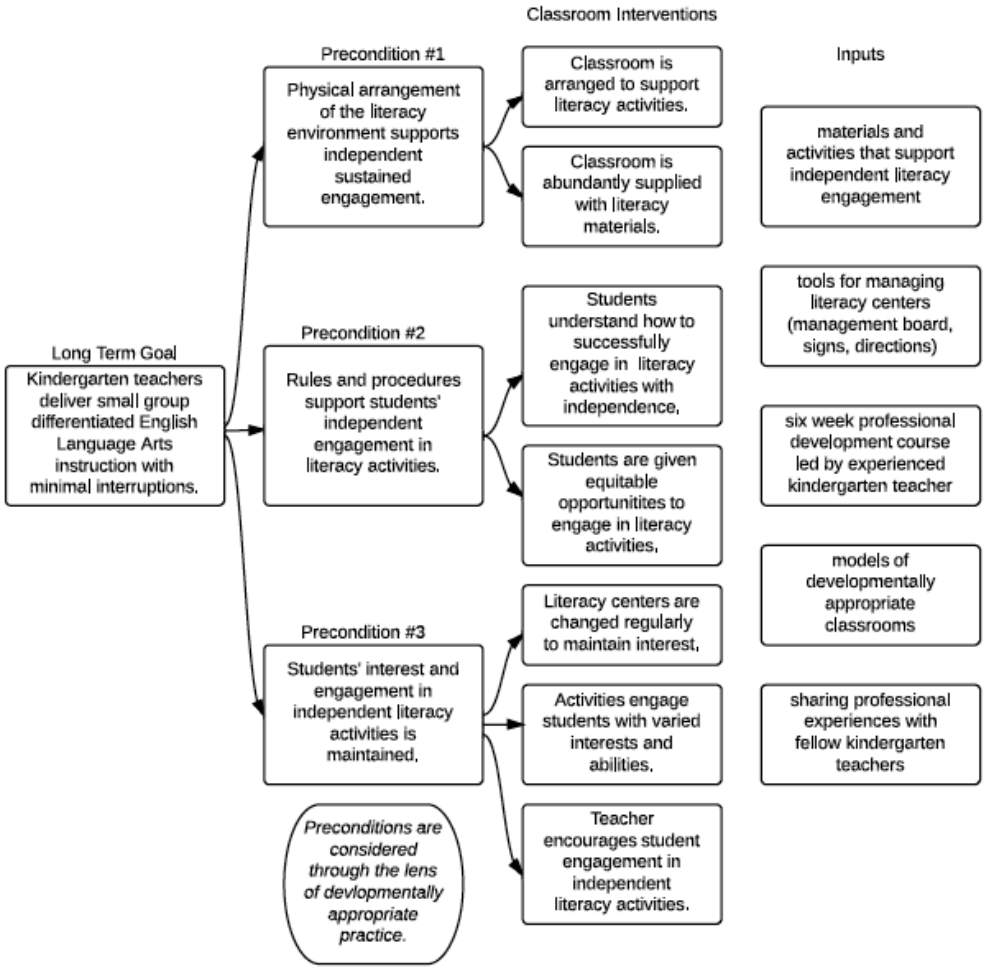

Figure 2. Kinder habitats theory of change.

Ultimately, teachers seek to deliver small group differentiated instruction. Three preconditions are essential to establishing student independence in literacy activities, which allow teachers to realize their goal: the design and provisioning of the environment, rules and procedures that direct behavior, and maintaining student interest in activities. All three preconditions are considered in the context of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). DAP is a framework, grounded in child development theory, that helps match activities with the way young children learn (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). DAP does not define curriculum, but it does describe a way of understanding how to manage classrooms that support young children.

This project was cognizant of the needs of kindergarteners who may be new to the school experience and are either pre-readers or emergent readers. Kinder Habitats was designed to support teachers in discussing and testing classroom interventions that support the preconditions of this theory of change. The course presented appropriate materials and activities to support independent literacy engagement as well as tools and techniques for managing centers. Participants were given opportunities to learn about the practices of others engaged in similar work. Teachers engaged in discussions with each other and the experienced instructor and were exposed to other kindergarten classrooms as models.

This study's intention was to assess the perceptions of teachers and look for physical changes in classrooms after kindergarten teachers participated in the 6-week professional development. The research questions that guided my study were:

1. Based on the Classroom Literacy Environmental Profile (CLEP) Tool, as applied to photographic evidence of kindergarten classroom environments before and after the salary point class intervention, was there a change in:
    a. Provisioning of the classroom with literacy tools? (CLEP subscale 1)

b. Arranging classroom space and literacy tools, gaining students' interest in literacy events, and sustaining students' interactions with literacy tools? (CLEP subscale 2)

2. What literacy tools and props do kindergarten teachers perceive to be:
    a. Engaging for students?
    b. Supportive of literacy skill development?
    c. Appropriate for independent use without adult support?
    d. Difficult to implement?
3. What arrangements of physical spaces/centers with literacy tools do kindergarten teachers perceive to be:
    a. Engaging for students?
    b. Supportive of literacy skill development?
    c. Appropriate for independent use without adult support?
    d. Difficult to implement?
4. To what extent do kindergarten teachers feel that participation in the professional development course helped them to:
    a. Manage literacy environments in which students could be more independent?
    b. Supply literacy tools and props that encouraged student engagement in independent literacy events?
5. To what extent did participating in the class impact teachers' perceptions of student independence?

Research Design

Several previous studies examined in-service professional development on managing early childhood literacy programs. Some of these studies used experimental designs to compare types of interventions (McGill-Franzen et al., 1999; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Neuman & Wright, 2010). An interesting finding, and a line of inquiry that I elected to pursue here, is that effective classroom management in-service training is closely aligned with the specific needs of teachers (COMP, 2012; Jones, 2006; Marzano et al., 2003; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Neuman & Wright, 2010).

This study of how Pacific Coast Unified kindergarten teachers manage their literacy programs contributes to our understanding of the decision-making of early childhood educators in the context of contemporary early elementary settings. This is a mixed methods study operating from a pragmatic worldview (Creswell, 2009). I used multiple approaches to understand how teachers manage their environments and the extent to which the Kinder Habitats course impacted classroom literacy environments, teacher behavior, and perceptions. My understanding of effective classroom management is context specific. This study focused on what works for teachers in their current work environments. The findings from this study are inherently limited in generalizability.

The quality of each participating teacher's literacy environment was measured using an observational rating instrument before and after the 6-week professional development intervention. The beliefs and practices of participants were also measured using a survey instrument. Statistical analyses determined the extent to which literacy environments, beliefs, and self-reported practices changed. Written reflections and survey responses were used to collect data on participant perceptions.

Throughout the study, I acted as a *participant as observer* (Fullan, 2006). All members of the group were aware of my observer activities, which were subordinate to my role as a participant. I was involved in setting the group's primary goals and designing activities central to meeting those goals. My status as an experienced kindergarten teacher made me an in-group member across many contexts. However, since I was the principal actor in this study, I did not take a peripheral role. I set the agenda for workshops and selected survey tools and rubrics.

Site and Population

Changing the management of literacy environments was a stated goal of Pacific Coast Unified. At the time of this study, the district was already asking kindergarten teachers to deliver small group differentiated literacy instruction. As part of the approval process, the district agreed that the professional development course content and the study objectives supported district priorities.

Pacific Coast Unified is a populous district spanning a large geographic area. During the 2011-2012 school year, there were approximately 57,344 kindergarteners enrolled in this district (California Department of Education, 2012b). With kindergarten class sizes at about 24 students, Pacific Coast Unified employs over 2,000 kindergarten teachers. Due to the size of the district, the course and the study were publicized primarily at elementary schools in the southern quarter of the district.

Approximately one month before the class started, I met with the district's Instructional Area Superintendent to discuss how the Kinder Habitats course might support regional objectives. I was subsequently invited to present the course as an opportunity for teachers at local principals' meetings. School principals were given hard copies as well as electronic

version of an informational flyer (Appendix B). This information was then disseminated to teachers. Interested teachers contacted me directly to enroll.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this study (Merriam, 2009). To enroll in the salary point class, participants had to be either a current or prospective kindergarten teacher employed by the school district. To participate in the study, participants had to currently teach a self-contained general education kindergarten class and have access to a complete district-approved language arts curriculum and assessment program. Transitional Kindergarten teachers, i.e., those assigned to teach the first of a two-year kindergarten program, a provision of Senate Bill 1381, the law changing the age-eligibility for kindergarten, were permitted to participate in the study. All course participants who volunteered to be part of the study and met the criteria were included in the sample.

Kindergarten teachers who chose to participate in this project did so voluntarily, outside of their assigned duties with the district. Teachers who chose not to participate in the study were not precluded from taking the companion salary point class. Teachers who were ineligible to receive the salary point credit because of their non-contractual employment status with the district were invited to participate in both the class and the study. Nineteen teachers participated in the class, missing no more than one session. Fourteen of these teachers completed all aspects of the course, including outside assignments. Two of these teachers could not be considered study participants because they taught multi-grade special education classes. This study examines the experiences of 12 kindergarten teachers.

These 12 teachers worked at nine different elementary schools. All of these sites are Title I schools[6]. Teachers had between five and 30 years of teaching experience (*M*= 14.17 years) and between 1 and 15 years of experience teaching kindergarten (*M*= 4.92 years). Eight of the teachers had less than five years of experience in kindergarten. Three teachers had some experience teaching preschool, which is relevant because of this study's interest in developmentally appropriate practice, a concept closely associated with preschool instruction.

Professional Development Overview

I developed the Kinder Habitats course during the summer of 2012. The goal of this course was to help kindergarten teachers manage enriched literacy environments that support independence. I organized the class sessions by focusing on expectations as described in the incoming Common Core State Standards for kindergarten. The course was also shaped by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) recommendations for DAP.

The activities and ideas presented during the course were informed by relevant research and literature as well as practitioner knowledge. In addition to extensive reading of peer-reviewed research summarized in Chapter Two, I attended regional and national kindergarten conferences in the months before submitting the course for district approval. Learnings from the *Southern California Kindergarten Conference* (2012) and the 2012 *I Teach K!* conference (Staff Development for Educators, 2012) in Las Vegas, NV influenced some of the ideas and activities presented in the course.

The course met for a total of 15 hours on six Thursday afternoons and one Saturday. Sessions were held in a kindergarten classroom that reflected at least some characteristics of enriched literacy environments. The Saturday session highlighted provisioning classrooms with

[6] Information obtained from the website of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

non-traditional classroom materials and included working with a local non-profit to source items for the classroom as well as time for creating materials. In accordance with Pacific Coast Unified's guidelines for salary point credit, a 30-hour homework component was part of the course requirement. The course was approved by Pacific Coast Unified in October, 2012.

Each course session began by focusing on one literacy domain for the day (reading, writing, listening, or speaking). We then looked at the Common Core State Standards to determine expectations for this domain in kindergarten. Next, we turned to the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) book for guidance about practices that can support the domain in kindergarten. When appropriate, articles and/or excerpts from publications were shared with the group. The group then engaged in collaborative discussion about their experiences with the literacy domains in kindergarten. The later part of each session was spent discussing resources and strategies that support independent development of the focused-upon literacy domain. Appendix A provides a detailed description of each class.

Procedures

This section provides an overview of the procedures used for data collection and analysis used to address each of the research questions.

Research Question One

To address the first research question, photography was used to evaluate how, if at all, participants changed the materials and arrangements of their classroom literacy environments after participating in a 6-week professional development. Photography is a valuable data collection method in the social sciences because it has the "capacity to record a scene with far greater speed and completeness than could ever be accomplished by a human observer taking notes" (Rieger, 2011, p.132). The use of temporally ordered photographs as a data collection

strategy to show environmental change is called *repeat photography* (Rieger, 2011). Methodologically, the strictest and best way to study change in a social environment is to do it *prospectively*, meaning to start watching for change at Time 1, from the first set of photographs. This study made use of repeat photography in a prospective manner, starting with an initial photographic baseline.

Development and use of the photography protocol. I developed a protocol (Appendix C) for taking comprehensive photographs of classrooms. Participants annotated their photographs, explaining the organization of their classroom space, the types of literacy tools and props supplied in each of the spaces, and how the pictured spaces and tools were used by students. This study considers teachers to be experts on how their rooms are organized and managed. Creating a complete record of their room environments gave teachers an opportunity to reflect on how space and tools are used. Because I collected data about room environments indirectly, it was important for teachers to submit photos in a clear and consistent way.

The photography protocol was developed with the input of other teachers. Six kindergarten teachers read my initial protocol at an after school meeting. We discussed the directions and made clarifying edits. One teacher, who did not participate in the study, followed the protocol and gave me the resulting photographs and annotations as a practice. Some modifications to the protocol arose from this informal testing.

The modifications included: asking teachers to take two distinct layers of photos and including an annotation form. The photography protocol instructs participants to take a set of photos that are oriented along the four walls of the classroom. Photos are labeled with reference to the walls following a clockwise sequence (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d…, 2a, 2b…, 3a, 3b, 3c…, 4a…). By asking teachers to capture furniture and spaces as they relate to each of the walls, a relatively

high level of detail was captured. However, by standing at the center of the room and taking a second set of photographs, two things were achieved: anything not pictured from the first set was depicted, and it became easier to understand and confirm the layout of the room. Also, the initial protocol included prompts for annotating photographs. Participants were asked to describe what's *seen*, how it's *used*, and how it's *managed*. Although these open-ended directions yielded rich information, descriptions were uneven. Some photos had much more description and others had very little. To counter this, I developed an annotation form that participants could use for each photo. I designed this annotation form to with the intention of drawing out information needed to completely rate the room according to the CLEP Tool. I allowed participants the option of using the form, about a quarter of them did.

Whether or not teachers chose to use the annotation form, the photographs and annotations were clear enough to analyze. When photographs were not entirely clear, written descriptions helped to clarify how the spaces were arranged, furnished, and managed. Photographs were all of acceptable resolution, and no one had a problem with photographing all parts of the room or with consistent labeling. There was, however, variation in how teachers submitted their photographs. I anticipated a range in preference and ability with regard to photography and technology, and therefore welcomed submissions in a variety of formats. Participants submitted photographs and annotations electronically (email or Dropbox) or in person. Some chose to organize photographs and annotations into Microsoft PowerPoint while others submitted photographs and Microsoft Word documents in separate files. Three participants turned in hard copies and either had photographs developed or printed them on a desktop printer. Photo developing incurred cost and time for participants.

Applying the CLEP tool to photographs. The CLEP Tool (Appendix D) was selected for this study because it considers many discrete features of classroom environments that support literacy engagement. This observational instrument was developed for use in kindergarten and elementary classrooms, with or without teacher and students present. The tool can be applied by looking at the environment. The CLEP Tool underwent two major phases of development and testing.

During the initial phase, the developers reviewed existing literature and conducted classroom observations in order to identify the salient features of print-rich environments. Preliminary checklists that defined observable characteristics of literacy environments were created and yielded 92.7% and 90.7% agreement from independent raters. Teacher focus groups were then used to refine the checklists. During the second phase of instrument development, the CLEP Tool rating scale was developed. This rating scale then underwent expert review and content validity analysis (Wolfersberger et al., 2004).

The CLEP Tool is a 33-item survey that measures the print-richness of kindergarten and elementary classrooms based on the observable literacy tools, materials, and arrangements in the classroom. Each item is rated on a seven-point Likert scale. The tool was developed in order to serve two purposes: (a) to provide researchers with a means of describing variations in the properties of *print-rich* environments, and (b) to give practitioners a way of assessing their own environments in order to consider ways to make changes that might enhance students' literacy experiences. The CLEP Tool generates two subscale scores: *Subscale 1: Provisioning the Classroom with Literacy Tools* examines the variety and abundance of materials that support literacy engagement, and *Subscale 2: Arranging Classroom Space and Literacy Tools, Gaining Students' Interest in Literacy Events, and Sustaining Students' Interactions with Literacy Tools*

looks at how the environment invites and encourages literacy engagement. Both subscales can be described using means-derived four-range quality *Interpretive Descriptions*: Impoverished (1.0-2.4), Minimal (2.4-3.9), Satisfactory (4.0-5.4), Enriched (5.5-7.0).

Subscale 1 is comprised of 17 discrete items. One item was eliminated from the study. Item 4: *Quantity of Text Materials* was excluded from analysis because this item indicates that quantities of books, as many as more than 500, are optimal. This item conflicts with recommendations that teachers rotate the books available to young students (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Too many books in a classroom library area may be overwhelming to students and create organizational and management issues (Diller, 2007).

Two retired teachers with prior kindergarten experience were trained to score classroom environments using the CLEP Tool. Both teachers had over 20 years of elementary teaching experience, much of it in kindergarten and pre-kindergarten. Both teachers were involved in teacher training through a local university and the school district. CLEP training took place in four kindergarten classrooms not involved in the study. We worked independently to rate the room environments and then collaborated on the results. Initial agreement was high. After deeper discussion of the tool, the raters reached near consensus across all items. As a final training procedure, raters applied the tool to photographic evidence. Again, agreement was high, and the three of us felt confident in using the instrument. When all three of us worked collaboratively to rate photographs for the study, similar reliability was achieved across the twelve sets of classroom data. Data was entered into SPSS. Subscale measurements were calculated to determine the print-richness of the classrooms.

Research Questions Two and Three

The second and third research questions examined teachers' perceptions of literacy tools and props as well as the arrangement of physical spaces and centers. Each course session focused on specific activities and aspects of literacy environments. Teachers tested new materials, activities, and centers. Following weekly photography and reflection prompts (Appendix E), teachers recorded their experiences. They wrote about what worked and what was challenging. At the following session, teachers submitted their written responses, as well as photographic evidence of tools and spaces they tried during the previous week. Assignments were also accepted electronically. Table 1 shows an outline of each week's focus topic. A detailed course description is included in Appendix A.

Table 1

Kinder Habitats Weekly Focus Topics

Week	Focus Topic
1	Holistic Examination of the Literacy Environment
2	Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Reading
3	Reading Games, Large Format Centers, and Rhyming
4	Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Writing
5	Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Oral Language Development
6	Reflecting on Changes in the Literacy Environment

In addition to written reflections, a short survey was given to participants during the last class session (Appendix F). The survey contained two matrices. In the first matrix, participants recorded literacy tools that they felt were: *engaging, supportive of literacy skill development, appropriate for independent use,* and *difficult to implement*. These four a priori categories reflect

Research Question Two. On a second matrix, participants named classroom spaces under the same four categories, responding to Research Question Three.

In analyzing participant responses, patterns emerged. Tools and spaces named by participants were grouped by type or purpose. For example, a type of tool that teachers named was *letter manipulatives*. Foam letters, magnetic letters, and letter cards could be counted together as one type of tool. *Dramatic play props* included tools for retelling stories and acting out real life situations, for example: puppets, costumes, and kitchen props.

Research Question Four

Data collected from a closing survey (Appendix F) and an anonymous course evaluation (Appendix G) was used to answer the fourth question, which seeks to understand how participants felt about the Kinder Habitats course. This question investigated teacher perceptions on how the course helped them to: manage literacy environments in which students could be independent and supply the room with appropriate materials. Information gathered in response to this question informs future plans for professional development.

Research Question Five

The fifth question explores how teacher perceptions of student independence were impacted by participation in the course. Previous studies have found that kindergarten teachers do not use developmentally appropriate practices (Bryant et al., 1991; Pianta et al., 2002; La Paro et al., 2009). It is thought that inappropriate practice may inhibit independence.

I administered the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey: 3-5 Year-Olds (Burts et al., n.d.) both pre- and post-intervention. This instrument (Appendix H) is informed by the NAEYC's descriptions of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). Its purpose is to determine educators' alignment with DAP using a five-point Likert scale. There are two parts to the

survey. The first part consists of a series of developmentally appropriate and developmentally inappropriate statements. Participants rate their agreement with each statement. The second scale asks teachers to report on the frequency of practices in their classrooms. Respondents indicate frequency of activities from *almost never* (less than once a month) to *very often* (daily). Items are then coded and calculated. A maximum score of 5 indicates alignment with DAP. Twelve participants completed the post-survey, 11 participants completed the pre-survey.

The entire instrument was administered. However, only items closely aligned with the goal of this project (i.e., supporting independent literacy engagement) were analyzed. Items not closely aligned with the content or objectives of the course, including those concerned with: adult communication, outdoor gross motor play, and severe behavior problems, were excluded from analysis. For example, Item 35 on the Teacher Beliefs Scale: *It is (not at all important-extremely important) for teachers to solicit and incorporate parent's knowledge about their children for assessment, evaluation, placement, and planning*, has little bearing on managing the literacy environment. Eighteen of the 43 items on the Teacher Beliefs Scale and 12 of the 30 Instructional Activities Scale items were isolated.

In addition to the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, I looked at teacher responses to the End of Course Prompt and weekly reflections to better understand how teachers perceived student independence. I looked for comments that clarified how they saw their role as classroom managers. Evidence of management techniques employed to support independence included: matching students with appropriate activities, giving clear directions, and having realistic expectations.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in order to understand teacher perceptions and practice. Table 2 aligns data analysis methods with each research question and data collection method.

Table 2

Alignment of Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

Research Question(s)	Concept	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Analysis Method(s)
1	Did change occur in classroom literacy environments?	Photography Protocol (Appendix C) was used to collect data pre- and post-intervention.	The photographs were analyzed using the CLEP Tool (Appendix D). Using SPSS, paired sample means comparisons were used to determine aspects of literacy environments that experienced change. Paired samples t-tests were used to determine change on both CLEP Subscales.
2 & 3	teachers' perceptions of: literacy tools and props & the arrangement of spaces/centers with literacy tools	Survey of Tools and Spaces (Appendix F)	Category construction emerged through analysis. Teachers' perception of tools & spaces were coded into the following a priori categories: *engaging for students, supportive of literacy skill development*, *can be used without adult support, difficult to implement*
		Weekly Photography and Reflection Prompts (Appendix E)	Written reflections were analyzed to gain understanding of how teachers viewed classroom resources and spaces.
4	How did participants perceive the salary point class?	Course Evaluation (Appendix G) End of Course Survey (Appendix F)	Responses were analyzed to understand aspects of the course that were: helpful and in need of improvement. Statements were compared to findings for questions one, two, and three. Patterns in perceptions and measurable outcomes were noted.
5	Did the course impact participants' perceptions of independence?	Pre- and post- intervention administration of Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey (Appendix H)	Using SPSS, paired samples t-tests were used to identify beliefs and practices that saw change.
		Written reflections	Written reflections were coded, categories were constructed using open

coding.

Two questions yielded numerical data from survey instruments both before and after the intervention. Question One compared the ratings of participants' literacy environments. Question Four compared teacher beliefs and practices. Results from both the CLEP Tool and the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey were analyzed both at the item level and at the subscale levels. Across the group, change was studied using means comparisons. Subscales were calculated by combining the results of items. Paired samples t-tests were used to examine subscale change.

Qualitative data from surveys and reflections were analyzed by looking for patterns in participant responses. A priori categories were used in questions two, three, and four. In questions two and three, teachers were asked to characterize classroom elements. In Question Four, teachers evaluated the course by describing what was helpful and what might be improved. In looking at the qualitative data, themes were also allowed to emerge. The frequency of similar responses prompted the establishment of categories.

Question Five takes a look at teachers' perceptions of student independence. I used data collected through surveys and written reflections to draw out teacher perceptions on kindergarten independence. Using demographic data, I looked for patterns between previous professional experiences and attitudes and perceptions.

Throughout the data analysis phase, demographic information about participants' prior professional experiences was considered. I looked for trends in the demographic data to understand which teachers made changes and felt that they benefited from participating.

Reliability and Validity

Several reliability procedures were embedded into the data analysis process. In coding participant responses, I conferred with a graduate student to cross check category analysis. To guard against bias, I diligently looked for data that support alternative explanations.

All of the measurements used in this study have been tested. Four of the measurements were developed specifically for this project: the Photography Protocol, the Weekly Literacy Environment Reflection Prompts, the End of Course Prompt, and the Course Evaluation Survey. These measures were informally tested by and developed with the input of teachers at my elementary site. Six teachers participated in reading the protocols and instruments and making recommendations for revisions and clarification.

The CLEP Tool was developed to analyze the print-richness of classrooms and has been validated for use in kindergarten and elementary classrooms (Wolfersberger et al., 2004). The Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey (Burts et al., n.d.) was written to determine teachers' alignment with the NAEYC's guidelines for DAP. The tool (Appendix H) has been revised several times and was validated for reliability and content validity (Kim, 2005).

Ethical Issues

I provided a consent form, which included study information, to all participants (Appendix I). The consent form assured confidentiality. Coding and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' privacy. All identifying electronic data was password protected. Identifying photographs and papers were kept in a locked file cabinet. All collected data will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

The fact that I facilitated the salary point class and conducted research with some of the same participants increased the potential for ethical questions. However, data was not collected

during the salary point sessions. It might have been valuable to record and analyze conversations during salary point class sessions, but all class participants would have been required to consent to being recorded. I was concerned that recording conversations could negatively impact the exchange of ideas in the class as well as rapport. Ultimately, I decided that I was most interested in how participants apply the ideas from the class in their own classrooms, which made recording the professional development sessions unnecessary.

Although all teachers who participated in the class also consented to participate in the study, I did not give any kind of *extra credit* or preferential treatment to encourage study participation. My role as the salary point course facilitator was not evaluative. My job was simply to ensure that participants completed the necessary tasks for credit: attendance, participation, and homework. I did not take any negative action toward teachers who declined participation. Teachers who chose to casually participate in the class without doing outside homework were welcomed. Some of these teachers brought thoughtful insights to the collaborative setting. I provided the salary point class at no cost. Participants were given a 50 dollar gift card in appreciation of their participation. I did not profit financially from this project in any way.

This study posed minimal risk to participants and was voluntary. During this study, I was not in a supervisory position at my school or in the district. The decision to participate in the study did not impact anyone professionally beyond professional learning that may have occurred. No students or student data were required for this study. Student outcomes were beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This mixed methods study investigated the impact of a professional development offering on managing the classroom literacy environment and the practices and perceptions of kindergarten teachers. It also examined professional insights of teachers regarding classroom management during small-group literacy instruction time.

The results and findings in this chapter are based on data gathered from annotated photographs of classroom environments, surveys of perceptions and practices, homework assignments (which included written reflections and descriptions of practice), course evaluations, and an end-of-course survey. Twelve teachers participated; all names are pseudonyms.

Research Question One: Did Literacy Environments Change?

To determine whether or not teachers' literacy environments changed from the start to the end of the Kinder Habitats course, I examined the Classroom Environmental Profile (CLEP) Tool scores as they were assigned to pre- and post-course photographs. The CLEP Tool is comprised of observational items that rate elements of classroom environments on a seven-point Likert scale. The instrument has two subscales. The first subscale, *Provisioning*, looks at materials that are present in the classroom to support literacy. The second subscale, *Arranging*, looks at how literacy materials are made available in the classroom. The results of these two subscales are discussed here.

Subscale 1: Provisioning

The mean change of Provisioning items is presented in Table 3. A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare average CLEP Subscale 1: Provisioning scores before and after the intervention. There was a significant difference in the scores for the Provisioning Scale pre-

intervention (M = 4.15, SD = 0.68) and post-intervention (M = 4.58, SD = 0.81); $t(11) = -3.95$, $p = 0.002$. These results suggest that the Kinder Habitats course had a positive impact on the Provisioning of classroom literacy environments.

Table 3

CLEP Subscale 1: Provisioning Items – Means

Item	Pre	Post	Change
Print Used for Classroom Organization	3.67	4.58	0.92
Accessories	3.58	4.42	0.83
Writing Surfaces	4.67	5.42	0.75
Appropriateness of Literacy Tools	4.25	4.92	0.67
Publishing Materials	2.58	3.25	0.67
Furnishings to Support Literacy Events	3.58	4.08	0.50
Format and Content of Text Materials	3.42	3.92	0.50
Reference Materials	4.17	4.67	0.50
Technological Resources	2.67	3.17	0.50
Utility of Literacy Tools	4.33	4.75	0.42
Writing Utensils	4.33	4.67	0.33
Storage and Display	4.50	4.83	0.33
Quantity of Literacy Tools	5.92	6.08	0.17
Genres of Text Materials	4.58	4.67	0.08
Levels of Text Materials	5.08	5.17	0.08
Classroom Literacy Product Displays	4.42	4.50	0.08
Written Communications	4.75	4.83	0.08
Overall Mean Provisioning Score	4.15	4.58	0.43*

Note. $N = 12$, $^*p < .05$

Across participants, five items on Subscale 1: Provisioning saw a mean score change above 0.5 point. The physical changes reflected in these items could be readily seen in participants' photographs. This section describes these five items and the observed growth. Sample photographs are used here to illustrate changes.

Print Used for Classroom Organization, CLEP Item 8, increased across the group (from 3.67 to 4.58). This item inventories print associated with organization: labels, schedules, and directions. Six participants showed improvement in this area. Signs were added to classroom

areas and centers, items were organized and labeled, and written directions were added to centers. Small-group management boards, which indicate which students participate in the day's available language arts activities, were introduced or re-tooled. Figure 3 illustrates changes to Print Used for Classroom Organization.

Figure 3. CLEP Item 8 example: Sofia added labels to library books.

CLEP Item 18, *Accessories to Support Literacy Events*, improved (from 3.58 to 4.42) across the group. Eight out of 12 people added accessories to support literacy events in their classrooms. This item is written broadly to include objects that support reading, writing, displays of literacy products, and dramatizations as well as objects and models from nature. Improvements in this area were varied and plentiful. Teachers added: puppets, pocket charts, writing props, chalkboards, plants, and scientific instruments. Furnishings to create cozy reading spaces, including pillows, furniture, and tents were also added. Figure 4 depicts how one teacher added accessories to create an inviting place to enjoy books.

Figure 4. CLEP Item 18 example: Shelley added accessories to library corner.

Providing a variety of types of *Writing Surfaces* (Item 13) was another area that saw improvements (from 4.67 to 5.42). Seven participants enriched their classrooms in this area. Different types of paper, white boards, magnetic writing boards, forms, and stationery were added to classrooms. By adding writing materials, some teachers were able to increase the utility of pre-existing centers. For example, Sofia included book review forms in her library area and Shelley introduced chalk to her classroom, making the asphalt outside her room into a writing surface. Shauna supplied a receipt pad to her dramatic play corner (Figure 5). These types of additions provided students with a seamless opportunity to add writing and paper handling to activities that were already established in the classroom.

Figure 5. CLEP Item 13 example: Shauna added guest checks to dramatic play area.

Growth was also shown with respect to the fourth provisioning item, Item 3, *Appropriateness of Literacy Tools* (from 4.25 to 4.92). This item considers how the materials in the classroom match students' needs. Seven teachers made improvements to their literacy environments in this area. Additions were added to meet the social, developmental, and academic needs of students. Items appropriate for young children included: dramatic play props, comfortable furniture, toys, plants, reference models (maps and globes), games, and audio equipment. Laura made independent differentiated activities for students easily accessible in a colorful pocket chart (Figure 6).

Figure 6. CLEP Item 3 example: Laura added differentiated activities for independent work.

The last provisioning item that demonstrated growth was Item 14, *Publishing Materials,* (from 2.58 to 3.25). Although this item showed growth, it was the lowest scoring item on the Provisioning Subscale before and after the intervention. This indicated the difficulty of its implementation. Only four teachers were able to increase their score in this area by furnishing materials for student to use for publishing. Additions included: stencils, markers, stamps, construction paper, recycled materials, crafting supplies, and materials to create collaborative class books.

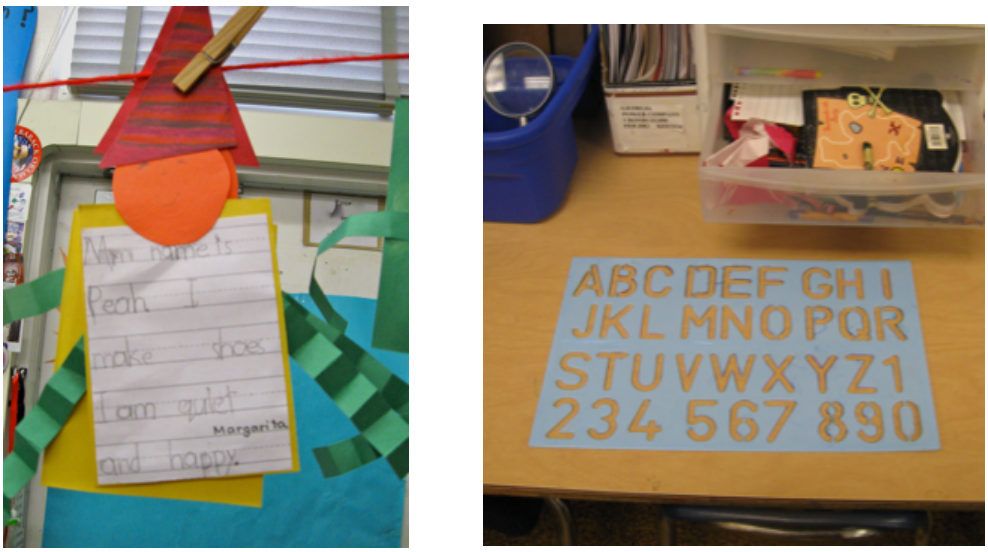

Figure 7. CLEP Item 14 example: Shelley and Shauna added publishing materials.

Summary of Subscale 1 findings. Literacy environments had a diverse range of tools and props to support literacy engagement. These materials appeared to have been provided both by the school and the teacher. For example, books purchased through district curriculum adoptions were seen in all classrooms. Special materials, including: writing utensils, dramatic play props, and furniture were supplied by teachers. Classrooms that did not include materials beyond what was furnished by the school were not highly rated on Subscale 1.

Participants with less prior experience in kindergarten tended to show greater improvement on the Provisioning scale. As seen in Table 4, the top third of participants showing the greatest change had less than 5 years of kindergarten teaching experience. The fact that participants that showed the most growth in provisioning had the least experience was unsurprising. Teachers with more experience had more opportunities to identify and acquire appropriate materials. The Interpretive Description Score Ranges are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Participant Performance on CLEP Subscale 1: Provisioning

Participant	Years Kinder	Pre Score	Pre I.D.	Post Score	Post I.D.	CLEP Change
Sofia	4	3.65	M	4.71	S	1.06
Phillipa	1	3.76	M	4.76	S	1.00
Shauna	3	5.06	S	5.94	E	0.88
Shelley	4	4.24	S	4.94	S	0.70
Laura	6	4.59	S	4.94	S	0.35
Ines	1	3.59	M	3.94	M	0.35
Priscilla	3	5.00	S	5.35	S	0.35
Rosa	1	3.76	M	4.06	S	0.30
Claudia	12	5.29	S	5.47	S	0.18
Monica	3	3.18	M	3.24	M	0.06
Maria	15	3.65	M	3.65	M	0.00
Danielle	6	4.00	S	4.00	S	0.00

Table 5

CLEP Tool Interpretive Description Score Ranges

Range	Interpretive Description (I.D.)
1.0-2.4	Impoverished (I)
2.5-3.9	Minimal (M)
4.0-5.4	Satisfactory (S)
5.5-7.0	Enriched (E)

Subscale 2: Arranging

The mean change of Arranging items is presented in Table 6. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare average CLEP Subscale 2: Arranging scores before and after the intervention. There was a significant difference in the scores for the Arranging Scale pre-intervention (M = 3.23, SD = 0.82) and post-intervention (M = 3.88, SD = 0.71); t (11) = -3.81, p = 0.003. These results suggest that the Kinder Habitats course had a positive impact on the Arranging of classroom literacy environments.

Table 6

CLEP Subscale 2: Arranging Items- Means

Item	Pre	Post	Change
Classroom Library	3.58	4.58	1.00
Participation is Inviting	3.08	4.08	1.00
Accessibility of Literacy Tools	3.42	4.42	1.00
Variety of Literacy Products	3.17	4.17	1.00
Authentic Literacy Settings	2.42	3.25	0.83
Interactions with Literacy Tools	3.00	3.75	0.75
Types of Classroom Areas	3.92	4.67	0.75
Participation is Encouraged	1.33	2.00	0.67
Grouping of Literacy Tools	3.42	4.08	0.67
Boundaries of Classroom Areas	3.67	4.25	0.58
Sharing Literacy Products	2.67	3.25	0.58
Record-keeping of Literacy Interactions	3.50	3.92	0.42
Authentic Literacy Events	3.08	3.42	0.33
Location of Classroom Areas	3.17	3.42	0.25
Size of Classroom Areas	5.00	5.00	0.00
Overall Mean Arranging Score	3.23	3.88	0.65*

Note. $N = 12$, $*p < 0.01$

Across the participants, four Subscale 2 items showed a mean change equaling one point. Qualitative environmental changes reflected by pre and post scale scores are described here. Sample photographs are used here to illustrate the changes participants made in order to gain student interest and sustain engagement.

Across the group, *Classroom Library* ratings (Item 23) improved (from 3.58 to 4.58). Six teachers made improvements to their classroom libraries. Some teachers made substantial changes, expanding the physical space or clearly defining the library area with furniture arrangements. Other classrooms saw more subtle changes. Areas were labeled with library signs. Books that were once piled into a disorganized heap were now arranged neatly into baskets. Covers were displayed, inviting student interest, and titles were organized by genre and author. Participation in extension activities was encouraged through the addition of book review

forms and discussion cards. One participant, Danielle, who made only minor changes to the rest of her room, made many changes to her library area.

Figure 8. CLEP Item 23 example: Phillipa organized and moved the library, added sign and directions

Item 27: *Participation is Inviting* had a gain of one point (from 3.08 to 4.08). This item looks at how items are displayed. To earn the highest scale score (7) on the CLEP Tool, an observer should find "Displays of literacy tools that include *varying textures, colors,* AND *objects* to create an attractive and comfortable museum-like." The rating descriptors for this item also refer to the importance of, "*natural features* (e.g., plants, shells, lighting, an aquarium)." Of all the CLEP items, this was one of the most subjective. This item inspired discussion and some debate among raters. However, teachers did enrich displays in their rooms. Objects from nature included plants and animals. Materials for writing and retelling were organized neatly and made accessible, inviting student engagement. Objects were relocated from cabinets and storage locations in order to invite use.

Figure 9. CLEP Item 27 example: Rosa used a waste basket as a mailbox, arranged a writing center

Item 25, the *Accessibility of Literacy Tools* increased (from 3.42 to 4.42). This item looked at how teachers made the materials they already had available to students. Supplies, manipulatives, and games moved from storage to within student reach. Some teachers were resourceful in repurposing tools to make literacy activities more accessible. For example, equipment and furniture that were primarily for teacher use were made available to students. Shauna added earphones to her boom box to make it a listening center; Ines turned her big book stand into a prop for independent literacy engagement (Figure 10).

Figure 10. CLEP Item 25 example: Ines made big book stand available to students, added props.

Finally, the *Variety of Literacy Products*, Item 32, also improved (from 3.17 to 4.17). This item looks for a balance between informal and formal, as well as short-term and long-term literacy products. Displays of student writing were added in many classrooms. Student books and collaborative class projects were present on walls and shelves. Short dictations reflecting students' responses to literature were collected on post-it notes and affixed to big books. The images depicted in Figure 11 show informal writing (a student-penned "note") and published writing (a basket of class books).

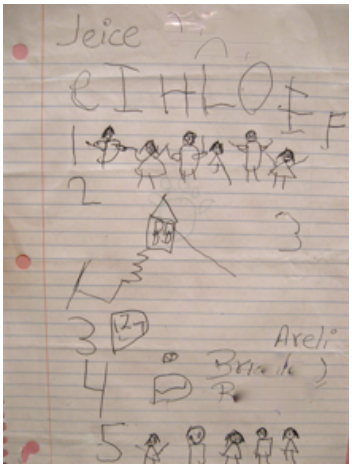

Figure 11. CLEP Item 32 example: Shelley displayed formal and informal writing.

Summary of Subscale 2 findings. Participant growth as measured by Subscale 2 reflected teacher efforts to make materials and spaces more available to students. Improvements made to room arrangements did not necessarily involve acquiring materials and equipment. Rather, creative repurposing of tools extended their utility and resulted in more enriched environments. Adding earphones to a boom box, turning a wastebasket into a mailbox, and rearranging a big book stand to be used as a reading center are all examples of resourceful classroom management.

Table 11 gives an overview of participant scores on the 15 items that comprise the Arranging subscale. Participants who had higher scores on the pre-intervention evaluation tended

to show less growth than lower scoring participants. This lack of movement does not indicate that high-scoring participants did not make changes. However, the CLEP Tool did not interpret these changes into higher scores.

Table 7

Participant Performance on CLEP Subscale 2: Arranging

Participant	Years Kinder	Pre	Pre I.D.	Post	Post I.D.	CLEP Change
Shelley	4	2.67	M	4.67	S	2.00
Sofia	4	2.40	I	3.73	M	1.33
Laura	6	3.33	M	4.33	S	1.00
Monica	3	2.27	I	3.13	M	0.86
Phillipa	1	2.80	M	3.60	M	0.80
Rosa	1	2.67	M	3.33	M	0.66
Ines	1	2.87	M	3.33	M	0.46
Claudia	12	4.60	S	5.00	S	0.40
Shauna	3	4.47	S	4.73	S	0.26
Danielle	6	3.53	M	3.73	M	0.20
Priscilla	3	4.27	S	4.33	S	0.06
Maria	15	2.80	M	2.80	M	0.00

Concluding Thoughts and Cautions on CLEP Data for Changes in Classrooms

Analyzing the CLEP items that showed the most growth revealed patterns and provided insight on the changes teachers made to their literacy environments. However, looking only at statistical gains does not tell a complete story.

Changes made by participants were not always recognized by application of the tool. Participants who were near the high score were not able to raise their scores, even when they made changes. For example, Priscilla's pre-intervention classroom earned the highest possible score on Item 3: *Appropriateness of Literacy Tools*. Although she added things to her classroom that were developmentally appropriate—puppets, dramatic play (farming theme), and paint—it was impossible to increase her rating in this area. Even though the CLEP scores did not

communicate all of the work that participants did, it is probably less imperative to document growth seen in classrooms that are already approaching the *enriched* level.

Looking not just at change, but also at items that scored high and low is revealing and reflects alignment with specific areas of emphasis in the professional development program. Item 1: *Quantity of Literacy Tools*, was the highest-scoring item with an average score of 6.08 on the post-intervention survey. All but one participant scored *satisfactory* or *enriched*. This item indicates that participants had at least a sufficient quantity of literacy tools. While teachers may have plenty of tools, this particular item cannot determine whether or not a teacher has sufficient tools to support all desired independent engagement in literacy activities. Perhaps a complete understanding of what an individual teacher deemed sufficient could better be achieved through alternative data collection methods.

The lowest scoring item was Item 26: *Participation in Literacy Events is Encouraged.* The average rating for this item was *impoverished* both pre- and post-intervention. This item looked for posted evidence that reading and writing were encouraged as pleasurable activities. A close evaluation of classroom photos found many examples of print items encouraging cooperative and industrious behavior. Sample messages encouraged "If You Believe, You Can Achieve," "Look Who's Working Hard Today!," "Be Caring, Be Generous, Be Accepting, Be Trustworthy, Be Responsible." In addition to general messages, all classrooms had posted rules governing behavior. Seven classrooms did not have any print materials communicating that reading and writing were fun or pleasurable. While the Kinder Habitats course did focus on making literacy activities engaging and enjoyable, print explicitly encouraging literacy was not emphasized.

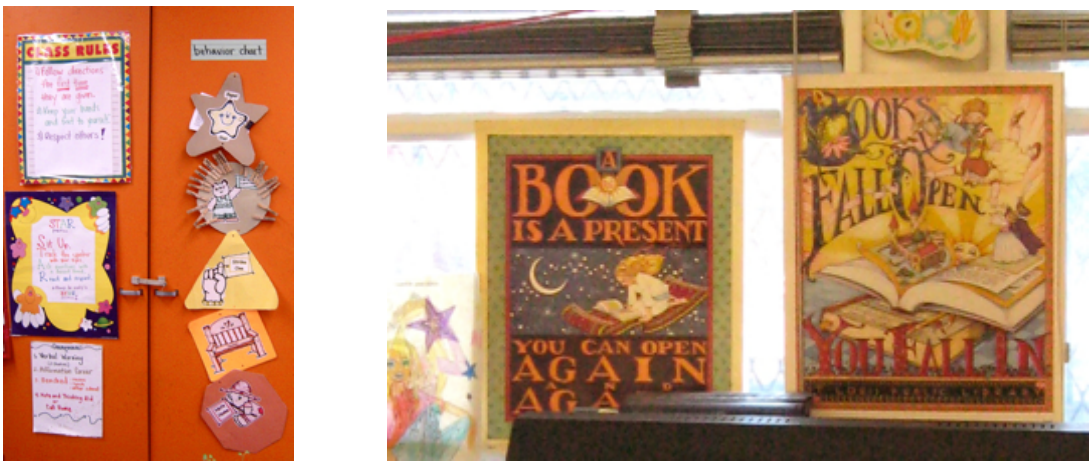

Figure 12. Monica's room features many examples of print encouraging school-appropriate behavior; Shauna's room features print encouraging reading as enjoyable.

Research Questions Two and Three: Teacher Perspectives on Tools and Spaces

In Question One, looking closely at classroom environments led to an understanding of the types of tools and arrangements teachers had in their classrooms. Research Questions Two and Three investigated teacher perspectives on these classroom elements. Weekly homework assignments included written reflections on materials and spaces that supported a range of independent literacy activities. A short survey (Appendix F) was used at the last session to gather perspectives from all 12 participants. This survey prompted participants to identify tools and spaces that were: *engaging*, *supportive of skill development*, *appropriate for independent use*, and *difficult to implement*. The results of this survey appear in Table 8, preceded by a brief discussion of participant responses.

While explicitly asked to report on them separately (Appendix F), participants did not always differentiate between materials and the spaces in which they were used. For example, one participant, Danielle, wrote that a space that was difficult to implement was "letter puzzles." Letter puzzles are considered tools, not spaces. While Danielle might have created a letter puzzle center in her room, this was unclear from her response. Additionally, two participants, Shauna and Priscilla, listed "dramatic play" instead of listing specific tools and props. Dramatic play

might refer to an array of objects to support pretend play or storytelling. Alternatively, the vague term dramatic play might refer to a center.

Conflating of spaces and tools may be attributed to survey error, but also may reflect how teachers think about activity segments. From an ecological perspective on classroom management, activity segments are comprised of: space, time, student arrangements, materials, actions, and rules governing behavior (Doyle, 2006; Gump, 1974). Following this view, materials and spaces were surveyed separately. A complete understanding of how participants view tools and spaces cannot be determined from this study. However, participant responses reflect a focus on how these components support the related independent literacy activities.

Table 8

Participant Perceptions of Tools and Spaces

	Engaging	Skill Development	Appropriate for Independent Use	Difficult to Implement
Tools				
Dramatic play	6	1	4	1
Letter manipulatives	5	3	4	1
Reading games/tasks	4	3	5	0
Pointers	3	0	1	0
Books	1	4	1	0
Writing props	1	3	1	2
Puzzles	1	0	0	0
Computer	0	0	0	1
Posted references	0	1	2	0
Art	0	0	1	1
Blocks	0	0	1	0
Literacy program	0	0	0	7
Spaces				
Dramatic play	5	2	4	0
Library	4	7	3	0
Listening centers	3	4	4	1
Computer	2	3	1	4
Puzzle center	2	0	0	1
Block center	2	1	1	0
Skill-based centers	1	0	1	1
Art	1	1	1	2
Writing areas	1	1	2	3

Tools and spaces that support independent dramatic play activities were the most positively mentioned classroom elements. Half of the participants cited dramatic play tools and props as engaging; five wrote that spaces were engaging. Priscilla's quote, written as part of her final homework reflection, exemplifies how she saw dramatic play elements as engaging:

> I'm real excited because I have two new dramatic play areas. The first is housed in the library and the second is housed at the listening center. The first is creative free play related to our Treasures themes. Currently, they get to play "school" in celebration of our last Treasures unit "I Know A lot!" The second is literature based. I'm hoping to tie the books to fairy tales and nursery rhymes. The kids are enjoying The Old Lady that Swallowed a Fly! The kids love these new stations.

Four participants wrote that dramatic play props were appropriate for independent use; four wrote that dramatic play spaces or centers were appropriate for independent use. These results seem to indicate that students were able to work cooperatively in a play setting. Claudia's quote indicates that students were able to adopt roles and sustain interaction without adult support, "The puppet theater is used either to make their own stories or to re-tell a story we read before. Some of the students are the audience and some the performers."

Additional evidence supports teachers' claims favoring dramatic play elements. On the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, which will be discussed in depth later in this chapter, seven out of 12 teachers reported that children in their classes "engage in child-chosen, teacher-supported play activities" at least weekly. Annotated photographs showed that nine classes were using dramatic play props (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Priscilla's dramatic play props support retelling of *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss.

Libraries and books were found to be engaging and supportive of skill development. Four teachers cited libraries as engaging spaces, while seven found them to be supportive of skill development. Conversely, there were fewer mentions for the books themselves. Four participants mentioned that books were tools that support skill development. Only one participant identified books as an engaging tool. Libraries like Sofia's (Figure 14) contained additional materials, and supported activities beyond book reading. Sofia wrote that, in her library, "An observer may see students…. Reading aloud or looking at pictures in book, Reading discussion prompts, Writing their thoughts on journal reviews, Drawing pictures."

Three participants mentioned the library as a space that was appropriate for independent use. Teachers rotated and differentiated materials to match student interests and needs. As Shelley wrote, "I change my books as students are maturing. In the beginning I have a lot of ABC books, color books, shapes, etc.…Now, that they are reading I try to have high interest books and level 1, 2 books."

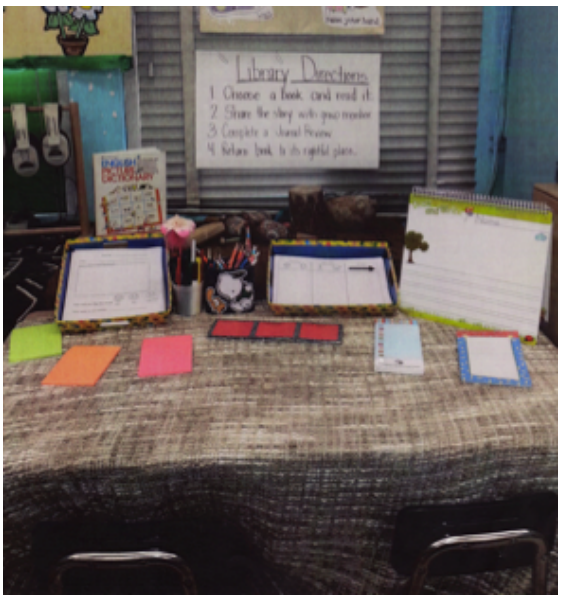

Figure 14. Sofia's library area includes writing materials for responding to literature.

Listening centers were valued because they supported literacy development and were easily used without adult support. Children were able to review familiar stories and respond to them in writing or through independent discussion. Claudia wrote, "Students have to listen attentively and follow story as they listen to it. Afterwards they complete a sheet that includes author, title, and their favorite part of the story (drawing and sentence)." All participants had access to equipment to arrange listening centers. Students could operate equipment without adult support. Danielle wrote, "The [headphone] group sits at the listening center with books to go with the CD. One student is in charge to turn the CD player on/off."

Letter manipulatives and reading games/tasks were tools that were found to be engaging, and appropriate for skill development and independent use. These included alphabet pieces and magnets, reading games, puzzles, and matching tasks. These materials were not confined to centers and spaces. Rather, they were portable and could be used at centers, desks, or the carpet. These tools could be used flexibly throughout the year to meet varied student needs. Maria wrote, "Students can make a simple AB pattern to trace the letter of the day. This is a simple activity that can be done independently. Later, pictures with words can be used."

Challenging Independent Literacy Activities

Writing tools and spaces were a common concern. Although three participants wrote that writing props supported skill development, two found independent use of writing props difficult to implement. Danielle wrote that dry erase boards with markers were not used appropriately; "students draw/color instead of assigned task." Similarly, concerns about writing areas were highlighted by three participants. Maria wrote, "Children tend to write or draw without motivation. Work production is poor and materials are easily wasted or become a mess." These comments reveal concerns about the final writing product. According to photographic evidence, only five teachers had dedicated writing centers. Priscilla was one of the participants who kept a writing center. Her assignments were carefully structured and made use of sentence frames (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Priscilla's carefully-constructed writing center.

Four participants found computer centers to be difficult to implement. However, some found them to be engaging and supportive of skill development. Participant access to technology was inconsistent. Danielle had a number of iPads loaded with appropriate academic applications and her school paid for a subscription service to an online reading program. In contrast, Phillipa and Sofia, who worked at the same school, both complained about equipment that did not work (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Phillipa's computers are "not working."

Although the survey (Appendix F) prompted teachers to, "Think about the *literacy tools and props* you have introduced into your literacy environment over the last 6 weeks," teachers did not entirely follow the directions. Seven participants thought outside of the intervention timeline and cited the district-adopted language arts program's materials and guides for independent literacy activities as difficult to implement. Participants specifically named components, including: flip charts with independent activity instructions, activity books, and retelling cards. This study did not collect data to clarify why participants felt that these components were difficult to implement.

In sum, teachers supported tools and spaces that presented fewer problems and, therefore, interruptions. Dramatic play, library areas, listening centers, and letter manipulatives and reading games/tasks held student interest, were appropriate for students at multiple skill levels, and required less adult support. Computers and writing elements were considered problematic. Participant comments regarding the district-adopted curriculum indicate that teachers need to develop classroom management strategies that work in their own classrooms rather than rely on publisher suggestions.

Research Question Four: How the Professional Development Was Received

Participants felt that the professional development course helped them to both manage literacy environments in which students could be independent and supply literacy tools and props that supported that independence. Data were collected through an anonymous course evaluation (Appendix G) and an End of Course Prompt (Appendix F).

Kinder Habitats and Managing Literacy Environments that Support Independence

Data from the anonymous course evaluation showed that all participants agreed that the course helped them to design classroom environments that facilitate independent engagement in literacy events. A summary table of participant responses is included in Appendix G.

The End of Course Prompt asked teachers to consider how their perceptions of challenges to student independence had changed through participation in the course. Responses indicated that teachers learned about managing literacy environments that support independence.

Six teachers wrote about how the class introduced them to ideas that support different types of independent activities. Danielle wrote, "I must put more time and effort into making my center activities more engaging." Five teachers indicated that they managed independent activities more successfully by making them easier or more accessible, or by lowering their expectations to de-emphasize final products so that students could work without adult support. Monica wrote, "It is okay to give (independent) activities at a lower level." Laura's comment emphasizes this idea, "I will be introducing more independent activities that they can be successful without my help." Three teachers said that the class helped them to realize the importance of giving clear directions for independent activities. Claudia wrote, "I need to work on the directions and on the lessons I need to teach before I can let them work on it."

Kinder Habitats and Supplying Literacy Tools and Props

Data from the anonymous course evaluation showed that all participants found the course helped them to supply materials that engage students in independent literacy events (Appendix G). When prompted to describe the *most helpful* aspect of the course, four teachers wrote about the materials received. A sample response indicated, "All the tangible things, papers, books, supplies that were shared and given." Three teachers indicated that the materials received in the class were what *set it apart* from other professional development experiences. For example, "Materials were provided that were ready to use in the classroom." When prompted to offer suggestions for improving the course, two respondents indicated that they would have liked more time for making materials that supported activities presented in the class, for example, "I would include time to actually create the centers."

Photographic evidence validates teachers' comments. Materials received and the importance of clear directions are evident in post-intervention photographs. Throughout the class, participants and I consistently shared materials and resources that we found were helpful in supporting independent literacy engagement. Examples of these materials included: language arts games, writing activities, student discussion cards, and poetry activities. Photographs showed that these materials were in use in the classrooms. Also, throughout the class, we discussed how giving clear directions supported independence. Post-intervention photographs depict written directions and samples posted at language arts centers (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. From the professional development: directions written by participants, an alphabet activity.

Concluding Thoughts on Question Four and Additional Benefits of the Course

Participants were asked to consider their experience with Kinder Habitats in the context of teacher education. All but one participant indicated that the Kinder Habitats salary point class was *more helpful than most* of the professional development experiences they'd had as teachers. When asked to explain, six teachers indicated that the course was well aligned with their current needs. For example, one teacher wrote that the class "Related to everything I am doing now." She went on to write that the class presented, "Realistic content and ideas that can be implemented immediately in my class." Five teachers wrote that the ideas and strategies in the class were helpful. One teacher indicated that the class "Spoke on specific instructional strategies."

The course supported its objectives: management of independent literacy environments and the acquisition of materials. Seven out of 12 course evaluation responses indicated that the class offered a welcome forum for collaborating and sharing ideas. For example, one wrote, "I enjoyed learning and sharing with other teachers." Another wrote that what she found helpful

was, “Everything! Loved it!!! Sharing ideas. Getting ideas. One of the best classes I have taken in a long time.”

Research Question Five: Teachers’ Perceptions of Student Independence

I entered this study with the notion that teachers might be struggling to manage independent literacy engagement because they did not use developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). In other words, kindergarteners might struggle to be independent because the activities in which they were expected to engage were not appropriate. In order to learn about participants’ alignment with DAP, I chose to use the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey: 3-5 Year-Olds (Burts et al., n.d.) both pre- and post-intervention.

This survey is comprised of 5-point Likert scale items. First, respondents indicate their agreement (or disagreement) with developmentally appropriate and inappropriate beliefs. Next, they indicate the frequency of classroom practices that are both developmentally appropriate and inappropriate. Only items relevant to this study were analyzed. In addition to this survey, weekly reflections and written responses to the End of Course Prompt revealed participant thoughts on student independence and how it could be supported through responsive classroom management.

Teacher Beliefs Scale

Participants’ belief scale means were calculated. Table 9 presents information by participant. Change across the group was positive, but not significant.

Table 9

Teacher Beliefs Items – Means

Participant	Years PreK	Years K	Pre	Post	Change
Sofia	0	4	no data	3.44	
Claudia	0	12	3.85	4.5	0.65
Shauna	3	3	3.85	4.39	0.54
Laura	13	6	3.90	4.22	0.32
Maria	0	15	3.30	3.61	0.31
Priscilla	0	3	3.35	3.61	0.26
Danielle	0	6	3.80	3.94	0.14
Rosa	0	1	3.45	3.56	0.11
Phillipa	0	1	3.40	3.5	0.10
Monica	0	3	4.20	4.11	-0.09
Ines	0	1	3.95	3.78	-0.17
Shelley	11	4	4.40	4.11	-0.29
Overall Mean Belief Score			3.77	3.94	0.17*

Note. $N = 12$, * not significant

According to survey data, eight teachers became more aligned with DAP beliefs (Table 9). It should be noted that the three participants who became less aligned also had the three highest pre-intervention scores. Teachers with prior early education experience and teachers who studied early childhood development were most closely aligned with DAP beliefs. Three out of the five participants with a post score above 4 had experience teaching preschool. All five of these high-scoring teachers took three or more courses in early childhood education as undergraduates. Four of the five took three or more courses in early childhood education as part of their multiple subject credential program.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare average Belief scores before and after the intervention. A significant difference was not found in the Belief means pre-intervention and (M = 3.77, SD = 0.36) and post-intervention (M = 3.94, SD = 0.35) conditions; $t(10) = -1.98$, $p = 0.08$).

Looking at the individual items on the Teacher Beliefs Scale (Table 10), eight of the 18 yielded mean post scores above 4, indicating a positive relationship between teacher beliefs and the DAP beliefs. The lowest scoring item indicated that teachers condoned rote learning, which is not DAP.

Table 10

Teacher Belief Items Aligned with the Professional Development

Item	Pre	Post	Change
Isolated Skills through Repetition	2.36	3.00	0.64
Observation Informs Planning	3.91	4.36	0.45
Teacher Facilitates Small Groups	4.00	4.45	0.45
Functional Print	4.00	4.45	0.45
Social Skill Development	4.36	4.73	0.36
One Approach to Literacy	3.55	3.91	0.36
Children Create Learning Activities	3.27	3.55	0.27
Interactions Develop Self-esteem	4.36	4.55	0.18
Follow a Prescribed Curriculum	3.73	3.91	0.18
Worksheets	3.36	3.45	0.09
Inventive Spelling	4.36	4.45	0.09
Same Curriculum and Environment	3.64	3.73	0.09
Variety of Centers Provided	4.18	4.18	0.00
Extended Time to Engage	3.55	3.55	0.00
Responsive to Development	4.64	4.55	-0.09
Quiet Environment	3.45	3.36	-0.09
Select Activities	3.55	3.36	-0.18
Children Engage in Seatwork	3.73	3.36	-0.36

Note. $N = 11$[7]

Instructional Activities Scale

Participants were more aligned with DAP beliefs than they were with DAP activities. The post-intervention mean for Beliefs Items (3.9) is greater than the post-intervention mean for Activities Items (3.01). Participants were prompted to report the frequency with which they

[7] Teacher Beliefs and Practices pre-intervention data are missing for Sofia.

engage in a series of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate practices. Significant growth was seen.

Table 11

Activities Items – Means

Participant	Years PreK	Years K	Pre	Post	Change
Sofia	0	4	no data	3.17	
Claudia	0	12	3.33	3.92	0.59
Phillipa	0	1	2.00	2.58	0.58
Maria	0	15	2.75	3.17	0.42
Shelley	11	4	2.75	3.17	0.42
Monica	0	3	3.00	3.33	0.33
Ines	0	1	2.25	2.33	0.08
Laura	13	6	3.25	3.33	0.08
Priscilla	0	3	2.50	2.50	0.00
Rosa	0	1	3.08	3.08	0.00
Shauna	3	3	3.08	3.00	-0.08
Danielle	0	6	2.67	2.58	-0.09
Overall Mean Activity Score			2.79	3.01	0.21*

Note. $N = 12$, $*p < 0.05$

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare pre- and post-intervention Activities Scale results. There was a significant difference in the scores for the pre-intervention Activities responses before the intervention (M = 2.79, SD = 0.42) and after the intervention (M = 0.47, SD = 0.14); $t(10) = -2.7$, $p = 0.02$. This suggests that the intervention may have had some influence on the frequency of DAP practices in participants' classrooms. As this instrument collected data through self-report, these results should not be overstated.

Looking at the post-intervention results for the Practices Items (Table 12), both the highest (4.09) and lowest (1.45) scores on this scale pertained to writing. Teachers indicated that students frequently were able to *experiment with writing by drawing, copying, and using their own invented spelling.* Students also *practice handwriting on lines* regularly, which is not a DAP practice.

Teachers seemed aligned with Instructional Activities concerning behavior management. Six teachers reported decreases in the frequency with which *students get separated from their friends to maintain classroom order.* Three teachers reported that they reduced the frequency that students had to *sit and listen for long periods of time until they become restless and fidgety (Item 18)*. Echoing the beliefs item in support of rote learning, participants also indicated that they frequently used flashcards to help students memorize discrete facts.

Table 12

Instructional Activities Items

Item	Pre	Post	Change
Get Separated from Friends	3.00	3.55	0.55
Integrated Activities	3.18	3.73	0.55
Select Center Activity	3.09	3.55	0.45
Valuing of Others	1.64	2.09	0.45
Flashcards	1.36	1.73	0.36
Sit and Listen for Long Periods	3.09	3.45	0.36
Complete Worksheets	2.73	3.00	0.27
Play is Supported	2.73	3.00	0.27
Play with Games, Puzzles, Construction	3.45	3.55	0.09
Experiment with Writing	4.09	4.09	0.00
Modified Materials	3.00	2.82	-0.18
Handwriting on Lines	2.09	1.45	-0.64

More telling data may have been yielded if teachers' perceptions of independence had been measured in a manner more closely aligned with this study. In an attempt to measure beliefs aligned with the goals of this study, four items were added to the beliefs scale. Perhaps due to overly simplistic phrasing, they all yielded a high degree of agreement (> 4) and did not reveal much change (0- -0.27). These questions asked teachers to indicate the degree to which they felt the following were important: *children's relationships, differentiated instruction, learning centers,* and *clear directions*. Richer information about how teachers viewed classroom

management as a means to support student independence was collected through teachers' written statements and reflections.

Participants' Thoughts on Independent Literacy Engagement – In Their Own Words

On a short survey (Appendix F), all 11 respondents[8] indicated that independent engagement in literacy events was either *very important* or *extremely important.* When asked to explain why independent engagement was important, seven teachers explained that student independence permitted them to meet with small groups. For example, Ines wrote that student independence "gives the teacher time to focus on a specific group of students and work on specific skills." Six teachers indicated that learning to be independent and collaborative in the classroom had academic and social benefits for students. As Shauna put it, "They need to be able to take responsibility for completing their own work. Working independently gives them additional practice with ELA [English Language Arts] skills and improves their socialization."

Teachers cited a variety of issues when asked to describe *challenges* to independent engagement. Seven teachers indicated that selecting appropriate activities for independent work was a challenge. As Danielle explained, "While they are working independently, the time should be spent on engaging activities that are easy enough to do without the teacher, but rigorous enough to challenge them." The challenge of matching students with appropriate independent activities was clearly echoed by Phillipa who wrote, "The challenges are to engage all students in similar activities but they are at various levels of attention span, as well as academic (levels)."

Six teachers referred to challenges concerning providing students with appropriate materials. Rosa wrote, "Materials have to be appropriate for students' abilities," while Maria asserted, "In the classroom setting, the students are limited in the amount, variety, and quality of what is available." Six teachers indicated that student behavior was a challenge to independence.

[8] Priscilla did not respond.

Ines wrote "Students play with each other. Students get loud. Students get up to ask the teacher questions."

All participants agreed that student independence is important. According to respondents, independence allows the teacher to work with small groups and supports student development. Major challenges to independence include: selecting appropriate activities, supplying appropriate materials, and managing behavior issues.

Data from the course evaluations and closing surveys will now be used to understand participant perceptions of how the professional development helped participants to manage literacy environments and supply their environments with tools and props. In reviewing written reflections on End of Course Surveys and weekly assignments, all participants made statements that affirmed an understanding that, through classroom management, student independence could be supported. Teachers seemed to realize that students were not solely responsible for their independence. By selecting appropriate activities and materials, clarifying procedures, and modifying expectations, teachers could promote independence. Teacher comments in Table 13 provide additional insight.

Table 13

Teacher Perspectives: Classroom Management Supports Independence

Participant	Source	Sample Quote
Priscilla	Final homework annotations	*Charts are displayed to encourage independent writing... There are also lists of high frequency words, theme vocabulary, and materials to get students motivated.*
Danielle	Closing survey	*I must put more time and effort into making my center activities more engaging!*
Ines	Closing survey	*I found out that I need to explain well the independent activity and have an extension for those who finish early.*

(continued)

Participant	Source	Sample Quote
Sofia	Library center reflection	*Prior to revamping the classroom library….they were not held accountable for sharing writing, or drawing about their reading experience… I currently have a more refined way of running my classroom library. My students know when they are scheduled to visit the library and look forward to it.*
Shelley	Closing survey	*My challenges: Managing the activities. Managing the children. Managing the games, etc. that we make.*
Claudia	Closing survey	*Library: I am hoping to make it more engaging so students really work on reading activities.*
Laura	Writing center reflection	*(I plan to) Have more materials made, books to use that they may take back to their seats to complete with stamps, stickers, and colored pencils to enhance their illustrations.*
Shauna	Closing survey	*I need to consider how I organize activities and the rigor of independent activities.*
Rosa	Closing survey	*Materials have to be appropriate for students' abilities.*
Monica	Writing center reflection	*Students can copy well. They can write sentences using sentence frames and thinking maps. Students are able to illustrate their sentences.*
Phillipa	Closing survey	*I learned to pace myself and remember to plan with-in the same concept but with a range of levels to assist all levels at their own pace.*
Maria	Closing survey	*Learning about new activities is always helpful.*

Unanticipated Findings and a Conclusion

This study focused on the perceptions and practices of kindergarten teachers as well as the impact of a professional development course on managing the literacy environment. It did not intend to investigate reading instruction. However, the importance of learning high frequency words was evident throughout this project and should not be ignored.

Rote Learning

During the study, I made informal visits to five course participants' classrooms. Although I intended to find out more about the literacy environments, one thing that struck me was an intense focus on learning high-frequency words, which are commonly occurring words that emergent readers memorize to help with reading fluency. Decoding strategies are not typically applied to these words. I was surprised to find teachers encouraging students to

memorize around 200 of these words (see Figure 18). Both the current and previous district-adopted language arts programs listed around 30 words. Evidence from the Teacher Beliefs and Practices survey made it hard to ignore what I had seen. On this survey, participants reported frequent use of flashcards. Teachers also found that it was important to "focus on teaching children isolated skills by using repetition and recitation (e.g., reciting ABCs)." Learning through rote memorization is considered developmentally inappropriate.

Figure 18. High-frequency word lists in Maria's classroom, Shelley keeps track of words learned.

Rather than discount the practical knowledge of these teachers, I looked to research on reading to better understand the efficacy of learning long lists of high-frequency words. While I was not able to determine an optimal number of words for kindergarteners, high-frequency words are considered a component of early reading (West, Denton, & Reaney, 2001).

This unanticipated finding did, however, resonate with a recent study of contemporary early childhood education settings (Howes, 2010). In this study of urban preschools, didactic teaching and an emphasis on pre-academic skills were found. In this study of 12 early childhood education centers, 15% of students had a primary teacher who taught in a *didactic* style. Howes (2010) writes of these teachers, "They appeared to believe that the role of the teacher was to

deliver this information to the children and to make sure that they learned it" (p. 52). Pre-academic teaching is perceived to be a growing trend in early childhood programs, "If we were to replicate this research more than a decade later, I suspect that every program would include more content in language, literacy, and mathematics" (p. 144).

Concluding Thoughts on the Findings

Findings from this study provide some detailed information about how kindergarten teachers manage their literacy environments to support student independence. Classrooms became more enriched. Teachers identified tools and spaces that helped them to support independent engagement. Beliefs and practices became more aligned with DAP. However, perhaps the most important finding is that teachers were willing and ready to adjust their practice to meet students' needs.

Teachers understood that through classroom management, student independence could be supported. All participants made statements about how they could modify activities, materials, and expectations, as well as clarify directions to support students. Furthermore, participants were receptive to the professional development, and even desired more professional learning experiences that support their work. While there may still be a lot to learn about managing the kindergarten literacy environment, the participants in this study were certainly aware of their role as classroom decision-makers and ready to learn from their experiences and from each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study employed a mixed methods design to investigate the impact of professional development on managing classroom literacy environments. It also examined the perspectives of kindergarten teachers on classroom management during independent literacy time. Evidence showed that the professional development program had a positive effect on the print-richness of classrooms. Participant perspectives revealed an understanding of classroom management' impact on independence.

Professional Development Supports Teachers' Work

Previous studies have examined the impact of professional development on literacy environments and classroom management in kindergarten and early childhood settings. The results have been mixed. Some studies found that professional development can be effective in changing teacher practice (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; McGill-Franzen et al., 1999). Other studies found that professional development can fail when it comes to linking theory and practice (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009) and that a coaching model might be more promising (Neuman & Wright, 2010).

In this study, professional development was found to be effective and desirable. Data indicate changes to the print-richness of classroom literacy environments. Data also show that the course impacted teachers' perspectives on classroom management and student independence.

Changes in Classroom Literacy Environments

The physical environment plays a role in supporting literacy. Enriched classroom environments have been seen to encourage positive attitudes toward reading and writing (Cunningham, 2008) as well as literacy engagement (Morrow & Weinstein, 1982; Neuman,

1999, Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman & Roskos, 1993). Unfortunately, many classrooms are inadequately furnished with literacy materials (Cunningham, 2008; Fractor et al., 1993; Neuman, 1999, Pianta et al., 2002). This study helped teachers to improve the quality of their literacy environments, which should, in turn, support kindergarteners' literacy attitudes and engagement.

According to the CLEP data, literacy environments became more enriched (Figure 19). Participants took what they learned from the professional development back to their classrooms.

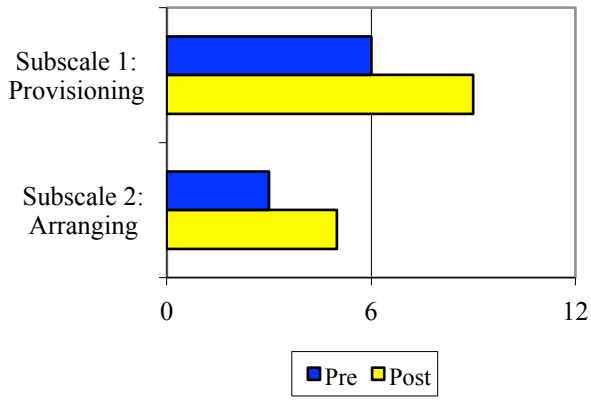

Figure 19. Literacy environments that were rated satisfactory or enriched on CLEP subscales.

Photographs showed that classrooms were generally well provisioned. Before the study, six out of twelve of the classrooms were rated *satisfactory* or *enriched* on CLEP Subscale 1: Provisioning. After the study, nine of the classrooms were rated *satisfactory* or *enriched* (Figure 19). The course provided both ideas for new activities and information about using existing materials. Photographs showed many school-provided materials as well as tools and props that were supplied by the teacher. Less experienced teachers showed more growth in *provisioning*, probably because teachers with more experience also had more opportunities to acquire materials.

Arranging of classroom environments to promote literacy was more challenging than provisioning materials. All participants scored better on *Subscale 1: Provisioning* than they did

on *Subscale 2: Arranging*, both before and after the intervention. Looking at CLEP Subscale 2: Arranging, three out of 12 environments scored *satisfactory* on the pre; five out of 12 scored at least *satisfactory* on the post. Creating environments that support student independence is cognitively complex work and was an ongoing focus of the course. Sessions highlighted techniques for managing spaces, materials, and activities.

CLEP data showed that teachers had literacy tools, but they had less success with arranging their rooms to promote literacy engagement. Data from the Teacher Beliefs and Practices survey indicated that although teachers had materials like games and puzzles, these were not frequently used. In addition, seven teachers indicated on the End of Course Prompt that they had difficulty matching students with appropriate materials.

It is important to furnish classrooms with a wide and rich variety of materials. Across data sources, the need for support with managing materials was clear.

Additional changes to the classroom literacy environment. Growth was seen across classrooms. More growth may have occurred had the professional development and study spanned a greater period of time. Some teachers wrote that they planned to make changes in the future, or didn't have enough time to make the changes they desired. Danielle wrote, "I have not recently tried any new centers, however, I would like to make an improvement on my listening center for next year." Similarly, Shelley wrote, "I learned new ways to organize and manage but have not tried it yet." Some teachers changed the structure of their independent work period although there were few changes to the arrangement of the classroom. Monica wrote, "I did not change the physical set up of my classroom. I did, however, start using working groups for my IWT center time."

Evidence suggests that teachers were thinking about how the room environment might be used to support independence. Six teachers made changes to *CLEP Item 8: Print Used for Classroom Organization*. Some of these changes involved labeling parts of the room as centers even though these spaces weren't clearly defined. Labeling could be a precursor to creating more defined areas. At a minimum, labeling the room shows that teachers were thinking about allocating spaces in the room for specific independent activities. Four classrooms showed changes to management boards, which match students with independent activities during independent work time. A longitudinal study of classroom environments could be conducted to find out if these types of smaller changes portend sustained or more substantial changes to classroom environments.

Participant Perspectives on Managing Independent Literacy Engagement

Participants understood that they had an important role to play as classroom managers. Management decisions, including: selecting activities, setting expectations, and clarifying goals, support student independence. This idea was reflected in written reflections. At the same time, participants consistently cited management challenges. For example, seven teachers indicated on the closing survey that one of the major challenges to independent engagement was selecting activities that students could do without teacher support.

The reality of classroom management is that classroom activities are context-dependent and are almost always met with some type of challenge. Independent activities are not always successful from one classroom to the next (Cambourne, 2001). A theme that emerged from this study was the struggle to manage independent writing. Some teachers, however, were able to reframe writing in a way that was developmentally appropriate.

Participants perceived writing centers to be problematic. Monica wrote, "If students are allowed to choose their own center, they usually do not choose it as their first choice." Concerns about wasting materials were voiced. Ines wrote, "Many students would rather draw than write." Maria emphasized how production quality was poor and materials were wasted during independent writing.

Evidence shows how participants experimented with the parameters of independent activities until they found practices that worked. When paper and pencils were introduced into thematic play areas, these literacy tools provided a catalyst for paper handling, reading, and writing. Shauna's restaurant area (Figure 5) and Rosa's post office (Figure 9), both pictured in Chapter Four, illustrate playful strategies that encourage writing.

The willingness of participants to adjust management to support independence is a key finding of this study. All participants recognized that classroom management decisions play a role in supporting independent engagement in literacy activities (Table 13).

Looking Across the Data: Those with Experience Also Performed

The five participants who had the highest pre and post performances on both CLEP subscales also studied early childhood education. As undergraduates, four of them took three or more courses in early childhood education. As part of their multiple subject credential programs, all continued their study of early childhood education. Only one participant who consistently studied early childhood education had a low-rated environment (Appendix J).

Although not consistently the highest scorers of the group, the three participants who had experience teaching preschool also scored at least *satisfactory* on both post-intervention CLEP subscales. Participants with preschool experience also appeared to be aligned with DAP. All

three of these teachers scored above a 4 on the Beliefs scale on the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey.

If there is a relationship at all between teaching preschool or studying early childhood education and performance on the survey instruments, it may not be causal. Teachers who are interested in supporting the developmental needs of students might be likely to take classes in early childhood education, or teach preschool. These same teachers may also be likely to create room environments that are responsive to children's needs. Previous research has found that the best predictor of DAP was knowledge (Bryant et al., 1991).

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered. Limits to generalizability include: the sample, the survey measures, and reactivity.

The first limitation is the small sample size ($N = 12$). Changes to environments, beliefs, and practices were found. However, findings may not be applicable to other kindergarten teachers working with the same conditions. Participants voluntarily enrolled in the professional development and may have been predisposed to changing practice.

The purpose of this study was to examine a previously identified issue: supporting independence during the language arts period. The study focused on the decision-making of kindergarten teachers in order to find out whether or not an intervention could be helpful. The small sample size allowed me to study room environments with a high level of detail and offer a course focusing on the concerns of a manageable group of teachers. I would not have been able to analyze the room environments of a much larger sample, which may have yielded more generalizable findings.

The second limitation concerns survey instruments. While the CLEP Tool provided a consistent framework for looking at literacy environments, some observational items did not measure change on the post-survey when classrooms were already near the high mark on the pre-survey. The Teacher Beliefs and Practices survey was aligned with the NAEYC's guidelines for DAP. However, teacher responses may suggest that misalignment did not necessarily indicate practice that did not match student needs. For example, participants believed that students needed frequent use of flashcards in order to memorize high-frequency words. If one of the purposes of kindergarten is learning to read, application of developmentally appropriate practice may need to be considered more flexibly than it is presented in the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey.

Additionally, self-report, a feature of the Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, is not always dependable. Respondents may tend to answer questions in a manner that coincides with the beliefs promoted by the course. In this case, results may not truly reflect actual beliefs (Schommer-Aikins, 2004). Considering practices, teachers may see themselves in a positive light, leading to over-reporting favorable practices (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2006).

Lastly, I recognize that my role as the facilitator of the salary point class may have caused some reactivity in the study. Teachers may have been more apt to make changes to their classroom and review the class favorably because they felt personally compelled to collaborate with me. To address this limitation, I used multiple data sources to best understand environmental changes and perspectives.

Opportunities for Future Research

To better understand how kindergarten teachers manage independent engagement in their literacy environments, we need to learn more about daily decision-making. In-depth interviews

could yield more information than the written reflections collected from participants in this study. Ongoing classroom observations coupled with interviews would draw out even richer information about how teachers support independent engagement in literacy events.

In the future, this topic might be further explored if it were integrated into ongoing professional development. Kindergarten teachers might work on literacy environments in collaborative groups for a longer period of time, perhaps an entire school year or more. Findings might be either validated or challenged if participants were drawn from a larger pool, not just enthusiastic volunteers.

Findings from this study relate to two lines of research. The impact of print-rich classroom environments on student outcomes deserves further investigation. Previous studies indicate that access to print promotes literacy acquisition (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2012; Neuman & Celano, 2001, 2012). It might be valuable to find out whether or not specific types of tools or spaces both support independence and literacy outcomes.

The impact of classroom management interventions on teacher performance and job satisfaction might also be interesting to investigate. Previous studies indicate that teachers who feel supported in a collaborative work environment are more satisfied with their jobs (Allensworth et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Implications and Recommendations for Education Policy-Makers

This study examined the tools and spaces kindergarten teachers use to support independent literacy engagement. Participants made changes to environments and provided reviews of the tools and spaces they used. Based on findings, schools might consider furnishing kindergartens with tools to support: libraries, listening centers, and dramatic play. Schools might

also create a method for fulfilling teacher requests for needed tools, including maintaining technology. However, the tools are actually the smaller part of supporting student independence. The issue of greater importance is managing the independent activities these tools and the environment support.

Teachers want professional development that's aligned with their needs. Kinder Habitats sessions were held outside of school hours. Teachers were not paid to attend classes. Those who did complete all in- and out-of-class participation hours received a point toward a salary increase. Attendance was consistent and evaluations were positive. Teachers who did not need or want salary point credit still chose to attend.

Course evaluations indicated seven teachers liked sharing ideas with colleagues that worked in similar settings. Six teachers felt that the Kinder Habitats course was more helpful than most professional development courses because it was closely aligned with current needs. Especially during times of transition, teachers need opportunities to discuss changes in practice. In 2013, the transition to the new Common Core State Standards and the push toward differentiated instruction created new professional demands. The course gave teachers a forum for learning about and discussing new expectations and practices.

All participants agreed that the course content helped them to design a classroom environment that facilitated independent engagement in literacy events. As a teacher with kindergarten experience at a Title I school, I was able to provide a course that was attuned to the demands of the job. Since the conclusion of the class, nearly half of the participants have contacted me to request that I put together a follow-up class. Monica wrote the following as a note on her final homework assignment:

> The Kinder Habitats class was AMAZING!!! I highly recommend it to all Kinder teachers. It was a great way to collaborate with more teachers and to get ideas for

> my own students. I took a lot of activities, ideas and knowledge from this class… This was a great experience. I hope there will be a "part 2" to this class.

District administrators may want to give teachers more opportunities to engage in self-selected professional development that supports their personal goals. Time has already been set aside for professional development. This time is primarily used to address school-wide concerns. It could be spent collaborating with teachers and support professionals who posses an intimate understanding of the classroom challenges teachers say they face. One-size-fits-all professional development for elementary teachers can become so general that it is often not useful. I suggest that teachers be provided regularly scheduled opportunities to network and collaborate with other teachers who are teaching the same grade level.

Professional development should be considered a vital part of every teaching experience. Pre-service training is critical preparation for new teachers, but in-service teachers need secure access to ongoing forums in which they can learn about and discuss strategies and improve practice. When it comes to classroom management, pre-service teacher training programs don't adequately prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom setting (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006) and in-service training is either nonexistent or poorly aligned with classroom needs.

A Final Reflection

Kindergarten is a time of transition. I feel strongly that classrooms need to be places that welcome children, meet them where they are developmentally, and celebrate learning. Under pressure for academic performance, educators can become victims of tunnel vision. Acute focus on test scores and academic targets causes well-meaning administrators to tell kindergarten teachers to raise the academic rigor of independent literacy activities. This can result in pressure for students to engage in activities that are not DAP and are not suitable for independent engagement. Sadly, if kindergarten classrooms are not able to offer rich settings with multiple

opportunities for learning, including activities that are fun and engage students' interests, many children may never have these experiences. Developmentally appropriate practice and literacy instruction are not mutually exclusive. Kindergarteners can learn to read and write in environments that meet their needs and support the transition to school.

In closing, I would like to address the professional needs of classroom teachers. Classrooms are complex environments. Managing classrooms is challenging work that requires teachers to develop a wide array of strategies. Even when activities are well planned and aligned with curricular goals, teachers must be responsive to unforeseeable hiccups and hitches. I am hopeful that this study, and others like it, will highlight the positive outcomes that may result when teachers are afforded opportunities to collaborate and share their collective wisdom.

APPENDIX A: KINDER HABITATS COURSE DESCRIPTION

Week 1: Arranging the Literacy Environment & Managing Student Groups

Course Objectives:

We will discuss how to manage kindergarten literacy environments. The goals of this class are: (a) to support the establishment of print rich classrooms, (b) support independent engagement in literacy events, (c) to support one another. This professional development class will be closely linked to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for California. Proposed strategies will be informed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommendations for practice.

Common Core State Standards:

Here are some key standards students should master by the end of the kindergarten year. Small group differentiated instruction will likely be needed to support these goals.

On Reading Fluency:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.4 Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

Writing, Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.1 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., *My favorite book is...*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

On Oral Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Guidance from the NAEYC:

Building Classroom Community (p. 219)

A variety of opportunities for peer interaction are offered throughout the day and throughout the week. Children work with partners as well as in small-and whole-group situations. Teachers encourage peer-to-peer scaffolding and assistance when possible.

Environment and Schedule (p. 222)

Teachers allocate extended periods of time in learning centers (60 minutes or more in full-day and at least 45 minutes in half-day kindergarten) so that children are able to get deeply involved in an activity at a complex level. The classroom includes a dramatic play area to which all children have frequent access. Children have ample time and opportunity to investigate what sparks their curiosity. Schedules are set but not rigid- if children are highly engaged in an activity, the teacher may choose to extend it.

Opening Discussion: ***In the current language arts context, why is the literacy environment so important?***

Through reviewing a prepared set of documents from the California Treasures series, the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) recommendations, participants will develop an understanding of how the literacy environment must support independent student engagement in order to allow for targeted, small group instruction and intervention.

Activity 1: Looking at the new Common Core State Standards

Compare 1997 CA Standards to the new Common Core. Look at a crosswalk comparison. We will not go over this thoroughly. Count the new ELA standards (12). Electronic versions of illustrated Common Core Standards posters were distributed electronically to all participants before the first class. (20 minutes)

Activity 2: ***What does independence look like in kindergarten?***

Participants will develop an understanding of self-regulation by reading an excerpt from Tools of the Mind (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). The instructor will facilitate a discussion of what types of activities kindergarteners are most likely to engage in with independence and success. What are our expectations? How do we communicate procedures? (20 minutes)

Activity 3: ***What's happenin' in the habitat?***

Instructor presents information about what developmentally appropriate kindergarten literacy environments might look like (i.e., how the physical space is organized and what tools and props are included). Excerpts from Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), will be used to facilitate discussion about what types of

work spaces/centers and tools/materials might facilitate independent student engagement in literacy activities. Participants will form small groups and engage in reflective discussion of their own classroom environments. If desired, the DAP guidelines can be used for discussion. Which aspect(s) of the environment have been working for students? Which have not? Why? Instructor will share photos and drawings of classroom environments. (20 hour)

Activity 4: *Student Groups and Rotations*

Instructor will lead participants in a discussion about managing independent literacy engagement. This discussion will cover:

- how students can be grouped
- what activities they can engage with
- how long students should be engaged in independent activities
- how student behavior in groups can be monitored
- how to create a management board for center rotations. A sports-themed group behavior score board inspired by Melissa Leach will be presented (Leach, 2012). (30 minutes)

Week 2: Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Reading- Part I

Week 2 focuses on classroom libraries. How can the library area be refined? Can the library be more supportive of independent literacy engagement?

Common Core State Standards:

Print Concepts:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.1 Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

a) Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.

b) Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.

c) Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.

d) Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Reading Literature, Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2 With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

Reading Literature, Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.6 With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

Guidance from the NAEYC:

Environment and Schedule (p. 221)

Teachers foster a learning environment that encourages exploration, initiative, positive peer interaction, and cognitive growth. They choose materials that comfortably challenge children's skills. The classroom includes spaces for children to keep their work and personal belongings; a place for group meetings; a variety of spaces for working, such as learning centers and tables of different sizes; a comfortable library area and other quiet places for independent work or conversation with friends; places to store materials; and displays of children's work.

Book reading and motivation (p. 236)

Teachers provide multiple copies of familiar kindergarten-level texts. Children are encouraged to return to books that have been read aloud to them for independent "browsing" Special time is regularly set aside for independent reading of self-selected familiar texts.

The above statement in in contrast the following (inappropriate) statement:

- Books in the literacy center rarely change. Multiple copies of books are unavailable for individual reading or reading with a partner.
- Children are encouraged to read books on their own when time allows, but teachers do not set aside time for independent reading.

Activity 1: ***Library Corners- Where the books are!***

Instructor will facilitate a conversation about library corners. This conversation will cover the following topics:

- Why should libraries be their own discrete spaces? Participants will read excerpts from "Books Make a Difference: A Study of Access to Literacy" (Neuman, 1999).
- Review Debbie Diller's chapter on libraries (2003). *What to Do* (p. 26-29) and *How to Set Up* (p. 29-32). This can be more thoughtfully read at home.
- An essential question: *Do we all have books?* Here are some organizations that may be able to help provision class libraries with books: Read, Set, Read!, First Book, Reading is Fundamental. Review websites for each of these organizations.
- Review photos of library corners. How can we make them comfortable and inviting?
- Discussion: How should books be organized in kindergarten libraries? By theme? In baskets? How many books? How can novelty be used to keep students interested? Rotate books to align with Treasure units, content areas, and seasons.
- Let students take the books home. Talk about easy checkout systems. (45 minutes)

Activity 2: ***But.... kindergarteners are not independent readers!***

What are pre-readers doing in the library?

- Listening to recordings of books and then use book discussion cards to talk to a friend about the book.
- Students could also read, or pretend to read, to a stuffed animal.
- Students can look at pictures or sequence a story.
- Writing or drawing a summary or review of a favorite book. (30 minutes)

Activity 3: *Bringing the Library to Life*

Encourage teachers to have students take ownership of the library. Feature student responses to literature, book recommendations. Try to follow through with other campus resources when students are "into" a character, an animal, a topic.

Participants will then receive some materials to help manage the classroom library. Materials will include:

- a library sign
- a sign with student directions for using tape/cd players
- a "book hospital" sign for damaged books
- student book review forms and retelling forms
- a list of ideas for organizing books
- a set of book discussion cards to prompt peer discussions books: *Who was the character? What was the setting? What was the problem? What was your favorite part?* (15 minutes)

Week 3: Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Reading- Part II

Week 3 focuses on activities that support independent practice of reading skills. What kinds of games, manipulatives, and other tools are sustaining students' interest? Where can we get/make materials? How do we set expectations?

Common Core State Standards:

Foundational Skills, Print Concepts:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.1c Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.1d Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Foundational Skills, Phonological Awareness:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

a) Recognize and produce rhyming words.
b) Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.
c) Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken.
d) Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.[1] (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.)
e) Add or substitute individual sounds (phonemes) in simple, one-syllable words to make new words.

Foundational Skills, Phonics and Word Recognition:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.3 Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

a) Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
b) Associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings (graphemes) for the five major vowels.
c) Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., *the*, *of*, *to*,*you*, *she*, *my*, *is*, *are*, *do*, *does*).
d) Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of the letters that differ.

Guidance from the NAEYC:

Teaching Methods (p. 222)

Teachers provide a variety of engaging learning experiences and ands-on materials. Materials include books, writing materials, math-related games and manipulatives, natural objects and tools for science investigations, CDs and musical instruments, art materials, props for dramatic play, and blocks (and computers, if budgets allow).

Materials are chosen for how well they support the overall curriculum and goals of the classroom.

Read excerpt on Phonological Awareness from the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* (Honig, Diamond, Gutlohn, 2012, p. 128-150). (10 minutes)

Activity 1: *Reading Games*

Discussion: Who is using games and activities that support reading skills? For homework this week, participants will bring in and explain a reading activity that is going well in their classroom. What skills do they support? What activities are working for independence? Do

some of these games and activities also support other literacy domains (writing)? What are your expectations for these games? How are these expectations communicated?

The kindergarten reading games and activities that I will introduce in Week 3 primarily address alphabet & phonics skills and high-frequency word practice.

Instructor will lead a discussion about what types of spaces work best for games, how to organize games, and where to get or create games. The instructor will then present a variety of free and cheap resources for games that kindergarteners can play independently:

- alphabet games: letter matching mats, puzzles, water games, capital/lowercase matching games, sound/letter matching games, making or building letters with different materials, sorting games, board games, total physical response games.
- High-frequency games: find the word/match the word games in many formats, build sentences with words.
- Word sorts, refer to Words Their Way by Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston. Also Picture This! by Shari Nielsen-Dunn.
- Electronic reading games. Share free on-line resources including how to use: starfall.com, http://www.uen.org/k-2interactives/reading.shtml, pbskids.org
- Discuss other electronic games, including Leapfrog and VTech toys, which sell for under five dollars at thrift stores and are great for families that don't have computer access. (30 minutes)
- How can technology help kindergarteners to build independence? "Finding the Education in Educational Technology with Early Learners" (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). (if time permits)

Activity 2: ***Big Books and Big Words***

- How to use big books to practice skills (high-frequency word, sound spelling patterns).
- How to organize and look after big books (they're fragile). Ideas: use a laundry basket, lay them flat on the rug, limit selection.
- Other kinds of large-format props include: song books, charts, poetry posters, and pocket charts. A balanced approach to literacy includes many types of reading practice. Build porosity by reciting familiar texts.
- Adding tapes and cd's to big book corners is a great idea. Use materials from current and retired programs as independent activity centers: Phonics and Friends, Singlish, Into English!, California Math, Open Court, etc.
- How can other props be incorporated? Removable highlighting stickers, pointers, post-its are useful tools. (15 minutes)

Activity 3: ***Bringing Reading Centers to Life***

Participants discuss how they would introduce some of the activities discussed. How to establish clear expectations? Participants will then receive some materials to help manage the classroom reading centers. Materials may include:

- signs for the following types of centers: big books, pocket charts, poetry, alphabet games, high-frequency word
- games
- blackline masters of alphabet, phonics, rhyming, and high-frequency word games
- a set of big book and poster props, including pointers and stickers
- a references sheet of online resources for supporting independent reading activities

- Layover lines and pocket charts are great for matching text and reciting familiar songs, chants, and rhymes. Instructor will demonstrate how to turn a poster into an interactive center.
- Props for the big book center add novelty and keep centers interesting. Ideas include: highlighter tape and removable stickers, pointers, fly swatters, etc. (30 minutes)

Activity 4: *Rhyme Time!*

- Participants read article "Nursery Rhymes and Phonemic Awareness" (Research and Development Staff, Sadlier-Oxford, 2000). Nursery rhymes support many aspects of the kindergarten program.
- Extend on the classic rhymes through art, make a book.
- Check the Florida Center for Reading Research for more fun reading and rhyming games. (15 minutes)

Week 4: Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Writing

Although writing is incorporated into activity discussions from weeks focusing on reading and oral language, week 4 is primarily concerned with supporting independent writing products.

Common Core State Standards:

Writing, Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.1 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., *My favorite book is...*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

Language, Convention of Standard English:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.1a Print many upper- and lowercase letters

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

a) Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun *I.*
b) Recognize and name end punctuation.
c) Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).
d) Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.

Guidance from the NAEYC:

Writing (p. 237)

Teachers encourage and assist children in their own efforts to write (using letters, words, drawings) for different purposes such as signs, letters, lists, journals, and records of observations. Teachers give children frequent opportunities to draw and write about topics that interest them. Emphasis is placed on helping children share their ideas through written communication. Teachers display children's writing, even if there are errors, for the ideas and expression they demonstrate.

Children are encouraged to use conventional spelling for common or familiar words and also to apply their developing knowledge of sound/letter correspondences to spell independently (i.e., developmental spelling).

Review Homework

Teachers share the independent reading activities that are successful in their classrooms. (20 minutes)

Activity 1: ***Setting up a Writing Center***

- Ideally, the writing center is permanent and does not need to be changed regularly.
- Keep in mind, the CCSS standards indicate support for writing (dictating is a writing strategy proscribed). Expect emergent writing. Expect experimentation. As the NAEYC guidelines suggest, look for ideas and expression. Don't expect perfection.
- Support writing with appropriate tools. Props may include: different types of paper, premade books, writing utensils, high-frequency word and alphabet sound reference cards, stencils, stamps, a mailbox, notecards, pictionaries, high-frequency referece, letter formation reference, story starters, sentence frames, graphic organizers.
- Rotate materials to keep it fresh and interesting! (15 minutes)

Activity 2: ***Alphabet Work for the Writing Center***

- Conventions, printing the letters, is a skill that can be practiced independently.
- Handwriting practice props: stencils, whiteboards, chalkboards, water painting, stamps, doodle boards, workbooks. (10 minutes)

Activity 3: Scaffold

- Use clear directions and samples.
- Sentence frames can support independent writing.
- Patterned writing gives students confidence.

- Graphic organizers- students need consistent practice before independence. Keep them simple, use icons, keep them the same. (10 minutes)

Activity 4: *Kindergarten Writing is Fun!*

- Purposeful writing: shopping lists, birthday cards, friendly letters, posters and signs
- Integrate writing with other activities
- Story starters and prompts: who/what/where sentence builder cards, resources for imaginative story starters: Susan Striker's Anti-Coloring Book series, Taro Gomi's Scribbles book.
- Ongoing pattern writing can be independent. Pre-bound book ideas include: animal alphabet book, cook book, the news, *What Is It?* Inference book. Instructor has created and will provide master copies of each of these. Plan ahead! Make bound copies of these books before getting started. (15 minutes)

Activity 5: *Low Stakes/No Stakes*

Independent writing from emergent writers (i.e., kindergarteners) may be celebrated, but should not be evaluated.

- Writing that disappears easily reduces stress and makes it a game. Use white boards, water writing, salt trays, etc.
- Give kindergarteners time to explore and experiment with writing. Still, kindergarteners need to respect the classroom and materials. Look for bargains and donations for alternative materials.
- Attitude is everything. Read "Literacy Environment Quality in Preschool and Children's Attitudes Toward Reading and Writing" (Cunningham, 2008) and discuss what participants can do to develop student enthusiasm for reading and writing.

- Celebrate writing! Publish it, make class books, post pictures and products. *It's the process, not the product!* (20 minutes)

Activity 6: *Bringing Writing Centers to Life*

Participants will then receive and create some materials to help manage the classroom writing centers. Materials will include:

- a sign for the writing center
- instructor-created high-frequency reference cards ("Writer's Card")
- blackline masters of story starter cards and pattern writing books
- instructor will have a drawing for: stencils, markers, doodle boards (10 minutes)

Week 5: Arranging and Provisioning Spaces that Promote Oral Language Development

Week 5 focuses on activities that support listening and speaking.

Common Core State Standards:

Speaking and Listening, Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Speaking and Listening, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Guidance from the NAEYC:

Language and literacy: Listening, speaking, and understanding (p. 234)

To enhance children's listening skills, teachers create regular opportunities for children to actively listen to and converse with others and work together in small groups on projects or

problem solving. They provide opportunities for students to listen and respond to stories and information books, follow directions, and listen attentively to others during group discussions. Teachers provide opportunities for oral response to stories and information books. Children are encouraged to describe events, retell stories or parts of stories, and give simple directions to others.

Activity 1: ***Don't Fight it... They <u>are</u> going to Talk and Play All Day***

- Participants will read "Children's Spontaneous Play in Writer's Workshop" (Lysaker et al., 2010).
- Is play important? Yes. Play is one powerful way in which children learn. Research tells us that play helps children to improve their thinking skills, social skills, language skills, and problem-solving skills (Heroman & Copple, 2006) (30 minutes)

Activity 2: ***Flannel Boards and Puppets***:

- Props can assist in retelling familiar stories.
- Song-games that children can play independently: "Who Took the Cookies from the Cookie Jar", "I Wish I Was a Pizza", "Five Green Speckled Frogs", etc.; manipulatives get mouths moving in creative rhythms.
- These props are not furnished by the school. Consider sharing props with other teachers. Paper puppets are not as durable, but do the trick. If children make them, they can take them home.
- Instructor leads discussion on making puppets and props, using the materials you already have. (15 minutes)

Activity 3: ***Dramatic Play***

- Thematic ideas that are tied to real-world work: doctor's office, restaurant, fire station, ice cream shop, etc. Tie themes to Treasures units, content areas, and seasons.
- Participants brainstorm ways to incorporate reading and writing activities in the dramatic play area to make the activities meet oral development needs and more. Often, it's as easy as adding paper and pencils.
- Behavior management: dramatic play can get loud. The teacher may need a quiet signal, may try some preventative measures: no noise-making toys, limit the number of students who can be in the dramatic play area, use an adult or older student to help monitor, keep play focused.
- Play plans: students think about their dramatic play objectives, write and discuss what they will do before they begin. (15 minutes)

Activity 4: ***Theater***

- *Fairy tale theater can connect books with language.*
- Strategies for children to use in the independent facilitation of theater play: turn-taking, costumes, props, organization.
- Teach story structure, tie to comprehension, writing, sequencing. (15 minutes)

Activity 5: ***Bringing Dramatic Play Centers to Life***

Participants will then receive and create some materials to help manage dramatic play. Materials will include:

- Reproducible paper puppets for retelling.
- Forms for "work" centers: veterinarian forms, restaurant menus, bus tickets, receipts.
- Character necklaces- to be used instead of costumes for retelling.

Saturday Session

The focus of the Saturday session was provisioning classrooms with literacy props and materials.

Part 1: Trash for Teaching

- *Trash for Teaching* collects manufacturing waste materials that can be used in school projects. These safe waste materials include: paper, fabric, plastics, metal, wood. Arrangements have been made to make a Saturday morning visit to the warehouse facility.
- Associates explain programs that might support teachers needs for materials that support classroom projects and activities.
- Teachers have opportunity to shop the facility, talk about how items might support the literacy domains. (2 hours)

Part 2: Treasure Hunt/ Prep Projects

- Option 1: Teachers can shop 3 local dollar stores: The Dollar Tree, Daiso, and 99 Cent Only to hunt for materials that can support independent literacy activities.
- Option 2: Teachers can return to the school to make materials for centers. (1 hour)

Part 3: Storytelling- Activate All Four Literacy Domains

- How can fairy tales/folk tales support independent engagement?
- Participants work in groups to plan teacher-directed and independent follow-up activities based on a familiar text. (1.5 hours)

Part 4: Computer Lab- Hunting for Resources

- Online treasure hunt. Participants receive a list of online resources, including organizations that help match classrooms with resources (Donor's Choose, First Book, etc.).

- Using the school computer lab, teachers look for activities and ideas.
- Alternative: make center activities

Week 6: Sharing Experiences with Literacy Environments

This last meeting provides a review of concepts and an opportunity for teachers to discuss how their literacy environments are supporting independent literacy activities.

Activity 1: Enriched Environments

- Supporting students with different types of activities.
- Discussion: What classroom elements do students find engaging? Which elements support literacy skill development? Which elements are students successful with independently (without adult support)? Which elements are not successful?

Activity 2: What are the elements of an activity that can be modified if the activity is not working?

- Patterns for arranging students (e.g., whole group vs. small group)
- Materials used during the segment
- Actions students need to take to complete the activity (e.g., read, write, talk)
- Rules governing behavior
- Mini case studies will be given and teachers will work together to make recommendations about fixing the activity.

Activity 3: Debriefing and Celebration

- Teachers discuss the work done and course discoveries. Exchange information and plans for next school year.

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APPENDIX B: PUBLICITY

SALARY POINT CLASS

KINDER HABITATS

This course is presented in conjunction with a research study affiliated with the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences.

To sign up, please email Allyson Miller: missallysonmiller@gmail.com or call (310)422-6266

Who: Current and prospective kindergarten teachers who want to increase student independence and maximize small group targeted instruction by aligning the classroom environment and literacy activities with the needs of kindergarteners.

Where:

When: 6 Thursday afternoons & 1 Saturday (TBD)

Time: 3:15-4:45p.m.

Maximum enrollment: 30

Salary point: Upon course completion, 1 salary point will be earned.

Research study: Participation in the research study is optional.

February 8, 2013

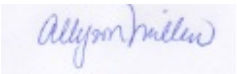
Dear Principals,

Differentiated instruction plays an important role in meeting students' diverse learning needs. Response to Intervention (RtI), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's California Treasures all call for elementary teachers to deliver targeted small-group instruction. Unfortunately, research shows that teachers struggle to manage instructional groups. Another challenge is that kindergarten teachers often find it difficult to support students' needs during the transition to school.

I would like to invite ESC South schools to participate in a professional development opportunity for kindergarten teachers on managing the literacy environment. *Kinder Habitats* is a six-week salary point class that engages teachers in discussions around classroom management and literacy activities that support the academic program and student independence. Recommended classroom activities provided in the course are closely aligned with the California Treasures curriculum and the Common Core Standards. In conjunction with the salary point class, I may ask qualifying teachers to participate in a UCLA dissertation study. Participation in the study is optional and does not preclude teachers from participating in the salary point class. Teachers who choose to participate in the study will be asked about their perceptions and practices. A few participants will be randomly selected for a brief classroom visit. All activities will take place outside of regular contract hours and do not involve students or student information.

I have been a kindergarten teacher for almost a decade. I enjoy working with teachers to help them realize classroom management and literacy objectives. I am looking forward to working and learning with teachers this winter. Please share the informational flyers with your kindergarten staff and feel free to contact me with questions or ideas.

Sincere thanks,



Allyson Laura Miller

APPENDIX C: KINDER HABITATS PHOTOGRAPHY PROTOCOL

Assignment 1 and Assignment 5

The purpose of this protocol is for you to take comprehensive photographs of your classroom **literacy environment**. I would like you to photograph all of the spaces in your room exactly as they exist during your language arts period. I will then ask you to write a few sentences about what is in these areas, how students use the areas and materials, and the directions and procedures you give students for using these areas.

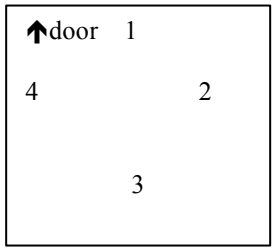
Please follow these steps for taking photos:

1. **Do not photograph any students** or anything that can identify students. Students and families have not given permission to participate in the Kinder Habitats salary point class or the companion study. I cannot accept or review photographs with identifying student information. Photographs should be taken at recess or outside of school hours.

2. Don't change your room. The goal is to capture your room environment as it exists during the language arts period. Don't clean it up or re-arrange elements.

3. Any camera can be used. A phone camera will work as long as the image is clear. You may submit photographs electronically or as hard copies. If you do not have access to a camera, one can be loaned to you. Electronic copies may be submitted via email or shared in our Dropbox folder. Hard copies can be brought to our next meeting.

4. Please follow these procedures for taking pictures.



- Think of your classroom as a box with sides numbered 1-4.
- The side/wall with the "front" door is wall 1.
- Stand inside your classroom. Identify the wall with the front door. (If you have more than one door, choose one to be the "front".) Starting with the left end of wall 1, you will move in a clockwise direction, taking pictures of the perimeter spaces in your classroom. Try not to leave anything out. Allow for a slight overlap. Take pictures of everything. Along the first wall, photos will be titled 1a, 1b, 1c, etc. Along the second wall, photos will be titled 2a, 2b, 2c, etc. Along the third wall, spaces will be labeled 3a, 3b, 3c, and so on. The fourth wall will be the last wall; label photos: 4a, 4b, 4c...
- Next, stand in the center of the classroom. Face the front door again. While standing in the middle of the classroom, take pictures of all the spaces in the middle of the classroom, moving in a clockwise direction. These photos will be titled with roman numerals: Ia, Ib, Ic, IIa, …IIIa, IIIb, IIIc, IVa, IVb… etc.
- Are there any work spaces that got left out? Around corners? Right outside the front door? Take pictures of these and title them in relation to the four walls, for example, "behind the room divider on wall 2".
- Take at least one close-up shot of student work posted. Pick one that can serve as a sample of what is posted in your room.

- You will probably take between 20 and 30 photos.

5. Once you have the photos, write a brief description to accompany each photo. There are three areas to address in your annotations: what is **seen**, how it's **used** by students, and how you **manage** the pictured areas.

Tell what is **seen** in each photograph. Please address the following:

- Describe the literacy tools, props and materials that are available to students in each photograph. Include materials that help students engage in all four literacy domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Examples include: *books, paper, puppets, games*.
- If the tools are difficult to see, please explain where they are and whether or not they are accessible to students.
- If there is student work visible in the photograph, briefly describe it. For example: *independent narrative writing, copying sentence, sentence frame writing, free choice painting, flower addition art project*.
- Are student records posted? For example: *attendance* or *achievement charts*.
- Please be as specific as you can about the number and types of materials that are available to students. Example: *How many books are available to students and what genre? How many writing utensils and what type?*

Please describe <u>how</u> the spaces you have photographed are **used by students**. Please address the following:

- What learning context is used in each area? For example: *independent engagement, small group work, whole-group work, seatwork, adult-led instruction.*
- If you have literacy centers or areas, please write a brief description. Examples: *writing center, computer games, library, dramatic play corner, word work.*
- Imagine seeing students at work in your literacy areas. What are they doing? What are they saying?

Look at each photograph and think about how you **manage** the area. Please address the following:

- What directions and or rules do you give students to participate in each part of the classroom? Please be specific.
- How frequently do you change this area? What kinds of changes do you make to the area?

You may use the Kinder Habitats Photography Protocol Annotation Form if you choose.

Kinder Habitats Photography Protocol Annotation Form
Photo(s)#_____

1. What is seen?
a) Materials *what type and quantity*- list all that are accessible to students.

b) Student work? (y/n)
Did students select the work? (y/n)
What is the nature of the work?

c) Student records? (y/n)

2. How is the area used?
a) learning context (check all that apply)

independent engagement____ small group work_____ whole group work_____

seat work_____ adult led instruction_____ other_____(explain)

b) Does this photo show a literacy center? (y/n)

c) What activities do students engage in in this area? (check all that apply)

writing_____ computer_____ reading_____ dramatic play_____ word work_____

games_____ listening_____ other_____ (explain)

3. Consider your management of the area
a) What directions or rules did you give students to participate in this area?

b) How frequently is this area changed?

c)What type(s) of changes are made?

APPENDIX D: CLASSROOM PROFILE

e–storage areas are provided for long term or incomplete projects.
f–when new literacy tools are introduced regularly (e.g., monthly, weekly).
g–consumable literacy tools are replaced regularly.

Appendix D

Directions for Responding to the CLEP

Purpose of the CLEP

The CLEP is an instrument that can be used by teachers, administrators, and researchers to assess the "print richness" of kindergarten and elementary school classrooms (K-6).

General Directions

This instrument may be used with or without the teacher and students present in the classroom. No feedback is needed from anyone to respond to the items. All judgments are made based on the observable literacy tools, materials, arrangements in the classroom.

Time schedule

30 min. - Completing rating scale in classroom

10 min. - Scoring rating scale and interpreting score

40 min. - Total time required

Directions for Responding to the Rating Scale

The descriptors for each item evidence increased implementation of a "print rich" classroom environment. A rating of 1 is the lowest level of implementation and 7 represents the highest. Therefore, it is imperative to read all descriptors for each item progressing from 1 through 7 before selecting a rating.

Descriptors at 1, 3, 5, and 7 on the rating scale are explicitly stated. Circle one of these numbers if the description accurately matches the environment. If 1, 3, 5, or 7 is not a match, then select 2, 4, or 6 which are implied descriptors indicating degrees of implementation between two descriptors. Circle the selected number above the rating scale.

For example, to select a rating for item # 4, you might follow these thought processes. If about 200 books are present, circle a rating of 3. If about 75 books are present, circle a rating of 2. If about 275 books are present, circle a rating of 4.

Definition of Terms

Literacy event

A communicative act in which reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening are integral to the participants' interactions and interpretive processes.

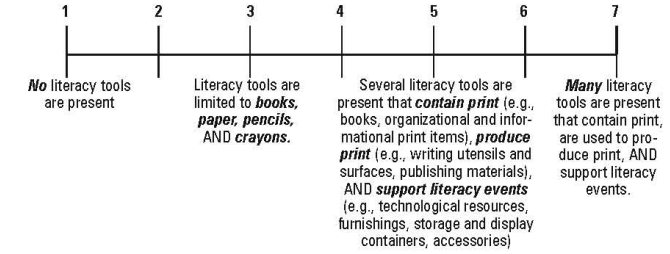
Literacy products

A concrete object or a demonstratable event that occurs as the result of interaction with literacy tools.

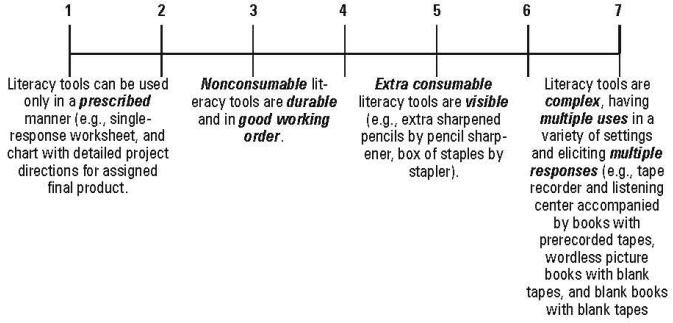
Literacy tools

Physical objects present in the environment which support the acquisition of literacy (e.g., paper, pencils, professionally published books and magazines, adult- and child-authored materials, computers, and bookshelves).

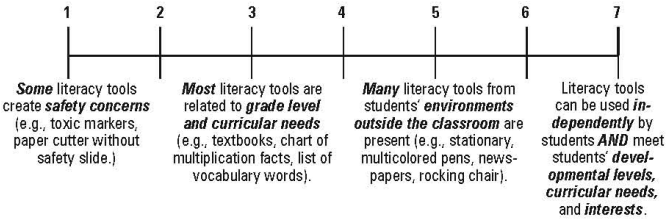
1. **QUANTITY** OF LITERACY TOOLS



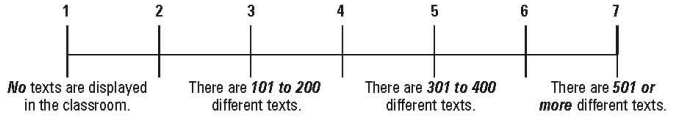
2. **UTILITY** OF LITERACY TOOLS



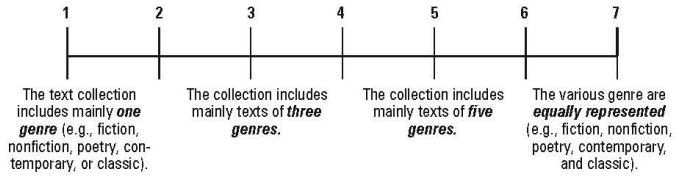
3. **APPROPRIATENESS** OF LITERACY TOOLS



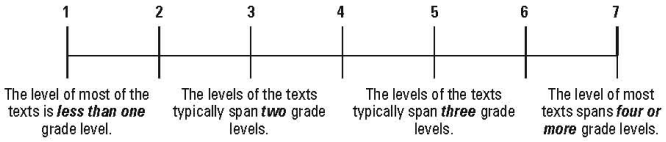
4. **QUANTITY** OF TEXT MATERI ; books, magazines, newspapers, etc.; count multiple copies as one)



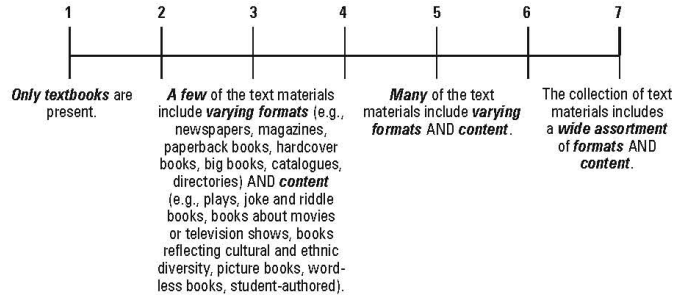
5. **GENRES** OF TEXT MATERIALS



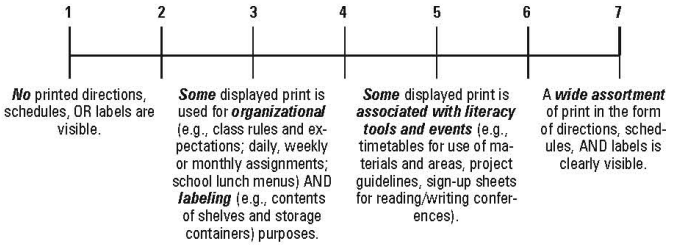
6. **LEVELS** OF TEXT MATERIALS



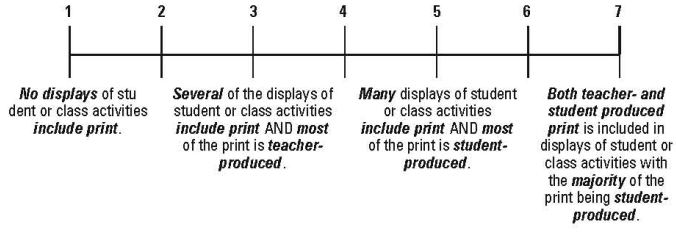
7. FORMAT AND CONTENT OF TEXT MATERIALS



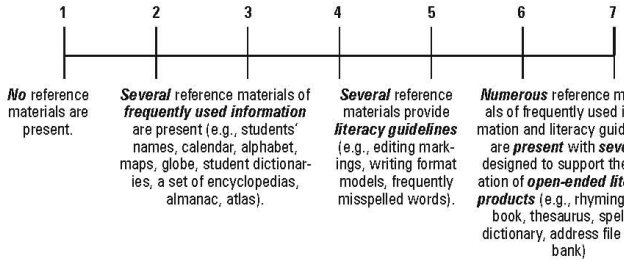
8. PRINT USED FOR CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION



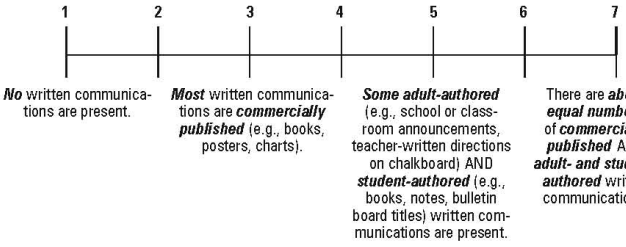
9. CLASSROOM *LITERACY PRODUCT* DISPLAYS



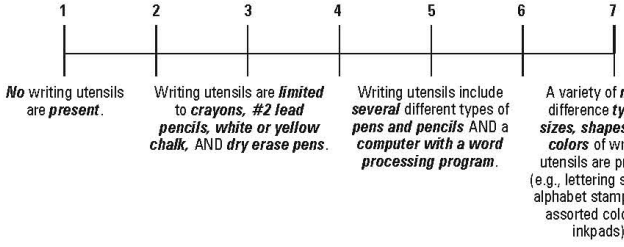
10. *REFERENCE MATERIALS*



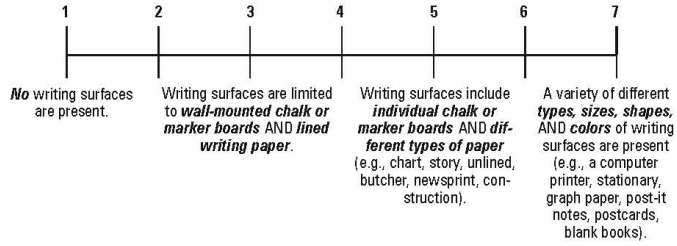
11. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS



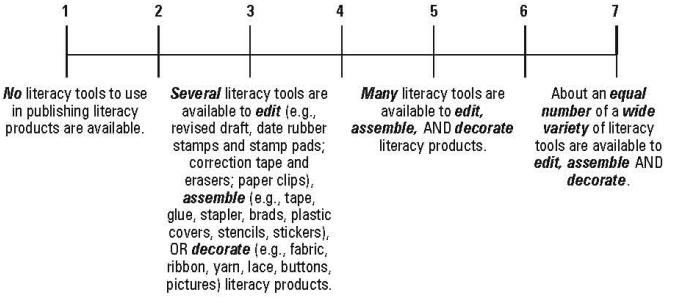
12. WRITING UTENSILS



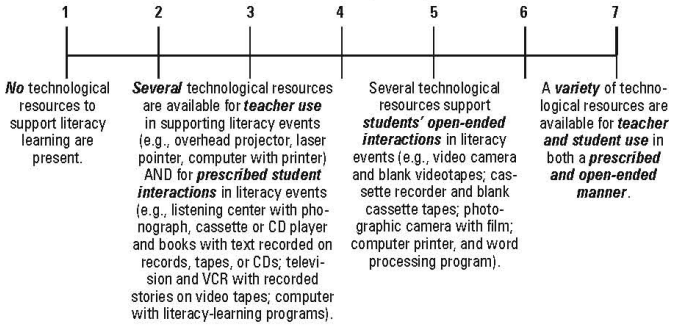
13. WRITING *SURFACES*



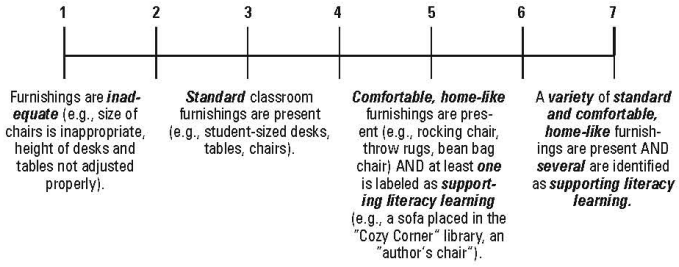
14. PUBLISHING MATERIALS



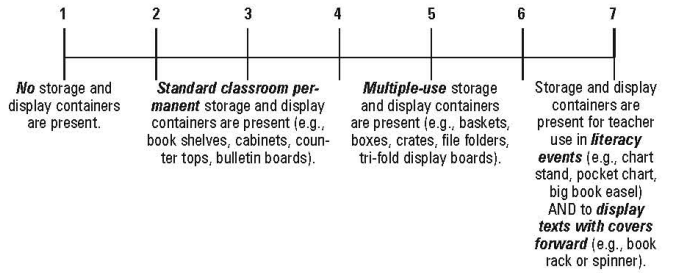
15. *TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES* TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



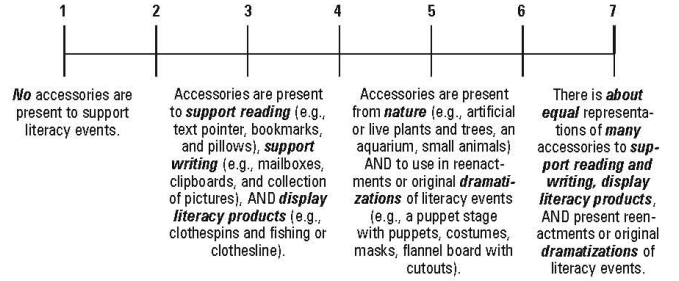
16. **FURNISHINGS** TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



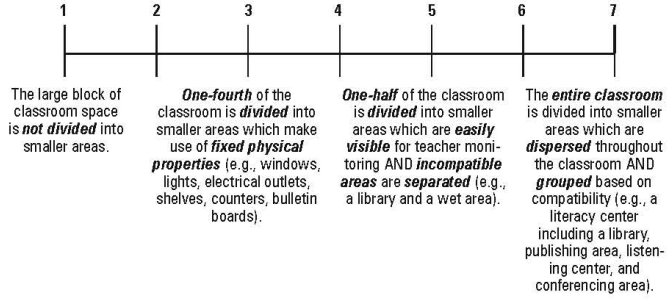
17. **STORAGE AND DISPLAY CONTAINERS** TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



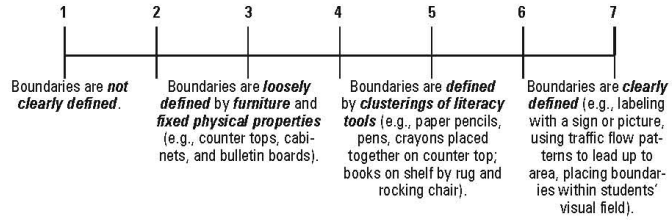
18. ACCESSORIES TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



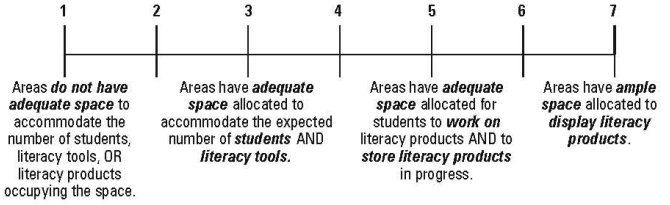
19. ***LOCATION*** OF CLASSROOM AREAS



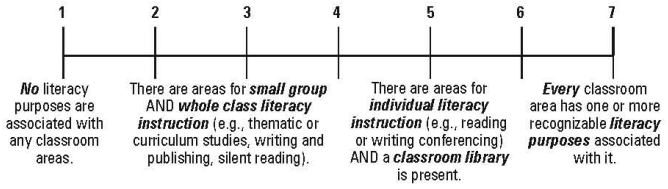
20. **BOUNDARIES** OF CLASSROOM AREAS



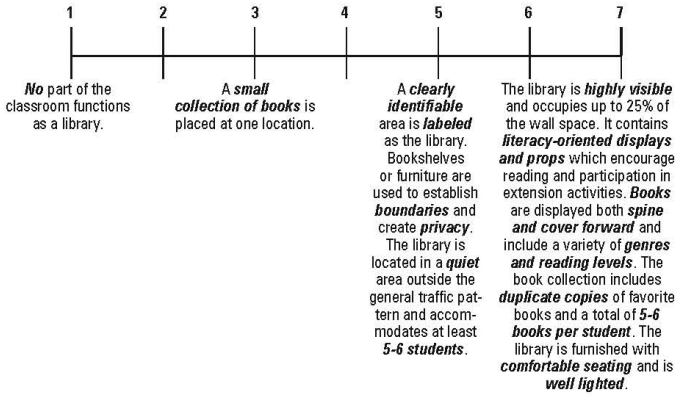
21. **SIZE** OF CLASSROOM AREAS



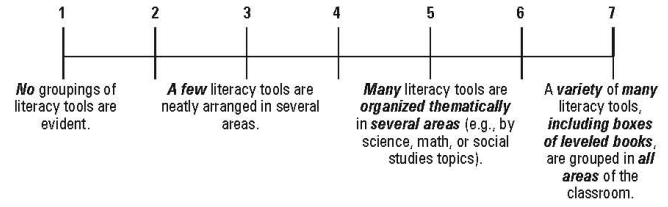
22. **TYPES** OF CLASSROOM AREAS



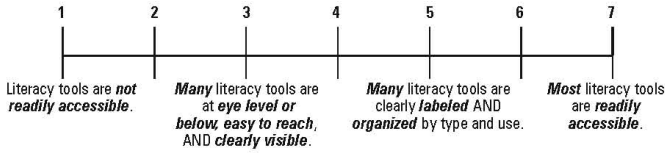
23. **CLASSROOM LIBRARY**



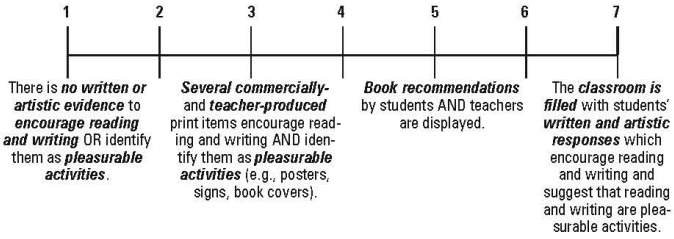
24. **GROUPING** OF LITERACY TOOLS



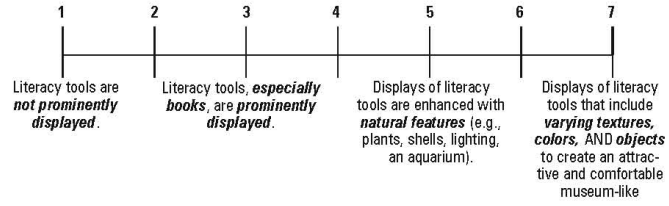
25. **ACCESSIBILITY** OF LITERACY TOOLS



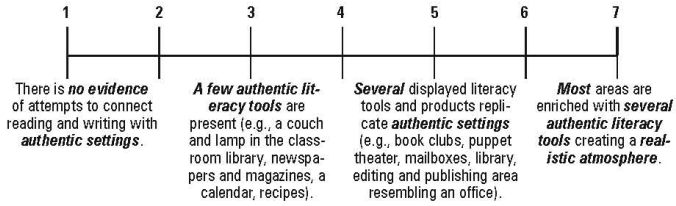
26. PARTICIPATION IN LITERACY EVENTS IN **ENCOURAGED**



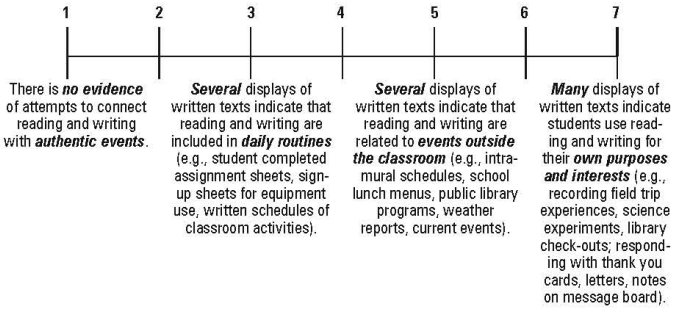
27. PARTICIPATION IN LITERACY EVENTS IS **INVITING**



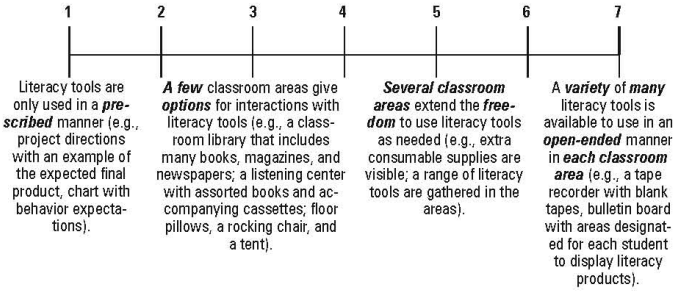
28. AUTHENTIC LITERACY **SETTINGS**



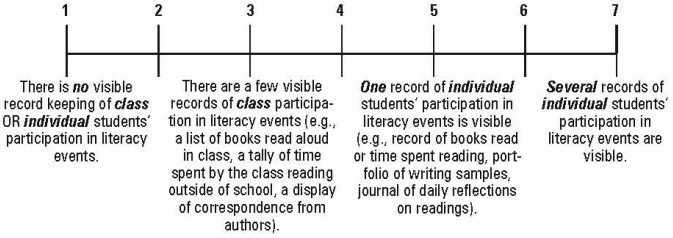
29. AUTHENTIC LITERACY **EVENTS**



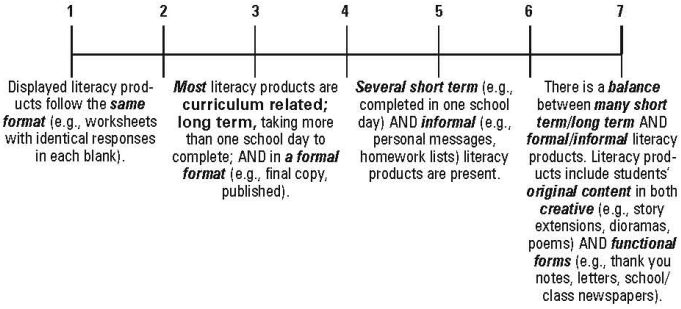
30. **INTERACTIONS** WITH LITERACY TOOLS



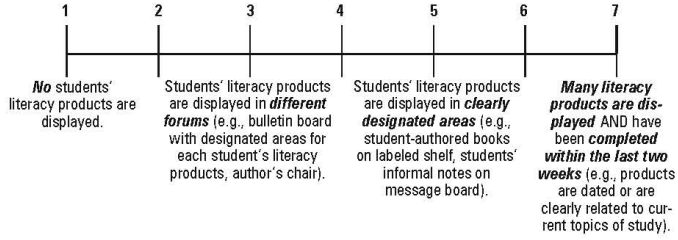
31. **RECORD-KEEPING** OF LITERACY INTERACTIONS



32. **VARIETY** OF LITERACY PRODUCTS



33. **SHARING** LITERACY PRODUCTS



CLEP Scoring Guide

1. Enter each rating in the spaces below and total Subscale 1 and Subscale 2.

Subscale 1		Subscale 2	
1.	_____	19.	_____ _____
2.	_____	20.	_____ _____
3.	_____	21.	_____ _____
4.	_____	22.	_____ _____
5.	_____	23.	_____ _____
6.	_____	24.	_____ _____
7.	_____	25.	_____ _____
8.	_____	26.	_____ _____
9.	_____	27.	_____ _____
10.	_____	28.	_____ _____
11.	_____	29.	_____ _____
12.	_____	30.	_____ _____
13.	_____	31.	_____ _____
14.	_____	32.	_____ _____
15.	_____	33.	_____ _____
16.	_____ _____		
17.	_____ _____		
18.	_____ _____		

_____TOTAL: Subscale 1 _____TOTAL: Subscale 2

2. Complete each equation for Subscale 1 and Subscale 2.

SUBSCALE 1

_____ divided by 18 = _____

Subscale 1 Total divided by 18 = Subscale 1 Score

SUBSCALE 2

_____ divided by 15 = _____

Subscale 2 Total divided by 15 = Subscale 2 Score

3. Enter the score for each Subscale on the scale below.

Subscale 1

Subscale 2

Interpretive descriptions

Subscale 1: Provisioning the classroom with literacy tools

1.0-2.4 = Impoverished

An unacceptably small number of a few different types of literacy tools are present. Some of the literacy tools are of low utility being damaged, outdated, or undersupplied.

2.5-3.9 = Minimal

Several different types of literacy tools are present in moderate amounts. There are enough literacy tools to support the number of students in the classroom.

4.0-5.4 = Satisfactory

An acceptable number of literacy tools of all types are present. The literacy tools are in good working order.

5.5-7.0 = Enriched

The classroom is abundantly supplied with all types of literacy tools. The literacy tools are complex, elicit multiple responses in varied settings, and are developmentally appropriate.

Subscale 2: Arranging classroom space and literacy tools, gaining students' interest in literacy events, and sustaining students' interactions with literacy tools

1.0-2.4 = Impoverished

The physical environment provides little support to literacy acquisition. There is a bleak or stark quality in the classroom atmosphere due to the random placement of only a few literacy tools. Literacy tools or products are not featured. Literacy is not identified as a valued goal.

2.5-3.9 = Minimal

The physical environment provides some support to literacy acquisition. The classroom atmosphere has a neutral feeling and does not capture the observer's interest. A narrow range of literacy tools and products are present but not featured. Literacy is not identified as a valued goal.

4.0-5.4 = Satisfactory

The physical environment provides an acceptable level of support to literacy acquisition. A comfortable classroom atmosphere is created by the presence of many literacy tools of varying types and the display of some literacy products. Literacy is identified as one of several curricular goals.

5.5-7.0 = Enriched

The physical environment provides optimum effectiveness in support of literacy acquisition. A museum-like quality and pleasing ambience is created by prominently featured literacy tools and products. Literacy is easily identified as a valued, life-long goal.

[a] The negative variance components were set to zero (Crick & Brennan, 1983; Shavelson & Webb, 1991)

* Each combination of symbols

(, *, etc.), and line types (continuous, dotted, etc.), represents a hypothetical decision to be made in creating and maintaining a print rich classroom environment.

APPENDIX E: WEEKLY LITERACY

Kinder Habitats Week 2 Assignment
Due on or before Session 3

Part 1: Considering the library discussion from the second meeting, evaluate how you might improve or enrich your classroom library and listening area(s). Try making changes to the physical design of these areas. Try changing the literacy props and tools in your libraries. Let students use the altered libraries for at least three days.

Part 2: Take photographs of your library and listening area(s). Remember: NO PICTURES OF STUDENTS!

Part 3: Tell about what is happening in the library area. What directions do you give students about using the area? What are students doing in this area? What are students saying in this area? Briefly describe what you have changed.

Part 4: Write a reflection in response to the following prompt: *What is succeeding in the library? What are the challenges? What do you need to know? What do you need to do?*

Kinder Habitat: Week 3 Activity

Differentiated small group instruction is a special challenge in kindergarten because kindergarteners are not very independent in the classroom. Please think about three successful literacy activities (reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking) that students are able to engage in independently (without constant adult support). Choose one idea to share with the group next week.

Activity name:_____

Materials:_____

Is this activity in a center/specified space? If yes, please explain_____

How long can your students engage in this activity? (approx. min.)_____

Is this activity **collaborative** or **independent**. Circle.

What are some of the potential challenges with this activity?_____

Think about the directions you give for this activity.

When did you teach children how to successfully engage in this activity?_____

_____

Does this activity have specific rules and/or procedures. If yes, please explain._____

_____

Is this activity differentiated for different academic skill levels? If yes, please explain._____

Is this activity differentiated for student interest? If yes, please explain._____

How frequently does each individual student use this activity?_____

Kinder Habitats Week 4 Assignment
Due on or before Session 5.

Part A: Please photograph your writing center.

Part B: Please answer these questions:

1. Do you have a writing center?

2. Have you done anything to make your writing center an inviting space?

3. What can you do to make your writing space more appealing to students?

4. What materials do you have that support students in independent writing?

5. What do students choose to do in the writing center?

6. What are students using well?

7. What are students not using?

8. What directions do you give students for work in the writing center?

9. Where do you display children's writing in your classroom? Do children help select what will be posted?

10. Do all children write on the same topic?

APPENDIX F: END OF COURSE PROMPT

Kinder Habitats Week 6 Survey/ End of Course Prompt

How important is it for your students to be able to successfully engage in independent literacy activities?

Not at all important	Not very important	Fairly important	Very important	Extremely important

Why?

Think about independent engagement in literacy activities in your classroom. What are some of the major challenges? Write or list you response(s) here.

Did your perceptions of these challenges change in any way through your participation in this course? Please explain.

Think about the ***literacy tools and props*** you have introduced into your literacy environment over the last 6 weeks. Write down at least one ***literacy tool and/or prop*** for each of these categories.

Name at least one literacy tool or prop that is **engaging for students.**	Name at least one literacy tool or prop that is **supportive of literacy skill development.**
Name at least one literacy tool or prop that is **appropriate for independent use without adult support.**	Name at least one literacy tool or prop that is **difficult to implement.**

Think about the ***physical spaces and centers*** you have created and/or maintained in your literacy environment over the last 6 weeks. Write down at least one ***physical space or center*** for each of these categories.

Name at least one physical space or center that is **engaging for students.**	Name at least one physical space or center that is **supportive of literacy skill development.**
Name at least one physical space or center that is **appropriate for independent use without adult support.**	Name at least one physical space or center that is **difficult to implement.**

APPENDIX G: COURSE EVALUATION

KINDER HABITATS
SALARY POINT COURSE EVALUATION SURVEY

Thank you for evaluating your experience with the Kinder Habitats Salary Point Course. We would like to know about the course's effectiveness in assisting you to create a classroom literacy environment that meets the needs of your students. Your feedback is important as it will be used to refine the design of this course. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. No one, including the presenter, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary.

In the following section, you will be asked about your teaching experience.

1. How many years of experience do you have teaching the following grade(s)?:

Preschool _____	2nd Grade_____	5th Grade _____
Kindergarten_____	3rd Grade _____	Other (Please Explain)_____
1st Grade _____	4th Grade _____	_____

2. How long have you been working at your current worksite?

_____ years

3. How long have you been teaching?

_____ years

4. Please describe the specialized training you have had in **early childhood education**. Circle ***all*** that apply:

As an undergraduate:
a. 0 courses
b. 1 or 2 courses
c. 3 or more courses.

As part of your multiple subject credential program:
a. 0 courses
b. 1 or 2 courses
c. 3 or more courses

5. Have you completed an Early Childhood Education Certificate? _____

6. Have you received additional specialized training in early childhood education?

_____Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain. _____

In the following section, you are asked to rate your experience with the Kinder Habitats course. For each statement, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Completely Agree	Generally Agree	Generally Disagree	Completely Disagree
7. The Kinder Habitats course content helped me to design a classroom environment that facilitates independent engagement in literacy events.				
8. The Kinder Habitats course content helped me to supply my classroom with materials that engage my students in independent literacy events.				
9. The Kinder Habitats course helped me to better understand and meet the needs of my students.				
10. The Kinder Habitats course helped me to manage discipline issues in my classroom.				
11. The instructor communicated course content in a clear and accessible manner.				
12. The instructor was responsive to the needs of the group.				
13. I would recommend this course to a colleague.				

15. Briefly describe what you found most helpful about this course:

_____

_____

_____

16. Briefly describe what you would change about this course:

_____

_____

_____

17. How does this course compare with other professional development experiences you have had as a teacher?

Please circle one:

less helpful than most *average* *more helpful than most*

Please

explain_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Data from the Anonymous Course Evaluation

Course Evaluation Responses (N=12)

	Completely Agree	Generally Agree	Generally Disagree	Completely Disagree
The Kinder Habitats course content helped me to design a classroom environment that facilitated independent engagement in literacy events.	11	1	0	0
The Kinder Habitats course content helped me to supply my classroom with materials that engage my students in independent literacy events.	11	1	0	0
The Kinder Habitats course helped me to better understand and meet the needs of my students.	11	0	1	0
The Kinder Habitats course helped me to manage discipline issues in my classroom.	8	3	1	0
The instructor communicated course content in a clear and accessible manner.	11	1	0	0
The instructor was responsive to the needs of the group.	11	1	0	0
I would recommend this course to a colleague.	11	1	0	0

APPENDIX H: TEACHER BELEIFS & PRACTICES

APPENDIX A

TEACHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES SURVEY: 3-5 YEAR-OLDS

Dear Teacher,

We are interested in finding out how you teach your students. We are conducting a survey of teachers of kindergarten children so we can learn more about teachers' beliefs and Practices. We would like to find out about your beliefs about teaching and the specific things you do in your classroom. If you have filled out a survey like this before, please consider helping us once more. This survey has been revised to reflect changes in our understanding of teaching.

Please take about 30 minutes to complete this survey and return it. Your answers will be confidential. Feel free to write comments on the survey to let us know, for example, if you have any reactions to the survey's content or format, or think some questions are not clear or are not relevant. While doing this might make you question your teaching, it is also a great opportunity to reflect on the things you do so well.

To ensure confidentiality, this page will be removed from your survey and kept with the other consent signatures in a separate file. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence.

Thank you for your help! Please call one of us if you have any concerns about the study.

Diane C. Burts	Teresa K. Buchanan	Kyung-Ran Kim
Human Ecology	Curriculum and Instruction	Curriculum and Instruction
578-2404	578-2444	578-2444
dburt1@lsu.edu	tbuchan@lsu.edu	kkim7@lsu.edu

"I have been fully informed of the above-described procedure its possible benefits and risks and I give my permission in the study."

Your Signature _____

Date _____, **2004**

This Survey was created from S. Bredekamp and C. Copple (Eds.) (1997), *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs: Revised Edition.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. This version of the survey was created by Diane C. Burts, Teresa K. Buchanan, Joan H. Benedict, Sheri Broussard, David Dunaway, Stephanie Richardson, & Mary Sciaraffa at Louisiana State University. The questionnaire was originally conceptualized and developed by Rosalind Charlesworth, Craig Hart, Diane C. Burts, Sue Hernandez, & Lisa Kirk at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1990.

For information contact: Dr. Diane C. Burts, School of Human Ecology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-4728, 225-578-2404, dburt1@lsu.edu; or Dr.Terry Buchanan, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-4728, 225-578-2444, tbuchan@lsu.edu.

1. Rank the following (1 - 6) by the amount of influence you believe that each has on the way you plan, or will plan, and implement instruction, *after considering children's needs*. **Please use each number only <u>once</u>.**
(1 = Most influence; 6 = Least influence)

parents	_____
school system policy	_____
principal/director	_____
teacher (yourself)	_____
state regulations	_____
other teachers	_____

Recognizing that some things in education programs are required by external sources, what are **YOUR OWN PERSONAL <u>BELIEFS</u>** about early childhood programs? Please circle the number that most nearly represents YOUR BELIEFS about each item's importance for early childhood programs.
(1 = Not at all important; 5 = Extremely important)

	Not at all Important	Not very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
2. As an evaluation of children's progress, readiness or achievement tests are _____ .	1	2	3	4	5
3. To plan and evaluate the curriculum, teacher observation is _____.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It is _____ for activities to be responsive to individual children's **interests**.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is _____ for activities to be responsive to individual differences in children's levels of **development**.	1	2	3	4	5
6. It is _____ for activities to be responsive to the cultural diversity of students.	1	2	3	4	5
7. It is _____ that each curriculum area be taught as separate subjects at separate times.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is _____ for teacher-child interactions to help develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings toward learning.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is _____ for teachers to provide opportunities for children to select many of their own activities.	1	2	3	4	5
10. It is _____ to use one approach for reading and writing instruction.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all Important	Not very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
11. Instruction in letter and word recognition is _____ in preschool.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is _____ for the teacher to provide a variety of learning areas with concrete materials (writing center, science center, math center, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is _____ for children to create their own learning activities (e.g., cut their own shapes, decide on the steps to perform an experiment, plan their creative drama, art, and computer activities).	1	2	3	4	5
14. It is _____ for children to work individually at desks or tables most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Workbooks and/or ditto sheets are _____ in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
16. A structured reading or pre-reading program is _____ for all children.	1	2	3	4	5
17. It is _____ for the teacher to talk to the whole group and for the children to do the same things at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5
18. It is _____ for the teacher to move among groups and individuals, offering suggestions, asking questions, and facilitating children's involvement with materials, activities, and peers.	1	2	3	4	5
19. It is _____ for teachers to use treats, stickers, and/or stars to get children to do activities that they don't really want to do.	1	2	3	4	5
20. It is _____ for teachers to regularly use punishments and/or reprimands when children aren't participating.	1	2	3	4	5
21. It is _____ for teachers to develop an individualized behavior plan for addressing severe behavior problems.	1	2	3	4	5
22. It is _____ for teachers to allocate extended periods of time for children to engage in play and projects.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all Important	Not very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
23. It is _____ for children to write by inventing their own spelling.	1	2	3	4	5
24. It is _____ for children to color within pre-drawn forms.	1	2	3	4	5
25. It is _____ to read stories daily to children, individually and/or on a group basis.	1	2	3	4	5
26. It is _____ for children to dictate stories to the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
27. It is _____ that teachers engage in on-going professional development in early childhood education (e.g., attend professional conferences, read professional literature).	1	2	3	4	5
28. It is _____ for children to see and use functional print (telephone book, magazines) and environmental print (cereal boxes, potato chip bags).	1	2	3	4	5
29. It is _____ to provide many daily opportunities for developing social skills (i.e., cooperating, helping, talking) with peers in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
30. It is _____ that books, pictures, and materials in the classroom include people of different races, ages, and abilities and both genders in various roles.	1	2	3	4	5
31. It is _____ that outdoor time have planned activities.	1	2	3	4	5
32. It is _____ for parents/guardians to be involved in ways that are comfortable for them.	1	2	3	4	5
33. It is _____ for strategies like setting limits, problem solving, and redirection to be used to help guide children's behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
34. It is _____ for teachers to integrate each child's home culture and language into the curriculum throughout the year.	1	2	3	4	5
35 It is _____ for teachers to solicit and incorporate parent's knowledge about their children for assessment, evaluation, placement, and planning.	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all Important	Not very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
36. It is _____ to establish a collaborative partnership/relationship with parents of all children, including parents of children with special needs and from different cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
37. It is _____ for the classroom teacher to modify, adapt, and accommodate specific indoor and outdoor learning experiences for the child with special needs as appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
38. It is _____ that services (like speech therapy) be provided to children with special needs in the regular education classroom by specialists within the context of typical daily activities.	1	2	3	4	5
39. It is _____ that teachers maintain a quiet environment.	1	2	3	4	5
40. It is _____ to provide the same curriculum and environment for each group of children that comes through the program.	1	2	3	4	5
41. It is _____ to focus on teaching children isolated skills by using repetition and recitation (e.g., reciting ABCs).	1	2	3	4	5
42. It is _____ to follow a prescribed curriculum plan without being distracted by children's interests or current circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5
43. It is _____ to plan activities that are primarily just for fun without connection to program goals.	1	2	3	4	5

FOR THE **FOLLOWING** QUESTIONS,

PLEASE THINK ABOUT **HOW OFTEN** CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM DO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES

	Almost Never (less than monthly)	**Rarely** (monthly)	**Sometimes** (weekly)	**Regularly** (2-4 times a week)	**Very Often** (daily)
1. build with blocks	1	2	3	4	5
2. select from a variety of learning areas and projects (i.e., dramatic play, construction, art, music, science experiences, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. have their work displayed in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
4 experiment with writing by drawing, copying, and using their own invented spelling	1	2	3	4	5
5. play with games, puzzles, and construction materials (e.g., Tinker Toys, Bristle Blocks)	1	2	3	4	5
6. explore science materials (e.g., animals, plants, wheels, gears, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
7. sing, listen, and/or move to music	1	2	3	4	5
8. do planned movement activities using large muscles (e.g., balancing, running, jumping)	1	2	3	4	5
9 use manipulatives (e.g., pegboards, Legos, and Unifix Cubes)	1	2	3	4	5
10. use commercially-prepared phonics activities	1	2	3	4	5
11. work in assigned ability-level groups	1	2	3	4	5
12. circle, underline, and/or mark items on worksheets	1	2	3	4	5
13. use flashcards with ABCs, sight words, and/or math facts	1	2	3	4	5
14. participate in rote counting	1	2	3	4	5
15. practice handwriting on lines	1	2	3	4	5
16. color, cut, and paste pre-drawn forms	1	2	3	4	5
17. participate in whole-class, teacher-directed instruction	1	2	3	4	5

HOW OFTEN DO CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS:	**Almost Never** (less than monthly)	**Rarely** (monthly)	**Sometimes** (weekly)	**Regularly** (2-4 times a week)	**Very Often** (daily)
18. sit and listen for long periods of time until they become restless and fidgety	1	2	3	4	5
19. have the opportunity to learn about people with special needs (e.g., a speaker or a character in a book)	1	2	3	4	5
20. receive rewards as incentives to participate in classroom activities in which they are reluctant participants	1	2	3	4	5
21. see their own race, culture, language reflected in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
22. get placed in time-out (i.e., isolation, sitting on a chair, in a corner, or being sent outside of the room)	1	2	3	4	5
23. experience parents reading stories or sharing a skill or hobby with the class	1	2	3	4	5
24. engage in child-chosen, teacher-supported play activities	1	2	3	4	5
25. draw, paint, work with clay, and use other art media	1	2	3	4	5
26. solve real math problems using real objects in the classroom environment that are incorporated into other subject areas	1	2	3	4	5
27. get separated from their friends to maintain classroom order	1	2	3	4	5
28. engage in experiences that demonstrate the explicit valuing of each other (e.g., sending a card to a sick classmate)	1	2	3	4	5
29. work with materials that have been adapted or modified to meet their needs	1	2	3	4	5
30. do activities that integrate multiple subjects (reading, math, science, social studies, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX I: CONSENT

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Kinder Habitats: Creating Kindergarten Classroom Environments that Encourage Independent Engagement in Literacy Events

Allyson Laura Miller, Doctoral Candidate in education, and faculty sponsor Dr. William Sandoval, from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have enrolled or expressed an interest in enrolling in the professional development course "Kinder Habitats" (approved by the Pacific Coast Unified Joint Salary Point Credit Committee, course number: 55-05-860). To participate in the study, you must meet the following criteria: currently teach a self-contained general education kindergarten class, have access to a complete district-approved language arts curriculum and assessment program, *and* have at least one year of experience teaching kindergarten and at least three years of experience in the primary grades (prekindergarten through second grade). Transitional Kindergarten teachers may participate in the study. All course participants who volunteer to be part of the study and meet the criteria will be included in the sample.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?
There are three main reasons for this study:
1. This study is being conducted in order to understand how kindergarten teachers establish and maintain "print rich" literacy environments.
2. This study will identify the types of literacy materials and spaces teachers feel are most beneficial to independent student engagement.
3. This study will find out about teachers' experience with the "Kinder Habitats" salary point class.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in the "Kinder Habitats" salary point class.
- Take photographs of your classroom environment and make notes about what types of literacy activities occur in different areas.
- Write reflections about how students interact with different types of literacy tools and props.
- Write reflections about how students behave in different types of areas and/or centers.
- Complete a short (10 minute) survey.
- Participate in a focus group interview at the end of the "Kinder Habitats" course. Agree to be recorded with an audio recording device during the 50 minute focus group interview.
- A random sample of study participants will be selected for a follow-up survey and classroom observation, which will occur in your classroom four to 6 weeks after the conclusion of the "Kinder Habitats" course.

How long will I be in the research study?
Participation will involve 15 hours of time in a class setting and 30 hours of independent work and reflection. We will meet as a class once a week for 6 weeks. Each session will take place in the afternoon, after school hours and last 2.5 hours.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
The risks or discomforts are minimal.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
You may benefit from the study. Research, strategies, and materials shared in the "Kinder Habitats" class may enrich your classroom literacy environment. In response to changes you make in your literacy environment, students may become more independently engaged, helping you to deliver targeted instruction.

The results of the research may inform future research about kindergarten literacy environments. Your feedback on the "Kinder Habitats" course will contribute to the design of future professional development courses.

What other choices do I have if I choose not to participate?
If you should decline to participate in this study, you will not be precluded from participating in the "Kinder Habitats" course. Data will not be collected during our regular meetings. Participation has no bearing on qualifying for salary point credit. Regardless of your decision regarding participation in the course, you will need to complete all in-class and out-of-class assignments in order to earn the salary point.

Will I be paid for participating?
You will receive a $50 Target gift card for participating in the study.

Will information about my participation and me be kept confidential?
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding and the use of pseudonyms. The principal researcher, will not attempt to link your identity with your participant code or interview pseudonym. Any electronic files with identifying information (names or details) will be password protected. Identifying data recorded on paper or in photographs will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Only the principal researchers will have access to codebooks which can link your identity.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Allyson Laura Miller
Doctoral Student in the Educational Leadership Program (Ed.D.)
University of California, Los Angeles
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies
missallysonmiller@gmail.com
(310) 422-6266

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(310) 794-5431

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant	
Signature of Participant	Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Allyson Laura Miller	(310) 422-6266
Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Contact Number
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

APPENDIX J: SUMMARY DATA WITH KEY

Summary of Quantifiable Data from the Kinder Habitats Study

	PreK	K	Un	MS	PrPre	PrPost	Change	ArPre	ArPost	Change	BPre	BPost	Change	AcPre	AcPost	Change
Maria	0	15	1	1	3.65	3.65	0	2.80	2.80	0	3.30	3.61	0.31	2.75	3.17	0.42
Priscilla	0	3	2	2	5.00	5.35	0.35	4.27	4.33	0.06	3.35	3.61	0.26	2.50	2.50	0.00
Danielle	0	6	2	1	4.00	4.00	0	3.53	3.73	0.20	3.80	3.94	0.14	2.67	2.58	-0.09
Ines	0	1	1	2	3.59	3.94	0.35	2.87	3.33	0.46	3.95	3.78	-0.17	2.25	2.33	0.08
Sofia	0	4	1	1	3.65	4.71	1.06	2.40	3.73	1.33		3.44	3.44		3.17	3.17
Shelley	11	4	3	3	4.24	4.94	0.7	2.67	4.67	2.00	4.40	4.11	-0.29	2.75	3.17	0.42
Claudia	0	12	3	2	5.29	5.47	0.18	4.60	5.00	0.40	3.85	4.50	0.65	3.33	3.92	0.59
Laura	13	6	3	3	4.59	4.94	0.35	3.33	4.33	1.00	3.90	4.22	0.32	3.25	3.33	0.08
Shauna	3	3	3	3	5.06	5.94	0.88	4.47	4.73	0.26	3.85	4.39	0.54	3.08	3.00	-0.08
Rosa	0	1	2	2	3.76	4.06	0.3	2.67	3.33	0.66	3.45	3.56	0.11	3.08	3.08	0.00
Monica	0	3	3	3	3.18	3.24	0.06	2.27	3.13	0.86	4.20	4.11	-0.09	3.00	3.33	0.33
Phillipa	0	1	2	2	3.76	4.76	1.00	2.80	3.60	0.80	3.40	3.50	0.10	2.00	2.58	0.58

PreK=number of years teaching preschool
K= number of years teaching kindergarten
Un= number of early childhood education courses taken as an undergraduate (1= 0 courses, 2= 1 or 2 courses, 3= 3 or more courses)
MS= number of early childhood education courses taken as part of multiple subject credential program (1= 0 courses, 2= 1 or 2 courses, 3= 3 or more courses)
PrPre/Post= CLEP Provisioning Subscale scores pre/post intervention
ArPre/Post= CLEP Arranging Subscale scores pre/post intervention

BPre/Post= Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, Beliefs Scale scores pre/post intervention
AcPre/Post= Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, Activity Scale scores pre/post intervention

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