

FOUR INTERNATIONAL FOURTH GRADERS'
BELIEFS ABOUT HOW THEY LEARN IN
THE AMERICAN CLASSROOM

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Today in the United States there are many international students in elementary classrooms. The Southwestern states have had an increase in families from Mexico, Central America and South America. Those families coming from India and the Middle East are living predominately in New York and California. Asian families have settled in California and other states along the East coast and some Mid-western states (DeGenova, 1997).

The population in the United States includes a rich diversity of individuals. The children who come to the United States face many obstacles as they adjust to their new home (Pungello & Kurtz-Costas, 2000). Some of the obstacles are: learning the language, adjusting to a different school system, adapting to a different culture and losing the support of family members who are still in their native countries.

Not only must children adjust to a different school system, and a different culture, but also teachers must adapt to this new population. Teachers need to understand how international children learn, their concerns, issues and problems (Pungello & Kurtz, 2000).

Multicultural education in the United States is popular today and has gained momentum since the Civil Rights movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is an attempt to make education more equitable for various groups. Sleeter and Grant (1987, 1996) have reviewed 89 articles and 39 books on multicultural programs, and have identified five popular approaches. These approaches are: *Teaching the Culturally Different*, *Human Relations Approach*, *Single-Group Studies*, *Multicultural Education*, and *Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist*.

Some multicultural programs may address primarily one of the approaches or may include one or more of the approaches. Kaleidoscope is one multicultural program that embodies two of the five approaches given by Sleeter and Grant (1987, 1996). It embodies *Multicultural Education and Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist*.

Kaleidoscope was developed by a team of individuals led by Yvonne DeGaetano, Leslie R. Williams, and Dinah Volk. It grew out of a Title VII grant, the Cross Cultural Demonstration Project which was a collaborative effort between parents, teachers, and administrators of two urban elementary public schools and university staff. The Kaleidoscope program focuses on the child from kindergarten through third grade. It is based on how children grow and learn and the important place of culture in the child's development.

Kaleidoscope focuses on teachers observing children carefully, seeking the essence of who and what their students are, and helping children understand their strengths and their world. It is based on a constructivist understanding of how learning and teaching occur. It incorporates the idea that learning is most effective when children

are given opportunities for practicing problem solving. It is rooted in the understanding that children are deeply connected to their family, their ethnicity, race, gender, and life experiences (De Gaetano, Y., Williams, L.R., Volk, D. (1998).

Kaleidoscope provides guidelines to the teacher for setting up a multicultural program in an early childhood classroom. Some of the tenets are: (1) based on how children grow and learn, (2) observing children carefully, (3) helping children understand their strengths and their world, (4) opportunities for practicing problem-solving and (5) the understanding that children are deeply connected to their family, their ethnicity, race, gender and life experiences. The present study was concerned about children's education. The focus was from the child's point of view about their beliefs and compared to the tenets in the Kaleidoscope program.

Also often the emphasis in multicultural programs is on helping the child who is born in the United States but is a member of a minority group. The current study is addressing the child who was born in another country but is currently going to school in the United States.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine four international fourth graders beliefs about how they learn. The investigator interviewed four fourth graders and sought their ideas about how they learn. The children's responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. (See Appendix A).

The children's beliefs about how they learn were compared with a specific program, Kaleidoscope. The child's responses were compared with the Kaleidoscope

approach to see if children's beliefs about how they learn are similar to the tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach.

Research Questions

1. From the child's perspective, is the classroom in the child's native country similar to the child's classroom in the United States? Does either promote principles of the Kaleidoscope approach?
2. From the child's perspective, does the American classroom promote opportunities for interaction with peers? Is peer interaction important for learning?
3. From the child's perspective, when is the best time of the day for learning? Does the classroom accommodate for individual differences?
4. From the child's perspective, what are his/her favorite experiences about fourth grade? Do these favorite activities reflect Kaleidoscope principles?
5. From the child's perspective, what methods does the teacher use to help children learn in the classroom? Do these methods support problem solving?
6. Does the child refer to his/her family in the responses?
7. What does the child perceive as his/her strengths?

Assumption

The current study will only refer to selected tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach. Not all the goals and strategies of Kaleidoscope were analyzed.

Summary

There are several approaches to multicultural education in the United States. How to best help the child in the classroom is an area in need of research. Research on the child's point of view is limited. There is a need to look beyond the adult's perspective and seek input from the child. By interviewing fourth graders in this study, information was gathered which may be of use to teachers. The children's responses were compared with the Kaleidoscope approach because this is an approach recommended for kindergarten through grade three. Fourth-graders were selected because of better verbal skills. They would have completed third grade and would be able to reflect on earlier experiences.

Definitions

International Children – An international child is a child not born in the United States but currently living in the United States.

Kaleidoscope – Kaleidoscope is a multicultural approach to teaching that enables teachers to connect children's cultures with their schooling and to promote academic excellence and social justice for all children.

Constructivism – Constructivism is an approach based on Piaget's theory that promotes a child's autonomy, thinking, and problem solving (Castle & Kamii).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature about international families in the United States, international children in U.S. classrooms and in their native classrooms, and then to review one specific program in multicultural education, the Kaleidoscope approach.

International Families in the United States

The increase in the number of international families in the United States has increased dramatically in the last few decades. Families coming from Spanish speaking countries such as Mexico, Central America and South America have moved into the southwestern states, and it is expected that by the year 2020 that Hispanic families will be the largest minority group in the United States. Those families coming from India and the Middle East are living in large cities in New York and California. Asian families coming from China, Japan and Korea have settled mostly along the West Coast in California (DeGenova, 1997).

The increase in international families in the United States is due to a number of reasons. These families are interested in more than American culture. Some families long for political, economic, social and cultural satisfaction (Kim, 1999).

The immigrant families now coming to the United States bring with them vastly different values and customs as well as diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds (Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). Many families face issues regarding their children adjusting to the United States education system. Some of these issues are language barriers, daily living situations, and cultural adjustments (Sikka, 1992).

Teachers and International Children in the U. S. Classroom

Understanding an international perspective on how children learn is a necessity for teachers dealing with diverse populations (Owen & Pumfrey, 1995). Due to the increase in international children in the classroom teachers may need to adapt their teaching style to match that of the children (Kwok, 1995). Teachers who have newly arrived immigrant children in their classes are likely not only to face a language barrier but also to have miscommunications with these children and their parents (Pangello & Kurtz-Costes, 2000). Meeting the educational needs of these children is crucial to their school success.

Meeting the needs of non-mainstream populations is a critical issue facing the American teacher (McClure, 1993). Teachers should strive to be particularly patient and empathetic when faced with pupils who are having a hard time adjusting to their new culture. Immigrant children are most likely to adjust well in the classroom when their teacher possesses traits that enhance acculturation including patience, tolerance, ability to deal with stress, persistence and flexibility (Punzello & Kurtz-Costes, 2000).

International Children in U.S. Classrooms

Children coming from various countries face several adjustments in American classrooms. The demographic changes have raised the issue concerning immigrant children and the need for them to learn the majority language. Hakuta (1986) claims that children learning a second language learn much more quickly than older learners do. Older children have various kinds of learning difficulties such as motivation, English proficiency, or parents who do not understand the American school system (Yao, 1988).

Immigrant children may be perceived as temporary and may be treated differently, no matter how long they have been in the country. Some classrooms in the United States take measures such as separate schooling, after-school programs and mainstreaming with supplemental help (Bhargava, 1998). Those children coming from East and Southwest Asian countries are generally stereotyped as successful and high-achieving minorities. In reality, for many Asian children the challenge of American schooling can be overwhelming (Feng, 1994).

Not only may American classrooms be overwhelming, American classrooms contradict Asian students' own cultural system. This may undermine their sense of well being and self-confidence (Trueba & Cheng, 1993) because the ethnic identity of Asian children is based on the group. In contrast, American schooling emphasizes independence, individualism and competition.

The adjustment of the child's learning skills to the American educational system deserves much needed attention for educators. Many Asian immigrant children work efficiently in a well-structured, quiet learning environment in which definite goals have

been established for them (Yao, 1985). Even when they know the answer to a teacher's question, they may not respond, but sit quietly instead.

Thorkildsen and Schmahl (1997) conducted a study about the fairness of teaching practices of Latino Elementary students living in urban neighborhoods. A total of 102 children in grades 1-5 were interviewed about the fairness of four teaching practices designed to help high-and low-ability students. All the children participating in the study were Puerto Rican, Mexican and lived in urban, low-income neighborhoods. The interviews focused on how to help high and low ability students learn.

The interviews with the Latino children involved questions about four common classroom practices of classroom teachers. The four practices were chosen to concretely represent the range of things teachers do. The four practices are acceleration, enrichment for fast learners, peer tutoring and slower learners never finish. The results indicate that most children believe peer tutoring to be fair, about half the children said acceleration and enrichment for faster learners were fair and most children thought having slower learners never finish was unfair (Thorkildsen & Schmahl, 1997).

Clayton (1993), in an ethnographic study investigated the process of acculturation for four international students in an elementary school setting in the United States. The children were newly-arrived, non-English speaking children from Bulgaria, Brazil, Norway and Russia. The study involved interviews with the students every two weeks, teacher interviews every three weeks and parent interviews once a month. The findings found overarching themes of acculturation and a paradigm development with four factors as determinative of the adjustment process.

The four factors are as follows: the cross-cultural students (including their personalities, self-images, priorities, expectations and family support); the challenges (academic, social and structural); the receiving culture (comprised of the culture of the school and the classroom, the strategies of the mainstream teacher, the attitudes of the peers); and finally, the interactions between the factors. The dynamic interrelationship between the student and the receiving culture shaped the acculturation process. The students faced many obstacles but the positive support from the receiving culture led to congruence with that culture (Clayton, 1993).

Ethiopian immigrants have had to overcome a great number of obstacles, such as, a gap of civilization and have had to adapt to a new society. Coming from a society where their “rich” culture was transmitted orally they have gone through a rapid change and adjustments, such as climate, instruments, norms, language, lifestyle and values. In a study by Tzuriel and Kaufman (1999) on mediated learning & cognitive modifiability they found that Ethiopian children performed lower on an initial measure of cognitive ability. But after a short phase of intensive mediation, including daily exercises of reading, writing and math, their performances improved.

International Children in Their Native Country

Children’s development is influenced by a complex mix of cultural and biological factors. It appears that different cultural and maturational influences affect different aspects of children’s developing competencies. In one study of children from mainland China the investigators examined the influence of language-related number words on the development of addition skills. For instance Chinese number words for 11, 12, and 13

are translated as ten one, ten two and ten three. This structure of number words creates an ease with which Chinese children learn math (Geary, Bwo-Thomas, & Liu, 1996).

In Japan, school is the center of a child's life. Students not only learn their basics but they learn how to use chop sticks and are responsible for serving lunch and cleaning the school after classes. Children go to class 220 days a year including two Saturdays a month. Japanese attend overcrowded classrooms with few visual aids and very few computers (Marlan, 1997).

A study that examined the differences between Australian and Japanese students conceptions of learning and their use of self-regulated and learning strategies was conducted in Australia and Japan schools. The researchers used the Students Learning Survey consisting of ten open-ended questions about learning strategies and conceptions of learning. Nine clear categories of learning conception emerged from the analysis. The categories are as follows: learning as increasing one's knowledge, learning as memorizing, reproducing and studying, learning as a means to an end, learning as understanding, learning as seeing something in a different way, learning as personal fulfillment, learning as a duty, learning as a process not bound by time or context and learning as developing social competence. The findings indicated that the Japanese students did not see learning primarily as a process of memorizing and reproducing, Australian students did. For the Japanese students, increasing knowledge was the most frequently mentioned conception. Australian students focused mainly on learning as memorizing (Purdie, Hattie, & Douglas, 1996).

Exploring the area of authority in Korean children has been of interest to some researchers. Korean children, because of their cultural orientation are often characterized

as collectivistic or entailing traditional orientations to authority. Generally, Korea is considered to have an ideology emphasizing children's respect for a deference to authority including teachers. Rohner and Pettengill (1985) in investigating elementary children found high levels of respect for authority of classroom teachers that pertain to moral issues. Children also give more weight to the act being commanded than to the person's social position.

Chaunsheng and Stevenson (1989) studied cultural differences in the amount of time spent on homework and beliefs and attitudes about homework in four cities, Chicago, Beijing, Hong Kong and Tokyo. The method of this study was interviews including parents, teachers and children. Chinese children in Beijing were estimated to spend much more time on homework than their counterparts in Chicago. In children's responses to their attitudes about homework, both groups from China and Japan liked doing homework. Some of the reasons Chinese children liked doing homework were: "they liked to do homework," as well as "they wanted to avoid their teachers' punishment."

Academic success is strongly emphasized in Chinese and Japanese societies, and parents and teachers in these two societies apparently perceive the additional practice and review provided by homework as a useful contribution to children's success at school. Homework is the primary out-of-school activity for Chinese children; and they devote long hours each day to their homework. Although homework is an important component of Japanese education, children's attitudes about homework are less positive than they are in Chinese society (Chaunsheng & Stevenson, 1989).

Pauler (1991) took a closer look at children's learning in South America. Pauler investigated the effects of a social studies instructional program that incorporated correspondence with transnational children residing in South America on students' learning about South America. The participants were 70 sixth grades. For ten weeks, forty minutes a day, four days a week, all students studied the same material with the same teacher. On the fifth day the experimental class wrote to peer correspondents in Ecuador; the control class read extra material about South America. All students were pre-tested and post-tested using a multiple-choice test and the attitude measurer Bogardus Social Distance Scale. Pauler's findings by gender comparisons indicated that girls' correspondence was effective in enhancing perceived social distance toward South Americans and for boys, extra reading was effective in enhancing perceived social distance (Pauler, 1991).

Kaleidoscope

Multicultural education in the United States is popular today and has gained momentum since the Civil Rights movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is an attempt to make education more equitable for various groups. Sleeter and Grant (1987, 1996) have reviewed 89 articles and 39 books on multicultural programs, and have identified five popular approaches. These approaches are: *Teaching the Culturally Different*, *Human Relations Approach*, *Single-Group Studies*, *Multicultural Education*, and *Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist*.

The first approach, *Teaching the Culturally Different* attempts to raise the achievement of students of color through designing culturally compatible programs

(Sleeter, 1996). Programs under the category of *Teaching the Culturally Different* focus on teaching minority students to develop a positive group identity and to function in the world of the dominant culture (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998).

The second approach, *Human Relations Approach*, teaches that “We are all the same because we are different.” The aim of this approach is toward sensitivity training. Its intent is to improve the school experience itself (Sleeter, 1996). This category attempts to help students from diverse cultures get along better and develop a more positive understanding of people’s differences (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998). Single Group Studies, the third approach teaches students explicitly about the history of each group’s oppression and how oppression works today. These studies include Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Women’s Studies and so forth. Scholars of ethnic and women’s studies have reorganizing disciplines from standpoints of groups other than European American (Sleeter, 1996).

The fourth approach most commonly called *Multicultural Education* focuses on respect for cultural diversity in order to enable students to reach their maximum academic and social potential (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998). The process of this approach includes redesigning schooling to make it follow the ideal pluralistic and equal society. Its advocates concentrate on reforming many dimensions of the school process, such as curriculum, pedagogy, parent involvement, and tracking (Sleeter, 1996).

Finally, the fifth approach, *Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructivist* is the least developed. Its goals include reducing racism and building a more just society (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). This approach teaches directly about political

and economic oppression and it assists in preparing young people to use social action skills (Sleeter, 1996).

James Banks (1992) has identified five dimensions of multicultural education programs. These dimensions are: *content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure.*

These dimensions deal with teachers using examples drawn from a variety of cultures and groups to explain the concepts and skills they are teaching. It is also a way for teachers to help students discover the culturally influenced frames of reference that students may bring to the classroom. Teachers can also help with the negative attitudes toward differences by eliminating them using certain teaching methods (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998).

Some multicultural programs may address primarily one of the approaches or may include one or more of the approaches. Kaleidoscope is one multicultural program that embodies two of the five approaches given by Sleeter and Grant (1987, 1996). It embodies *Multicultural Education and Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist*. These two approaches in the Kaleidoscope Program help in promote a true democracy in the classroom. Kaleidoscope encourages a variety of activities in which the child is valued and gets to make choices. Essentially, this program is a proactive engagement to better or change an identified concern for the common good (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998).

Kaleidoscope was developed by a team of individuals led by Yvonne De Gaetano, Leslie R. Williams, and Dinah Volk. It grew out of a Title VII grant, the Cross Cultural Demonstration Project which was a collaborative effort between parents, teachers, and

administrators of two urban elementary public schools and university staff. The Kaleidoscope program focuses on the child from kindergarten through third grade. It is based on how children grow and learn and the important place of culture in the child's development.

Kaleidoscope focuses on teachers observing children carefully, seeking the essence of who and what their students are, and helping children understand their strengths and their world. It is based on a constructivist understanding of how learning and teaching occur. It incorporates the idea that learning is most effective when children are given opportunities for practicing problem-solving. It is rooted in the understanding that children are deeply connected to their family, their ethnicity, race, gender, and life experiences (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998).

In Kaleidoscope's approach, culture is seen as encompassing both past and present traditions and values, as well as present perceptions and experiences. This approach is concerned with cultural discontinuity, unequal relations and the negative results in the academic setting for many children. Teachers using Kaleidoscope in their classrooms are concerned with broadening the world view and enriching the education of children of the dominant culture (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998).

Summary

There have been several research studies conducted on classrooms overseas and in the United States. These studies have focused on a variety of topics. But there has been a lapse in the research pertaining to how to best help the child in the classroom. Research on the child's point of view is limited. There is a need to look beyond the adult's

perspective and to seek input from the child. The present study addresses international children in American classrooms. The purpose of this study was to gain insight on how international children believe they learn.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine four international fourth graders' beliefs about how they learn. The investigator interviewed four fourth graders and sought their opinions about how they learn. The children's responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed (see Appendix A).

The children's beliefs about how they learn were compared with a specific program, Kaleidoscope. The child's responses were compared with the Kaleidoscope approach to see if children's beliefs about how they learn are similar to the tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach.

Research Method

This exploratory, qualitative study applied the interview method and examined patterns and ideas on how international children believe they learn. Qualitative research is explorative and descriptive. McCracken (1988) states,

without a qualitative understanding of how culture reflects human action, we can know only what the numbers tell us. The qualitative interview is useful because it can help us to state these numbers in their fuller social and cultural context. (p. 73)

In-depth interviewing is the most frequently used method of qualitative research. The reliance on interviewing comes from the critical importance of capturing meanings and other subjective information that may not normally be available through other types of research (Rosenblatt & Fischer, 1993).

Reliability

The researcher did not have a person to review the results of her interpretation of the themes and coding of the transcription of the interview tapes nor send the transcript to the individual interviewed for their review of the interpretation of the results. This is a weakness of the study; however, the researcher was involved in a class involving in-depth interviews. Through this class, interviews were administered, transcribed, coded and interpreted by the researcher.

Subjects

Four fourth graders were interviewed, two females and two males. They were selected from a group of fourth graders in an after-school program in a rural southwestern town in the United States. The children all speak English fluently, with English as their second language. The ages of the fourth graders were aged 9 years 1 month to 10 years 1 month as of September 1, 1999.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation used for the study under investigation was an unstructured interview, focused on selected tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach to multicultural education. These questions were piloted and modified.

Interview Questions

The specific research questions, which guided this study, were:

1. What have you been doing since you got out of school today?
2. What grade are you in?
3. How long have you been in the United States? Where did live before here?
4. Did you go to school where you used to live? What did you like best about that school?
5. Describe your classroom. What kinds of desks do you have (tables, desks,)? Are their lamps in your classroom or windows?
6. What do you like about school? Dislike? Why is that?
7. What is your least favorite subject? Why is that?
8. When you are working on a class assignment, do you like to work by yourself or with others?
9. When do you learn best? Are you a "morning" person or "afternoon" person?

10. How does your teacher help you learn? What kinds of things does he/she do?
11. What kinds of things do you do on the playground? (Follow-up) How did you learn that game?
12. When you do your homework what is the best way for you to study?
13. What has been your best memory about fourth grade?

Procedure

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board (#HE-00166 shown in Appendix B), permission was requested from the after-school program site (see Appendix C). Following the site's approval, the investigator put all the names of the fourth graders from the site permission in a container. Four children's names were randomly drawn, and then parents' permission was requested. The investigator personally distributed the consent forms to each child's home since the parents did not visit the after-school program site regularly (see Appendix D). The forms were explained to the parents, including the purpose of the study, the interview process and the guarantee of confidentiality in a parent letter. Those parents who allowed their child to participate in the study signed the consent form and returned it to the investigator. Only the children with signed consent forms were included in the study.

After permission was granted from the Institutional Review Board, the after-school program site and the parents, the investigator interviewed each child at the after-school site. Instructions to the child were stated as, "I'm working on a project, and I need fourth-grader's opinions. Would you come with me?" If the child refused or got tired the

child did not have to participate. Each child was asked to share his/her thoughts, feelings and perceptions on how fourth graders learn. Each child was asked a question, and then according to their response, follow-up question/questions were asked. The interviews took approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded. Then the child was returned to the after-school program scheduled activity.

Research Questions

1. From the child's perspective, is the classroom in the child's native country similar to the child's classroom in the United States? Does either promote principles of the Kaleidoscope approach?
2. From the child's perspective, does the American classroom promote opportunities for interaction with peers? Is peer interaction important for learning?
3. From the child's perspective, when is the best time of the day for learning? Does the classroom accommodate for individual differences?
4. From the child's perspective, what are his/her favorite experiences about fourth grade? Do these favorite activities reflect Kaleidoscope principles?
5. From the child's perspective, what methods does the teacher use to help children learn in the classroom? Do these methods support problem solving?
6. Does the child refer to his/her family in the responses?
7. What does the child perceive as his/her strengths?

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved transcribing the recordings of the interviews and then examining the data for patterns and themes. Theme analysis was done through selective highlighting. The themes that emerged were compared with selected tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach to multicultural education.

Limitations

Limitations of the study are primarily the sample size and the comparison with some but not all of the major tenets of Kaleidoscope. Secondly, is that there needed to be more reliability, an objective person to review the results of the children's interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine four international fourth graders beliefs about how they learn. This study was designed to include qualitative research in the analysis and description of the participants. The interview method was used to explore the participant's ideas, perceptions and opinions about how they learn.

Characteristics of Participants

The sample included four international fourth graders, two males and two females, who lived in a rural southwestern town in the United States. At the time of the interviews all children were ten years old. The length of time the participants have been in the United States ranged from four years to seven years (Table I).

TABLE I
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Participant	Age	Native Country	Length of Time in U.S.	Grade
01M	10	Malaysia	5 years	Fourth
02M	10	Jordan	6 years	Fourth
03F	10	Ethiopia	7 years	Fourth
04F	10	India	4 years	Fourth

Findings

Research Question One - *From the child's perspective, is the classroom of the child in his/her native country similar to his/her classroom in the United States? Does either promote principles of the Kaleidoscope approach?* Interview questions asking the participants to describe both their native country's classroom (Question Four) and their United States classroom (Question Five) were used to evaluate and compare the similarities and the differences of the two classrooms. Participants 01M, 02M, 03F attended Pre-Kindergarten or preschool programs before coming to the United States. Participant 04F completed first grade and one-half second grade before coming to the United States.

Those participants that attended Pre-Kindergarten and preschool programs remember doing activities such as coloring, playing on the floor and watching cartoons.

Participant 04F who attended first grade and part of second grade commented in the interview,

In India we have lots of homework to do. We had benches, we didn't have desks and had to sit with another person. Boys on one side and girls on the other side and uh we couldn't talk unless she spoke to us and we had to stand up when we talked and we had to wear uniforms and they were really strict and the strange thing about is, there are eighth teachers per classroom, each teacher has a subject. The school starts at 8:30. From 8:30-9:00 the teacher comes in and teaches math and from 9:00 to 10:00 spelling then English and all that. We have to eat our own lunch. No cafeteria there. And, we have to eat it outside everyday. Don't got any bathrooms. You have to hold it! Until you go home. No buses, your parents have to pick you up and that is it mostly.

The research question was supported by three of the four students. These three students had a variety of activities which would be similar to early childhood programs in the U.S. These programs would allow for individual choice and would support the constructivist theory in Kaleidoscope. The fourth subject, 04F school program was very different. It was very structured and little choice was available. This program would not support the Kaleidoscope approach since the child is not given the responsibility of making any choices.

Research Question Two – *From the child's perspective, does the American classroom promote opportunities for interaction with peers? Is the peer interaction important for learning?* The question (Question Eight) that asked, "If they preferred to work individually or in groups," brought about several comments from the participants. All participants felt they liked working with others on class assignments because they could help each other out. 01M stated, "I like to work with my friends, just one friend 'cause it is easier and we tell each other the answers." 02M commented, "I like to work

with partners because sometimes if I have a partner we help each other and if they don't know one thing I can help them or they can help me." 03F responded, "In science I work with a group. I like to work with a group to see what their ideas are." 04F said, "In geography and stuff like that I like to work with my partner because when you are with a partner they know something and you don't know and you can ask the other and get the answer." In summary the children enjoy working in groups for most of their subjects but there are some subjects they prefer to work at individually. Some of the reasons for preferences for working alone were: "I like to work by myself because I am really good at math and sometime they are slow" or "It doesn't matter-it depends on who I'm with." This research question proves that children enjoy working with their peers so they could help each other and that they learned from one another. This would support the constructivist idea that children learn through social interaction.

Research Question Three – *From the child's perspective, when is the best time for learning? Does the classroom accommodate for individual differences?* Answers to the interview question (Question Nine) regarding personal conditions of learning were very similar by each of the participants. Each participant said he/she preferred afternoon to morning for reasons such as, "more awake," "have more energy" or "it's after lunch." 02M responded to the question, "When do you learn best?" as, "In the morning I can't concentrate because I just get to school, I like middle of the day or afternoon. I am used to the day for some reason." Part of 03F response was, "I don't eat my breakfast. I just go to the gym to wait for the bell to ring and I don't eat so I can't wait until lunch. And so, I mean you eat food and you're not tired anymore."

The results suggest that all participants all prefer afternoon to morning for similar reasons and that some subjects are in the afternoon as well as in the morning. It did not appear that the classrooms accommodated for individual differences based on the information available.

Research Question Four – *From the child's perspective, what are his/her favorite experiences about being in fourth grade? Do these favorite activities reflect any Kaleidoscope principles.* The interview questions (Question Six and Thirteen) were used to explore children's favorite activities at school. The questions were "What do you like about school?" (Question Six) and "What has been your best memory about fourth grade?" (Question Thirteen). The answers ranged from math, geography, physical education, "everything," going on field trips, and having special events. Each child supported their favorites with reasons and explanations. The narrative responses to the question "What do you like best about school?" offered great insight into what children love about school. Here are the children's comments; 01M, "um, math 'cause we always do math at school everyday. So I learn it most." 02M, "Geography, well I like to learn it. Like about different states and countries. We had 'state night' and we got to choose what state and learn about it and I chose Arizona." 03F, "Active stuff we do and physical education. We have a test and we have to run a lap and I'm always the first girl to finish," and 04F, "Oh, everything, such as playing outside, sometimes we get to miss class and sometime you get to do sports and to get good grades. It's just fun and cool to do math."

Research Question Six – *Does the child refer to his/her family in the responses?*

This research question did not have a direct question during the interviews. This research question was measured differently due the fact that it was not a direct interview question. The children did comment about their families throughout each of their interviews. Some of the children's responses relating to family were 02M said, "Mostly at home playing with my brother," "my brother helped me find it on the computer, and it took like 30 minutes," "and so my dad tells them to get out and let me work in the quiet, on his desk and I can study, my dad has a desk and chair, and I sit there and study." 03F commented, "My big sister told me it was MC Hammer." 04F responded to one question talking about both her parents, "I tell my mom if I don't get this done," "I leave my homework on my dad's table and he checks it before I turn it in at school," "my dad got this desk for me, a college desk, and (I) sit in there, and I just work out my problems." The children referred to their families a number of times throughout their interviews.

Research Question Seven – *What does the child perceive as his/her strengths?*

This question was measured by the children's responses to the question "What do you like best about school?" (Question Six) The children responded to this question with several different answers. Each child had a different favorite subject. Two of the children, 01M and 04F, did comment as math being their favorite subject. But 04F stated that several things were her favorite and math was included, while 01M said only math. 03F said her favorite was "Active stuff we do and physical education. Art and P.E. and sports-I like sports." 02M stated, "Geography, well I like to learn it." The children had differences in

their responses to this question. The children's favorite subject was not the same as the other children's.

The children's responses to the interview questions offered insights into children's beliefs about how they learn in the classroom. Only one of the seven research questions was particularly unique and stood out from the others, *From the child's perspective, is the classroom in the child's native country similar to his/her classroom in the United States? Does either promote principles of the Kaleidoscope approach?* Therefore, children's beliefs about learning are reflected in all the tenets of Kaleidoscope.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Overview

There are many programs in Multicultural Education, one is the Kaleidoscope Program. This program focuses on the child, its ethnicity and that children are intimately connected to their family. It values the child and their choices. To learn more about international children's beliefs of learning it is important to get each child's point of view. The current study was designed to explore international children's beliefs about learning and under what conditions they learn best.

The review of literature summarized the research of international children in their native countries, international children in the United States, and multicultural programs. The constructivist theory and the Kaleidoscope Approach to Multicultural Education was discussed as well.

This study was exploratory and descriptive and utilized qualitative methods of research. The research methodology consisted of an interview of international children in the fourth grade. Interviews were used to assist the investigator in shedding light on the beliefs of learning of international children in the United States classroom. The area of concentration was a rural south-western town in the United States.

Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of the results found in this study. One of the goals of this research was to apply selected tenets of the Kaleidoscope Approach to the responses from the interviews.

Tenet One

The program is based on how children grow and learn, i.e., considerations of individual differences among children.

The findings reflect individual differences in favorite subjects, in working with peers, and favorite memory.

Tenet Two

Teachers observe children carefully.

According to the children and their responses teachers do perceive their students carefully. The children are allowed to work in groups on occasion. They provide activities and assignments that the children enjoy, such as “State Night,” “Eat and Read Day” or “Science stuff with frogs, crabs and snails in class.” Or the teacher may just help as one child stated, “My teacher helps me learn, tells us more clearly what the fact is and the meaning.”

Tenet Three

The program promotes helping children understand their strengths and their world.

The teachers provide activities that empower the children and make them feel good about themselves. One child commented that she likes physical stuff and then proceeded to tell how well she did in her physical education and how she was the first girl to finish running laps.

Tenet Four

There are opportunities for practicing autonomy and problem-solving.

The fourth tenet states that children are more affective when they are given opportunities for practicing problem-solving. The children indicated in their responses that there are opportunities for problem-solving. One of the times problem-solving may be encouraged most was when the child discussed conflict managers. These are children that help out on the playground by working through arguments and helping other children resolve their differences. Also one child said, "When we do math on the board together, instead of saying you don't know it, and you're thinking, she doesn't tell you the answer, and you can learn it yourself instead of like you didn't learn that."

Tenet Five

The program promotes the understanding that children are deeply connected to their family, their ethnicity, race, gender, and life experiences.

One girl commented about eating a snack of her “country’s food.” The fact that the children commented about several members of their family during their interviews indicated that they very connected to family and their background.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore four international fourth graders’ beliefs about how they learn. Past research has examined various studies of international children in their native country and in the United States. The children’s responses to the interview questions offered insights into children’s beliefs about how they learn in the classroom. Their responses about how they learn are reflected in the selected tenets of Kaleidoscope.

Implications for Further Research

This study was exploratory, and evidence for further research was found. Recommended further study includes: modifying the research design and exploring further topics.

The children took the questions seriously and were articulate in their responses. Therefore, it is recommended that a continuation of this study be made including more

subjects. Also it is recommended that the subjects represent a variety of countries, more than four. Do children from Spanish-speaking countries have similar beliefs as the four children in this study? Would children from English-speaking countries like England have similar experiences as these children?

The instrument focused on selected tenets of the Kaleidoscope approach, but a recommendation is that more concepts should be included in an interview. More open-ended questions could be included that would give the child more freedom in the responses. Also, more follow-up questions are recommended.

To strengthen the reliability, the researcher in the future may use an outside person to review the transcriptions and the tapes. Also, the child could complete a questionnaire that would also strengthen the reliability.

A further topic for research is “recess” and comparing the adult’s view with the child’s. One of the children commented that “Recess was their time and did not want the teacher to interfere.” This research might have implications for mediation on the playground.

Another topic for research would be exploring the child’s best time of day for learning since these four subjects indicated that mid-morning or after was their best time for learning. It appears that this is not considered in most American schools since the most difficult subject often occurs at the beginning of the day.

Implications for Teachers

Teachers need to be aware of the adjustments that international children experience when attending American schools. It is essential for the teacher to be

sensitive to the changes of these children, especially younger children. All the children in this present study had been in the United States at least four years, with seven years being the longest. The American school system needs to be aware of this and find the best ways to help these children since they will be here possibly for many years.

Examples of the adjustments international children must make were found in this study. One child stated that in his native country there was not a teacher on the playground. This suggests that the teacher should consider how to give the child more responsibility, in the classroom and on the playground. Another child said in her country the school had no bathrooms, and the boys sat on one side and the girls sat on the other side. This suggests that the teacher needs to carefully reflect on orienting the child to the American classroom and routines.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CHILDREN'S RESPONSES BY QUESTIONS

Grouping of Children's Responses to the Individual Questions

1. What have you been doing since you got out of school today?

01M Umm-nothing. Just sitting at home eating chocolate. (Was it good? - Investigator) Uh-huh. (What kind? - Investigator) Bunny kind, chewy with peanuts. (Was it a gift? - Investigator) No.

02M Nothing. Mostly at home playing with my brother. (Did you watch TV-Investigator)- Yeah. (Did you play any games?-Investigator)-yeah. (Did you watch Pokemon-Investigator)-No.

03F I ate and then I rode my bike and I did cartwheels and a lot of sport stuff. (You did, what did you eat?-Investigator) I ate my country's food. (What is it called?-Investigator) It's like this spicy stuff it's called ba-bubbit, and some other stuff that goes with it that's like this bread and that's call anjeira. (That sounds pretty good. Would it be too spicy for me?-Investigator) Don't know, you'd have to try it and see how it is.

04F Me? I just came home and I'm having a birthday party so my friends helped me with decorations and everything, (and) my party favors, and my mom told me about your project, and I said okay, and I just came up here. (Alright, when is your birthday?- Investigator) This Saturday. (Cool! - Investigator)

2. What grade are you in? Fourth grade.(01M, 02M, 03F, 04F)

What do you do in fourth grade?

01M Science, math, art, language, um-that's all, and play on the playground.

02M I write calligraphy and do geography, math, science and other subjects.

03F A lot of math and all the subjects but mostly a lot of math and science. (Those are your big subjects. You do more work with math and science than with the rest of them?- Investigator) Yeah and Oklahoma social studies. (Do you like social studies?- Investigator) No. (Do you like math?-Investigator) Yeah sometimes, science I don't like it all. (How come?-Investigator) They have- my dad tells me -that science is everywhere around you, somehow it's just too educational, and I don't like educational stuff that much. I like to run, play and have fun and that's it-with just a little bit of studying. So most of- Half study and half play. That's not bad do think? (Not that bad.-Investigator)

04F In my school we get to help out, we have conflict managers for one semester and just go on the playground and see if there are any fights or something, and we help them. We try to solve their problems out. (You help them work through them?-Investigator) Yeah

and when we can't handle it we just tell the teacher. (Then she takes care of it?-Investigator) She just puts them on the wall or sits down during recess. (What kind of subjects do you have in fourth grade?-Investigator) Math, science, social studies, reading time. (Wow!-Investigator)

3. How long have you been in the U. S.?

01M 5 years.

02M Almost six years. (That is a long time isn't it?-Investigator) Yeah.

03F Seven years.

04F Four years. (Do you miss home? Investigator) No. I just went home for visit last summer. (How was it?-Investigator) Wonderful. (Did you see your grandparents?-Investigator) Yeah, everybody.

Where did you live before here?

01M Malaysia.

02M Jordan.

03F Ethiopia.

04F India.

4. Did you go to school in (native country)?

01M Yes, pre-k. (What did you like best about pre-k?-Investigator) uh-nothing. (Do you remember very much about it?-Investigator) No I think we colored and stuff. (Is it different than here?-Investigator) Yeah. (Can you think of anything that is different?-Investigator) Playing outside without a teacher. (Oh really.-Investigator)

02M Yeah. (Do you remember it?-Investigator) Not really but just a little bit. (Did you go to school there?-Investigator) Yes. (What grade?-Investigator)-just small kids. (Like a preschool or daycare?-Investigator) Yeah. (What did you like best about going there?-Investigator) I liked everyday, I remember we watched television, the Pink Panther, when we ate lunch. My friends, sometimes, they used to pick us up because my mom is a school teacher. We did work, well not really- (You just played?-Investigator) Yeah. (Did you color and other stuff like that?-Investigator) Yeah. (What was your classroom like over in Jordan?-Investigator) I don't remember but we had a big room with a little

door place, and we just sat on the carpet. (Okay, so you sat on the floor?-Investigator) Yeah.

03F I did go to school, and I don't remember anything there. But I can, learned the something uh, theory. (Is there anything you do remember?-Investigator) Well, yeah I always remember that once I was watching TV and there was a guy singing with a weird hairdo, and it's like an American guy, and I got really interested in it, and it has been stuck in my mind, and I didn't know what it was. My big sister told me it was "MC Hammer" but I never knew that 'cause I was little, and now every time I hear it in my apartment, I always remember it, and I'll be staring at the TV listening to it.

04F Yeah, I went to school in first grade and one-half second grade, and one day I just came home from school and my dad said "we are going to America". (Oh.-Investigator) I was so glad because in India, we have lots of homework to do. (Did you have it everyday?-Investigator) Yeah. (Was is hard?-Investigator) Every subjects. (Every subject, everyday?-Investigator) Yeah, social studies- one book, math- one book, and books were very heavy. (What was your classroom like in India?-Investigator) We had benches, we didn't have desks, we had benches and had to sit with another person. Boys on one side and girls on the other side, and uh we couldn't talk unless she spoke to us; and we had to stand up when we talked, and we had to wear uniforms, and they were really strict. And the strange thing about it is there are eight teachers per classroom, each teacher has a subject. The school starts at 8:30. From 8:30-9:00, the teacher comes in and teaches math, and from 9:00 to 10:00 spelling then English and all that. We have to eat our own lunch. (Do you bring it to school?-Investigator) Yeah. No cafeteria there. And, we have to eat it outside everyday. Don't got any bathrooms. (There are no bathrooms?-Investigator) You have to hold it! Until you go home. No buses, your parents have to pick you up and that is it mostly. (Wow! You remember well.-Investigator) Thanks. (What did you like best about school in India?-Investigator) Best, was "nothing". Nothing at all, except getting out of school. It is only one month. That's it. (Do you have good memories?-Investigator) My friends. They are very strict, and if you talk, whisper you will get a "whoopen" with a stick. It happened to me on a visit. (Oh my, What did your mom say?-Investigator) She said "we better go back to America."

5. Can you describe your classroom?

01M Here or Malaysia? Malaysia. I don't remember, we just played, and sat on the floor. Here we have tables in rows, the teachers desk sits up front and all face the board. (Does everybody have their own table?-Investigator) Yeah their own table. (Do you have light, windows?-Investigator) One window and lots of lights in the ceiling. We open the window sometimes.

02M We have desks, and sometimes we change to different ones. Like our teacher has a cup with everyone's name in it, and every month she puts it on somebody's desk, and then whatever person you get, you go to their desk, and the person goes to your desk, and

everybody has a different place. (Is it like a game or do you just switch seats?-Investigator) Just switch seats. (Do you like doing that?-Investigator) Yeah. (So does everybody have their own desk?-Investigator) It's like your own desk and you have a place for your books. (Are there lamps in your classroom or do you have lights in the ceiling?-Investigator) Yeah, in the ceiling. (Are there any windows?-Investigator) Yeah, one window. It's not that big, and not all classes have it, and sometimes when it's recess you can hear loud noises and the little kids playing outside. (Does that bother you?-Investigator) Sometimes.

03F All right it's medium-sized. We have two couches, one for the boys, and one for the girls, and we have a TV, and we have our seats. They are put in a square shape except one corner is cut off of it. And there is a space where you can walk in and out, and I'm by one of the corners where you walk in and out. We have carpet with blue, purple and gray, and my teacher has a lot of books. She likes to read, and that's all I can describe. (Do you have tables or desks?-Investigator) Desks. (Everybody has their own or do you share?-Investigator) Our own. I don't want to share. (Are there lamps in your classroom or lights in the ceiling?-Investigator) Lights in the ceiling. (Do you have any windows?-Investigator) Yeah, we have one window by the teacher's desk. (Is it very big?-Investigator) Well, it's kind of big to medium. (But most of your light comes from the lights?-Investigator) Yeah.

04F We have our own desk and um, not so strict, we can speak freely to the teacher. More time to do stuff we need to do and when the teachers are nice, and we can talk some, and we don't have to wear uniforms. (That's nice.-Investigator) It's great! Best thing is you can work with partners. There you couldn't. (You like to work with partners or groups?-Investigator) Just one other person to talk out problems. (Does that help?-Investigator) Yeah. (Are there lamps in your classroom or lights in the ceiling?-Investigator) Lights in the ceiling, and we also have lamps sometimes and candles sometimes, not much. (For special times?-Investigator) Yeah like my teacher for Christmas she put out a candle, and we got to decorate the room and a tree, and stuff. We drew something and put it on the tree, and then she turned off the lights. (Sounds like a neat teacher?-Investigator) Yeah, she is.

6. What do you like about school?

01M Um, math. (Is that your favorite class?-Investigator) We don't have class; we have subjects. (Why do you like math best?-Investigator) 'Cause we always do math at school everyday. So I learn it most. (What do you dislike about school?-Investigator) Don't know. (Do you dislike anything?-Investigator) Um, writing. (Why?-Investigator) 'Cause we have to write a lot, and my hand gets tired, and everybody complains.

02M Geography, well I like to learn it. Like about different states and countries. (Is there anything you dislike?-Investigator) Reading. (Why?-Investigator) Because you do too much, and I don't enjoy it. (What makes geography your favorite?-Investigator) It's like discovering the world and know new things. (What else have you been learning in

school besides geography?-Investigator) We had a lot of big suns and doing science stuff. (Do you like doing science stuff?-Investigator) Yeah. We used to have frogs, crabs and snails in class, we had them for a while. We had groups and tables, and some groups had four people, and some had three, and it was me and two girls in one group. (Did you like working with the girls?-Investigator) They were nice.

03F Active stuff we do and physical education. Art and P.E. and sports- I like sports. (That's not a bad thing to like.-Investigator) That's not too bad-that's real good. (So what do you like best about P.E.?-Investigator) We always have like a test, and we go outside, and we have to run a lap, and I'm always the first girl to finish running the lap, and we have to climb this pole, and I was the only girl in my class who could even do that, and I like to play soccer- soccer is part of physical education, and so I just got hooked on PE. I never forget to wear my tennis shoes. (You have them on now?-Investigator) These are tennis shoe sandals. (Alright.- What do you dislike about school?-Investigator) Probably science, and every time we are finished with our work, and like our teacher moves on to some new subject, and you don't get to do something else you wanted to do. Like I started on a . . . , poetry but I didn't write anything in it because she keeps moving on to other stuff. (Too fast?-Investigator) Yeah. (Do think fourth grade is harder than third grade?-Investigator) Its in the middle-some things are hard -some things are easy. (Did you like second grade of third better or fourth grade?-Investigator) I liked third better. 'Cause my teacher was a _____ High School coach, and oh so nice and not that much you know-hard work. She taught us cheers and stuff, and she taught us games and that is probably why I liked it best.

04F Oh, everything, such as playing outside, sometimes we get to miss class, and sometimes you get to do sports and to get good grades. It's just fun and cool to do math. (You like to do math?- Is that you favorite subject?-Investigator) Uh-huh. (How come?-Investigator) Because whenever I go to the store, and they add it up wrong, I say "that's wrong, that's wrong", so my mom only pays the right amount. (So learning math helps you with everyday life?-Investigator) Yeah and I also I like science because I want to be a doctor. And we get some people in a group and do all kinds of fun stuff. Last time we did science we had animals, and we had to take care of them; we had to feed them and clean their cage, and it smelled. We had crabs-they were hard. (Hard to clean?-Investigator) The problem was getting them; they had claws. And they would pinch our fingers. (Oh no!- Is there anything you dislike about school?-Investigator) Yeah I don't like it when we have to talk about our personal problems. Like when we go to recess and there is a fight or something, and the teacher asks what's the matter, and we have to tell her. (You don't want to tell her?-Investigator) Well, it happens at recess, and it is ours.

7. What is your least favorite subject?

01M Um, I just don't like to write, that is it, nothing else.

02M So your least favorite subject is reading? Yeah, because I don't enjoy it as much.

03F Uh-huh and that's because—because my dad says it's all around us—and it's too education. Ant math is another educational one. Science has to do with sports, but some stuff, it's like you have engineering—in my class we did motion and design, and you had to work with cars, and this kid in my group- _____ and another kid _____, he takes over, and we just sit and watch.

04F Reading. I like to read, and I read good, but sometimes I get bored with it, read, read, read. Sometimes it just gets so boring at school, and then when we talk, we get in trouble.

8. When you are working on an assignment at school do you like to work by yourself or with your friends?

01M With my friends, just one friend 'cause it is easier, and we can tell each other the answers. (Does your teacher know that?-Investigator) No. We are just helping each other, oh, that's all. (Okay.-Investigator)

02M I like to work with partners because sometimes if I have a partner, we help each other, and if they don't know one thing, I can help them, or they can help me. (So you like to work best a partner?-Investigator) Yeah.

03F It depends on what kind of subject it is. In science, I work with a group, but math, if it's an activity I like to work with a group to see what their ideas are and, sometimes if it's like you draw a field—other people watch and get their ideas and you get your own field and compare yours to theirs and see . . . (So it depends on the subject if you work together or not?-Investigator) Uh-huh. (And you don't care if you work by yourself or in a group, it doesn't bother you.-Investigator) It doesn't matter—it depends on who I'm with.

04F Uh-huh. (Better than by yourself?-Investigator) Well sometimes with math I like to work by myself because I am really good at math, and sometimes they are slow. In spelling I like to do by myself. In geography and stuff like that I like to work with my partner because when you are with a partner they know something and you don't, and you can ask the other and get the answer. (Help each other out?-Investigator) Yeah.

9. When do think you learn best?

01M Uhhmm- I don't remember. (Do you think you are a morning person or an afternoon person?-Investigator) Afternoon, cause I am more awake, and it is not so early, and we have played outside, and that wakes me up playing outside. Sometimes I like morning cause we have free time and I can talk to my friends. (What's your friend's name?-Investigator) _____, _____ and _____. (Do you have friends that are girls?-Investigator) No way!

02M What do you mean? (Investigator -Do you like morning or afternoon?) In the morning I can't concentrate because I just got to school, I like the middle of the day or afternoon. I am used to the day for some reason. (So do you do better in the afternoon?-Investigator) Yeah, and when I have recess and come back sometimes I sweat on my papers. (Does the teacher ever say anything?-Investigator) No.

03F Well, it's like after lunch. 'Cause in the morning you wake up too early, and you're too sleepy, and so you're not listening that good, and you're hungry in the morning. I don't eat my breakfast. I just go to the gym to wait for the bell to ring, and I don't eat my breakfast, and so I can't wait until lunch. And so, I mean you eat food and you're not that tired anymore. Food gives you energy. (So you would say you are an afternoon person?-Investigator) Yeah. (So do you like your classes better in afternoon or in the morning?-Investigator) Afternoon.

04F I don't understand. (Okay, do you like your subjects in the morning or the afternoon?-Investigator) I like them best in the afternoon 'cause in the morning you're still just sleepy, and in afternoon you're shot up and at your best, more awake, and you're not hungry. It's not that we don't have breakfast, it's just you're so sleepy, and your eyes are tired; you just can't concentrate. But then after recess at 10:30 we just get up and move and feel better. (Does that give you energy?-Investigator) Yeah.

10. How does your teacher help you learn?

01M By helping us, like if you don't know an answer, she will help us. (How?-Investigator) Like looking in a dictionary or something. (What else?-Investigator) Like giving us hints or clues. (Does she write on the board?-Investigator) Yeah. (If you need help does she come to your table or do you go to her?-Investigator) I go to her desk, and she helps. Sometimes if it's a test, she comes to our table. (Alright.-Investigator)

02M Well, she doesn't really- like when she, when you don't know anything, when we do math on the board together, instead of saying you don't know it, and you're thinking, she doesn't tell you the answer, and you can learn it yourself instead of like you didn't learn that. She wants you to learn. She wants you to learn how to do it by yourself without telling you the answer. (What else does she do to help? Do you have raise your hand or go to her desk when you need help?-Investigator) Oh yeah, sometimes she gives us work, and we have to write down the answer to the questions in our notebook, and sometimes if I have a lot of problems I can just go and ask her, and she helps me. (So you go to her desk?-Investigator) Uh-huh. But sometimes when we work together like when she's at the chalkboard doing a problem, she shows us.

03F Well, sometimes our teacher if you're stuck on a problem-she always – it's kind of like in first grade-like division-divide this many pieces of candy so when you think about candy you get the right answer. So your teacher does stuff that helps you and she talks about stuff you like? Yeah, and my favorite sort of teacher his name was Mr. T for _____ and he always did activities with us. He did an activity with us on social studies-

he grouped us up and the –for the Oklahoma Land Run, and you were teamed up with a boy and a girl. And me and my partner we had broken legs, and we had to run fast, and some people sat on chairs on each side, and some people held hands like this, and they had to run, and he always timed us. (You think when the teacher does special activities it helps you to learn?-Investigator) Yeah. (What else does the teacher do to help in your learning? Do they write on the board or let you come to their desk?-Investigator) Well they do both of those things, but in third grade my teacher taught us to go with it. And what I like is division. (Does your fourth grade teacher do that?-Investigator) Nope.

04F My teacher helps me learn, tells us more clearly what the fact is and the meaning. And she tells what the paper is trying to say. She says if you learn this, you'll do this. Kind of encourages us that we do it and if we do it we pass this, and we get to go to fifth grade. And then we will be the oldest, and we can boss everybody around. She says everything clearly, this is how you do this. Not some teachers- in third she didn't do very good, not any directions, and we had lots of trouble. (Do you think fourth grade has been easier or third grade?-Investigator) Fourth. (I see.-Investigator) Sometimes she reads, and her voice was not clear and all soggy and smoky and bad. (Fourth grade has been easier because the teacher has been better?-Investigator) Better teacher and some stuff we already had learned. (Does your teacher ever write on the board or come to your desk?-Investigator) She only comes to our desk if we have trouble on a test and don't understand a question or know a word and, she helps us out and for other stuff we go up to her desk.

11. What kinds of things do you do on the playground?

01M Play soccer or tag. (Which is your favorite?-Investigator) Both. (How did you learn to play those games?-Investigator) I don't remember how I learned to play tag. I've been playing that since kindergarten. With soccer I saw people playing and started playing with them. (Are you good at it?-Investigator) Oh yeah and it is lots of fun to play during recess. (Is there much else you do at recess?-Investigator) No, just play.

02M I mainly play soccer, but when there is no soccer well, I just don't do anything. (You don't do anything?-Investigator) Not really. Sometimes I play football-American. (How did you learn how to play soccer?-Investigator) When I was in Jordan we played soccer. (So you knew how to play soccer before you came here?-Investigator) Uh-huh. (What about football, how did you learn to play football?-Investigator) My brother taught me because when we went to America, he thought he would like football, and he started playing and taught me how to play it. And he taught me about the rules, and when I play at school, I'm not that good, I don't even make a touchdown, and everybody else does. (But you are good in soccer, right?-Investigator) Yeah.

03F I do cartwheels and cheer. Well my friend she's really into a lot of things, and she found this little insect and it's like itsy bitsy spider and I'm like "isn't that poisonous", and she didn't know. She said, "this is my pet" and she named it "Edward", and then I accidentally put a book on in when she asked me to look after it. Next we have to look

for Edward the Second. Or sometimes I just play on the monkey bars or physical stuff like cheering. (How did you learn those cheers?-Investigator) Well a couple of my friends are cheerleaders, and they teach me some cheers, or I learn from other friends, or some my teachers taught me last year. (Okay.-Investigator)

04F I like to play basketball; I like to play with my friends, something creative. Sometimes we fight, or our friends try to help, or we help them. But you have to control yourself. It is so fun outside, playing soccer, you don't even want to go inside. (Sounds fun. Your outside games like soccer how did you learn to play that?-Investigator) In India. I don't think they called it soccer, we called it football 'cause you hit it with your foot. I played three champions games in India. All small kids on my team. And our PE teacher teaches us games, soccer and taught us with American rules.

12. When you do your homework what is the best way for you to study?

01M I don't usually have homework. Only sometimes, usually I finish my work at school. (Do like homework?-Investigator) Not really. (What subjects do you usually have homework?-Investigator) Uh-math mostly. (Does it take very long?-Investigator) No, not very long.

02M Um-well, sometimes I can't really study because of my little brother and sister always running up to me, and so my dad tells them to get out and lets me work in the quiet, on his desk, and I can study. (So you like it to be quiet?-Investigator) Yeah. (Do you sit at a desk or on the bed-did you say you sit at your dad's desk?-Investigator) Yeah, he has a computer, and he has a desk and chair, and I sit there and study. (Do you have homework a lot?-Investigator) No- sometimes I have like three books or three subjects, but mostly I don't have any at all. (When you do have homework does it take you very long to do it?-Investigator) Sometimes, one time it took me a long time to figure out one of the questions, do you want to know the question, (Sure.-Investigator) It was "Name two states that say the date is 1889", and my brother helped me find it on the computer, and it took like 30 minutes or an hour to find it, and my brother found it. (So that is a pretty long time for you?-Investigator) Yeah, and we had two geography questions like number one and number two and it had geography and stuff, and I never got one of them. (Do you like having homework?-Investigator) Sometimes.

03F In a room alone 'cause if somebody is in there with me I always look at them and not at my sheet and when it is quiet is when I'm sitting on something comfortable. (Do you use your bed or a desk?-Investigator) I like a bed better. (How often do you have homework?-Investigator) Well my teacher she assigns homework like three times a day but- like every day she assigns homework for some of the people that don't finish their work, but I don't get homework that much that I can't finish at school. (Does it take you very long to do the homework?-Investigator) It depends when I start and if the TV is on in the bedroom. If I'm in a room with the TV, I get addicted to the TV. Then it takes me a long time. (Oh, okay. Do you like having homework?-Investigator) Yeah, it's okay

04F I tell my mom if I don't get this done . . . , I get home at four and eat something, and at 4:30 I start doing homework. 4:30-if I don't get this done in one-half hour, well, I'm not going to play outside. I go to my room, my dad got this desk for me, a college desk, and sit in there, and I look outside, and my friends are out there, and I go and I just work out my problems. I don't use a calculator. And then I leave my homework on my dad's table, and he checks it before I turn it in at school. (That's good.-Investigator) If there's anything wrong, I study and study to get that problem right. (Do you like having homework?-Investigator) No. (Do you have it very often?-Investigator) Well, we sometimes, if we are too busy that she can't give us any assignments then we have everything for our Thursday folders and pass that out, and if we don't have time left, she says no homework for today. (Is homework extra work or left-over work from school work?-Investigator) Sometimes it's leftover, but sometimes-both. Mostly people don't get all their work done except smart people. Sometimes they have so much work they say they forgot about, and they are lying to the teacher. And the teacher just gives them extra work. (Does it take you very long to do your homework and night?-Investigator) Well in India yeah, but I would be fifth grade. I had to start all over here. In India you start school at three and it doesn't matter your age, it matters in brain. Here in America, it matters in age.

13. What has been your best memory about fourth grade?

01M Um, I don't know, I like the field trip day to the one-room schoolhouse. It was fun. (Did you like fourth grade better than second or third.-Investigator) No, I had more friends in second. (Anything else about fourth grade?-Investigator) There are three teachers and student teachers but the student teachers, were not in my class they were in the other two and sometimes, we had a substitute, that is it.

02M "State night." (What is that?-Investigator) It is where you have to pick a state and find a lot of information about it. And I picked Arizona, and I just liked it because I didn't have- it is the night we have a poster board with all the information we found, and everybody has the same stuff, but it's all different about what we found out on different states. Parents come around and ask questions, and I was scared I would get a question and couldn't answer and I never got a question that I couldn't answer. I liked it because it was fun. (So you knew all the answers?-Investigator) Yeah. (So is fourth grade easier than third grade or harder? -Investigator) Well when I went to fourth grade I should have thought third was easy, but it's kind of hard, but I like it to be challenging instead of being easy. Fourth grade gets harder.

03F We had a substitute and student teacher, and we had "a read and eat day" at the same time. We brought fun food to class and ate it, and when our teacher always made up jokes, so it's not a lot of work- it's play and work when we have him. I always thought that was fun. He was a substitute two times for us. But I liked it when he came, and that's when we had a "50s day." (That sounds fun, was it?-Investigator) Yeah. We also

had a trip to Leonardo's and it was fun! Also we have a new principal, I like to do work and met some new kids this year.

04F I like the field trip when we went to this place with the one-room schoolhouse. (Here in Stillwater?-Investigator) Yeah. We went there, and my teacher and the girls. It was 1800's, and we dressed up like that with bonnets and dresses, and we went there. The boys wore suspenders, and we had benches, and the boys sat on one side, and the girls sat on the other, and we had to stand up when we talked, like in India. I really liked that field trip; it was really neat.

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/10/01

Date: Thursday, May 11, 2000

IRB Application No: HE00166

Proposal Title: FOUR INTERNATIONAL FOURTH GRADERS BELIEFS ABOUT HOW THEY LEARN

Principal
Investigator(s):

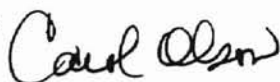
Kimberly Simmons
21 N. University Place #6
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dr. Mona Lane
333E HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Signature :



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX C

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM SITE PERMISSION FORM

May 1, 2000

Dear Parent,

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development. In cooperation with the staff of (name of after-school program). I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my master's thesis.

The purpose of this study is to interview four international fourth graders about their beliefs about learning. Additional details are described on the enclosed form.

I would like to work with your child individually at the (name of the after-school program) for about 30 minutes. These sessions are planned for the week _____ (date) _____. The time will be determined by the site's coordinator so as not to interfere with the ongoing program.

In order for your child to participate we need for you to fill the enclosed consent form and return it to _____ (the site), by _____ (date) _____. Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

Mona Lane, Professor
Department of Family
Relations & Child
Development

Kimberly Simmons
Graduate Student

APPENDIX D

CONSENT AND APPRECIATION FORMS

SITE CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

I, (site coordinator), agree to the access of the (after-school site) for use of the research project which has been approved by the Department of Family Relations and Child Development.

I understand that this research will be carried out by Kimberly Simmons, principle investigator, under the supervision of Dr. Mona Lane.

I understand the purpose of this study is to examine four international fourth graders beliefs about how they learn. The children’s responses will be recorded, studied and analyzed. The interviews will take about 30 minutes.

I have read this consent form and understand its contents, and I freely consent to the use of the (after-school site) under the conditions described. I understand that I will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

If I have any questions concerning this research project, I may consult with Kimberly Simmons or Dr. Mona Lane, FRCD, by calling (405) 744-8355, or Sharon Bacher, Office of University Research Services, (405) 744-5700.

Signature of Coordinator

Date

Signature of Principle
Investigator

Date

June 15, 2000

Dear Parent:

I am writing this letter to let you know that I am through with the research study at (name of after-school program) and to thank you and your child for your cooperation. All the children seemed to enjoy participating, and they were a pleasure to be around and to interview. It was easy to talk with them with the assistance of the (program site).

Your role in this research was as important as any other aspect. Without your help and support, this research would have not been possible. The quick response to the return of your child's permission slips was greatly appreciated.

I have enclosed a copy of the signed consent form for your records. Again, I thank you and your child for your support.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Simmons

VITA

Kimberly Michelle Simmons

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Title of Study: FOUR INTERNATIONAL FOURTH GRADERS' BELIEFS ABOUT
HOW THEY LEARN IN THE AMERICAN CLASSROOM

Major Field: Family Relations in Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, on May 7, 1970, the daughter of Mike and Bethel Simmons.

Education: Graduated from Wewoka High School, Wewoka, Oklahoma in May 1988; received Bachelor of Science degree in Family Relations and Child Development from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1993. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Child Development at Oklahoma State University in December, 2000.

Experience: Employed by Head Start for 3 years; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Residential Life, Family Resource Center for two years and graduate assistant, 1999-2000.