

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM: A COMPARISONAL STUDY OF THE
PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,
THE FIRST GRADE TEACHER, AND THE
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER IN EIGHT
NORTHEASTERN COUNTIES IN
OKLAHOMA

By

JANA MANN SANDERS

Bachelor of Science in Education
Northeastern Oklahoma State University
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
1979

Master of Education
Northeastern Oklahoma State University
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
1981

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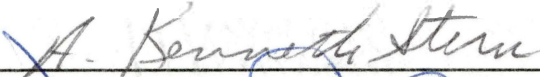
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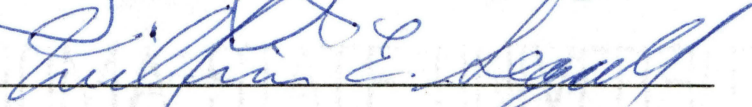
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Dean of the Graduate College

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This study attempted to compare elementary principals', first grade teachers', and kindergarten teachers' views of the existing kindergarten curriculum at their schools. The main objective was to determine where the differences in the perceptions of the existing kindergarten curriculum lay.

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when "Mommy" was working on her "paper" and for never touching
Mommy's computer. Mommy is back and she plans to be a "real" person
again very soon!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Need for the Study	3
Definition of Terms	4
Statement of the Problem	5
Limitations of the Study	5
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	8
The History of Early Childhood Education	
European Influences	8
History of Early Childhood Education in the	
United States	11
Importance of Early Childhood Education	16
The Elementary Principal's Role in Early	
Childhood Education	22
The Teacher's Role in Early Childhood Education	25
Curriculum Design for the Young Child	29
Testing of Young Children	34
Summary	37
Research Questions Guiding the Study	38
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	41
Introduction	41
Instrumentation	41
Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument	41
Sample Selection	43
Demographics	44
IV. FINDINGS	46
Introduction	46
Examination of the Research Questions	46
Research Question 1	46
Research Question 2	54
Research Question 3	54
Research Question 4	55
Research Question 5	56
Research Question 6	57
Research Question 7	58
Additional Analysis	59

Chapter	Page
Summary	60
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
Summary	62
Findings and Conclusions	63
Discussion	65
Recommendations for Further Research	70
Recommendations for Kindergarten Practices	72
BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
APPENDIXES	78
APPENDIX A - GENERAL INFORMATION SURVEY CHECKLIST	79
APPENDIX B - KINDERGARTEN SURVEY INSTRUMENT	82
APPENDIX C - SEEFELDT'S PORTION OF KINDERGARTEN SURVEY INSTRUMENT	85
APPENDIX D - LETTERS	88

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Responses to Seefeldt Survey	47
II. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Three . . .	48
III. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Four . . .	49
IV. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Five . . .	49
V. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Six	50
VI. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Seven . . .	51
VII. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Eight . . .	52
VIII. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Thirteen	53
IX. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Question Number Sixteen	53
X. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Grouped by Certificate . .	55
XI. Responses to Item Nine of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Grouped by Years Taught in the Elementary School	56
XII. Responses to Seefeldt Survey Grouped by College Degree .	57
XIII. Responses to Item Seven of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Grouped by Years in the Same Position	58
XIV. Total Mean for Elementary Principals, First Grade Teachers, and Kindergarten Teachers on Kindergarten Curriculum Survey	61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The education of young children is the most important responsibility of the public school system. At no other time in history has it been as important for the average citizen to be a well-educated person. Children must have not only factual knowledge but also the agility and flexibility to cope with new ideas. They must develop thinking skills and be prepared for continuous growth and learning if they are to become responsible adults in an era of ever increasing knowledge.

Attendance in America's kindergartens has increased dramatically in the past two decades. In 1965 about 47 percent of the five-year-old population was enrolled in kindergarten. Today that enrollment figure has almost doubled with approximately 90 percent of all five-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten. This increase becomes even more impressive when coupled with the fact that most states do not require kindergarten attendance (Spodek, 1986). Therefore, if our children are attending kindergarten, should not it be the best and most appropriate experience available?

The kindergarten curriculum is an ever evolving dynamic entity which involves the facilitation of the child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth. This vitally important experience may set the stage for a life long love of learning.

Two basic types of kindergarten curriculum have emerged. The first is a more academic and structured curriculum which emphasizes content and academics. Children are instructed in reading and math readiness and may be placed in ability groups for formal instruction. The second approach to kindergarten curriculum is one in which attention to child development is paid. This curriculum offers children choices of hands-on activities within a developmentally appropriate range for five-year-olds.

Research shows that the elementary school principal has more influence on the quality of a school's programs than any other individual (Krajewski, Martin, & Walden, 1983) therefore the role of the administrator is vital to the kindergarten. The administrator's development of an early childhood philosophy is another crucial role and includes the determination of goals, objectives, staff roles and positions, scheduling, and evaluation (Decker & Decker, 1986).

The administrator must also help in the improvement of the curriculum. This entails assessment of curricular needs, goal setting, provision of instructional materials, improvement of teaching methods and activities, and evaluation of the curriculum improvements (Krajewski et al., 1983).

Perhaps the most important ingredient of a successful kindergarten program is the teacher. These educators play a vital part in the kindergarten curriculum. In addition, teachers must observe children, evaluate not only the children's progress but also the curriculum, establish the learning environment, monitor children's behavior, and create a safe and secure classroom.

The basic foundation for future academic success is laid during the kindergarten year. During this year, the child's natural curiosity and motivation to learn are at their height and misapplication of theory or method has yet to stunt their desire for knowledge. "A child who experiences a productive and enjoyable kindergarten year is well on the way to a successful learning experience" (Barbe, 1980).

Need for the Study

There have been no studies conducted in Northeastern Oklahoma which have compared elementary school principals', first grade teachers', and kindergarten teachers' perceptions of the existing kindergarten curriculum. The available literature concerning the kindergarten program is broad in concept and lacks specific information about the kindergarten curriculum. Therefore, a need for information regarding specifics about kindergartens in Northeastern Oklahoma exists.

During the spring of 1990, House Bill 1017 was signed into Oklahoma law by Governor Henry Bellmon. One of the sections of this bill dealt specifically with mandatory kindergarten attendance of all children age five on or before September 1. With all five-year-olds attending kindergarten it becomes necessary to have compatible and consistent perceptions of the kindergarten curriculum.

The need for comparison of principals, first grade teachers, and kindergarten teachers is obvious. While teachers value some input from administrators there is a belief that administrators do not have

the classroom expertise of teachers (Young, 1985). In a study concerning expectations of principals versus their performance teachers believed the principal spent too much time dealing with the school plant which interfered with more important duties such as developing curriculum (Berlin, Kavanagh, & Jensen, 1988). On the other hand, principals believed they were spending appropriate amounts of time dealing with the curriculum (Berlin et al., 1988).

This study attempted to identify not only those factors which affect differences of perception of the curriculum but also those areas of the kindergarten curriculum where differences exist. Through this identification of differences, expectations of children may become more realistic and development of a better kindergarten curriculum may result.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will be applied to the specific terms used in this study:

Kindergarten: The educational experience which is specifically designed for children ages five or six which precedes first grade.

Kindergarten Teacher: A teacher of children ages five or six years old. The teacher is certified to teach elementary or early childhood classes.

First Grade Teacher: A teacher of children ages six or seven years old. The teacher is certified to teach elementary or early childhood classes.

Elementary Principal: An individual who is the administrator of an elementary school which includes at least grades kindergarten through first grade.

Certified Teacher: A teacher who holds a valid early childhood education certificate (N-3) or an elementary certificate (K-8) or both.

Kindergarten Curricula: Those experiences which are included in the kindergarten program and "for which the school accepts responsibility" (Ragan & Shepherd, 1977).

Existing Kindergarten Curriculum: Those experiences which are included in the kindergarten program and "for which the school accepts responsibility" (Ragan & Shepherd, 1977). These experiences take place during the current school year.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be dealt with in this study is to determine if a difference occurs among kindergarten teachers', first grade teachers', and principals' concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations apply to this study.

1. This study was limited to elementary principals, first grade teachers, and kindergarten teachers in Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, Sequoyah, and Wagoner counties in Oklahoma.

These perceptions of the existing kindergarten curriculum may or may not be similar to those of other educators in different areas of Oklahoma or other states.

2. The study was limited by any inherent weaknesses which might have been present in the instrumentation.

3. Educators' perceptions of the existing kindergarten curriculum may be temporary or changeable.

4. The objectives selected were gleaned from the "Suggested Learner Outcomes" for kindergarten written by the Oklahoma State Department of Education and may not have relevancy to other curricula.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The History of Early Childhood Education

European Influences

Early childhood education began with the beginning of humankind. Fathers taught sons to hunt and fish while mothers taught daughters to cook, plant, and harvest. This was the initial form of early childhood education.

Before the Renaissance, children were considered to be little adults by age seven. Children were expected to move into adulthood as soon as possible where the primary goal of life was basic survival. According to religious beliefs of the time, people were deemed as innately evil and children were constantly corrected and punished (Gordon & Brown, 1985).

Society became more enlightened during the Renaissance in the fourteenth century and the Reformation during the sixteenth century. The German school system had its beginnings during this time and would continue to influence European education. People began to change their perceptions of children and their education. The mortality rate of children declined as living conditions improved. The acquisition of skills and knowledge at an earlier age became important (Gordon & Brown, 1985).

Jon Amos Comenius (1592-1670) developed the belief that

education should follow the natural order of things. In other words, the development of children followed nature's timetable and their education should reflect that timetable. Comenius believed teachers should observe that natural timetable and work with it to ensure successful learning. He wrote the first picture book for children entitled Orbis Pictus (The World of Pictures). This book was a guide for teachers which included training of the senses and the study of nature (Gordon & Brown, 1985).

John Locke (1632-1704) wrote a series of letters, which later became Some Thoughts on Education, to a friend regarding the education of the friend's son. He advised parents that children's minds were as a blank slate to be written on by training. But, he also counseled parents to pay attention to the child's moods and interests in order to plan the best method of educating the child (Braun & Edwards, 1972).

During the middle 1700's, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), a writer and philosopher, brought forth the idea that children were not inherently evil but were naturally good. He philosophized that education should reflect that goodness and allow for spontaneous interests and activities of the children. He suggested that the school environment be less rigid and become more flexible to meet the needs of the children. Rousseau recommended using concrete teaching materials and leave the abstract and symbolism for later years (Braun & Edwards, 1972).

Johann Heinrick Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was a Swiss educator who represents a beginning point for early childhood education. This was

the first time that more formalized thought was devoted to the education of young children. Along with intellectual content, he recommended practical skills be taught (Gordon & Brown, 1985).

Freidrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852) is known as the "father of kindergarten" not only because he coined the term kindergarten but for devoting his life to the development of a system of education for young children. The word kindergarten is German for "children's garden" and best expresses what Froebel wanted for children under the age of six years. Froebel built respect for the individuality of the child into the curriculum. He also insisted upon an organized curriculum which insured a step-by-step natural progression of the child. All activities were designed to instruct while giving pleasure. Froebel advocated the radical idea that play was important and that children should have toys (Broman, 1982).

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the first female physician in Italy, worked in the slums of Rome with poor and mentally retarded children. Believing that children lacked the proper environment and motivation, she opened a preschool in 1907. Dr. Montessori designed materials which taught children to perform self-help skills. The materials were graded in difficulty and taught children to be responsible for themselves. A great emphasis was placed upon the environment where a clear sense of order and place were necessary. One of her most valuable contributions to education was her theory of how children learn (Gordon & Brown, 1985).

History of Early Childhood Education
in the United States

In 1856, the first kindergarten was opened in the United States by Margaret Schurz, a student of Froebel. Schurz, a German immigrant, opened a German-speaking kindergarten to help preserve the heritage of her children and her neighbors' children. The kindergarten held on the front porch and in the parlor of her Watertown, Wisconsin, home was a small program which never enrolled more than six children. Froebel's gifts and occupations were an integral part of the curriculum (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986).

During a chance meeting between Margaret Schurz and Elizabeth Peabody (1804-1894), Schurz described the kindergarten her children had attended and at the age of 55, Peabody decided every child in America should have the benefits of kindergarten (Seefeldt and Barbour, 1986). After studying a kindergarten in Germany, Ms. Peabody and her sister (Horace Mann's widow) opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in 1860 in Chicago (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990).

During the mid-nineteenth century the social purpose of kindergarten changed. Immigrants first sent their children to kindergarten because of the similarities to their early educational experiences. However, the Froebelian curriculum soon became "Americanized". Social reformers viewed kindergarten as a way to help the less fortunate while professional educators saw it as an

effective way to prepare children to begin formal learning (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

Kindergarten had become a social reform instrument by 1870. "Charity" or "Rescue" kindergartens were provided to low-income families and quickly expanded. During this period wealthy women volunteered in these kindergartens as a philanthropic service to the poor. The number of kindergartens grew from about 400 in 1880 to 4,000 in 1894 (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

The Froebelian play program and individualized curriculum was impossible to implement in the first charity kindergartens. These kindergartens served as a day-care function for large groups of children whose ages ranged from infant to primary age and who spoke a variety of languages (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

In 1873, Susan Blow and W. T. Harris, superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools, opened the first public school kindergarten in the United States (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986). Public school kindergartens operated as cheaply as possible. Large enrollments and underqualified teachers were the norm. While kindergarten teachers continued to use Froebel's books as texts, few kindergarten curriculums resembled the original play garden concept (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

During the early part of the twentieth century, with the appearance of Freudian psychology and the urbanization of the American society, the notion of the "sinful child" was replaced with the idea of the "sensual child" (Freud, 1938). Through this the concept of a "healthy personality" emerged. At that time the child's

intellectual development was not as emphasized as the unconstrained expression of emotion and feelings. The progressive education movement aimed at the expressions of emotion and feelings rather than the suppression of these emotions (Elkind, 1986).

With the acceptance of John Dewey's writings and philosophy, a shift of focus occurred. Anna Bryan, Patty Smith Hill, and Alice Temple, leaders in the early childhood profession, made the break from traditional Froebelian curriculum. This curriculum included the scientific study of children and the idea that school should prepare children to become democratic citizens (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986).

In 1921, Patty Smith Hill started a laboratory nursery school at Columbia Teacher's College in New York City. This school embraced Dewey's notion that teachers should be a guide who monitored children's experiences while constantly evaluating and diagnosing children's learning and growth (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986). The program allowed children long periods of time for unstructured play and little didactic instructions (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990).

Two crises helped early childhood programs rapidly expand. The first, the Great Depression, occurred during the 1930's. The funding of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) included development of nursery schools. Not only did these schools provide employment for unemployed teachers and other school staff, but they also provided a valuable experience for young children (Spodek, 1985).

The WPA nursery schools were full-day comprehensive programs. These nursery schools had a lasting effect on the growth of early

childhood education. Kindergarten and nursery school teachers were hired to be consultants and to develop appropriate curriculum. This was the first time in the history of early childhood education that children from all over the nation had a chance to experience early childhood education (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986).

The second crisis, World War II, spawned the Lanham Act in 1941 which established child care centers in most centers of war industry to provide care and education to the children of working mothers (Spodek, 1985). These programs enrolled about 300,000 children and enabled the early childhood education profession to explore again the possibilities of programs (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990).

Both the WPA nursery schools and the Lanham Act centers were terminated as the depression and World War II ended. However, because of these two government-financed programs, education for young children became popular and professional educators became acquainted with programs and theories for teaching young children (Broman, 1982).

During the mid-1950's, Emma Sheehy's book The 5's and 6's Go to School, was used as a model in teacher training and child development classes. This guide used some of Froebel's original ideas in the curriculum. Sheehy suggested conferences with parents, teaching children how to learn, and the need for careful planning. She also believed teachers should have observation skills, should listen to children, and that teachers should be concerned with the child's whole being (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

In 1957, the Russians launched the first successful satellite,

Sputnik, into space orbit. Many Americans questioned why this had not been accomplished by the United States first. Educators were called upon to prepare children better for survival and a new interest in math and science education as well as early education developed (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986).

Many kindergarten curriculum models were developed on university campuses for research purposes during the 1960's. Children were encouraged to select activities of interest from a variety of learning centers in the classroom. Teachers were viewed as "observant guides" and it was assumed the children could and would select appropriately (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

The 1960's were also a time of social unrest in the United States. The civil rights struggle showed inequalities of black and white as well as rich and poor in the nation (Gordon & Brown, 1985). Out of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty came legislation which created Head Start in 1965 (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990). Head Start programs were developed to prevent school failure, common to poor children (Gordon & Brown, 1989). These programs for four and five-year-olds included the components of education, psychiatric services, health, nutrition, and parent and community involvement (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1986). As a result of Head Start, enthusiasm for programs for young children developed (Gordon & Brown, 1989).

The decade of the 1970's brought instructional objectives, skills lists, and the term "accountability". Benjamin Bloom determined mastery learning to be the key concept in education.

Teachers were to determine specific skills children would be learning not only during the kindergarten day but also throughout the year (Lawler & Bauch, 1988).

The 1980's saw preschool programs which had been developed for poor children transferred to more affluent families. Parents became more willing to trust the education of their young children to educators. The function of early childhood programs also served the practical solution for working parents in the form of daycare. Many half-day kindergartens became a thing of the past due to the need for daycare. This change responded to working parents' schedules and their demands for greater academic accomplishments from their children (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990). Seefeldt and Barbour (1990) described early childhood education as having become a "bona fide profession".

Importance of Early Childhood Education

The most recent U. S. Government figures show that 95.3 percent of all five and six-year-old children in the United States were enrolled in school in 1987 (U. S. Department of Commerce). Thus, if early childhood programs serve the majority of children, should not these programs be the best experience available for young children?

Weikart and Scheinhart (1985) reviewed seven studies of early childhood programs. The studies reviewed included: the Early Training Project, the Harlem Study, the Milwaukee Study, the Perry Preschool Project, the Mother-Child Home Program, the New York Pre-K Program, and the Rome Head Start Program.

The studies chosen for review were some of the most scientifically rigorous and followed subjects to at least age nine and, at most, to age 21. The programs focused on the effects of early childhood education on children living in poverty (Weikart & Schienhart, 1985).

The Early Training Project began in 1962 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and consisted of 90 children who were randomly assigned to program or control groups. A follow-up study was conducted when subjects were 20 years of age with 80 percent of the subjects being interviewed. Children assigned to the program group attended part-time classroom experiences five days a week in the summer and received weekly home visits during the school year for three years. Thirty-eight percent of the female preschool participants reported a pregnancy with no between group differences. After pregnancy and childbirth, 88 percent completed high school while only 30 percent of the females who had not attended preschool returned to high school after childbirth and pregnancy. The Early Training Project also found a 21 percent lower high school dropout rate for the children who had attended preschool.

The Harlem Study focused only on males who were randomly assigned to the program group or control group. The study began in 1966 in New York City and a follow-up study was conducted when participants were 13 with 81 percent of the subjects being interviewed. One to one sessions between the child and a tutor were held twice a week for eight months. Retention for children in the program group was 21 percent lower than those in the control group.

The Milwaukee Study of 2058 children from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, began in 1968 and followed up on participants at age ten. Preschoolers were randomly assigned to program groups or control groups. The study provided full-time, year-round developmental child care for children from ages of a few months to six years and included vocational and educational programs for the mothers whose intelligence quotient (IQ) was at or below the 75th percentile. The Milwaukee Study's effect on IQ, as measured on the Stanford-Binet test, had a maximum effect of two standard deviations.

The Perry Preschool Project, which began in 1962 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, focused on 123 children whose IQ's were between 60 and 90. One hundred percent of the participants were located for a follow-up study and 98 percent of the subjects were interviewed at age 19. Subjects in the program group, ages three and four, attended a morning classroom program five days a week for two school years and received one home visit per week. Placement in special education classes was 13 percent lower for those who attended preschool than those who did not. Avoidance of special education classes was deemed as one of the major financial benefits of the preschool program in the cost-benefit analysis of the Perry Preschool Project. Consistent positive impact of the early childhood education program on scholastic achievement was found in the program group at ages seven, eight, nine, ten, 11, 14, and 19. This study also found reduced delinquency among participants who attended preschool programs. Females attending preschool reported 64 teenage pregnancies per 100 while those who did not attend preschool

reported 117 teenage pregnancies per 100 females. The high school dropout rate was 17 percent lower for the subjects attending preschool and those individuals had an employment rate of 50 percent as compared with a 32 percent employment rate for those not attending preschool at age 19. The final cost-benefit analysis showed school systems returned their investment in the one-year preschool program by the time the participants graduated from high school.

The Mother-Child Program began in 1965 on Long Island, New York, and was offered to all willing participants within a geographic area. The program consisted of two weekly home visits for one to two years. Two hundred and fifty children participated in the study and a follow-up study of 74 percent of the subjects was conducted when participants were between the ages of nine and 13. The placement in special education classes was 15 percent lower for children in the program group while grade retention was six percent lower for this group.

The New York Pre-K Program began in 1975 in New York State and was open to the public in selected school districts. A follow-up study of 75 percent of the participants was conducted at age nine. This program consisted of five morning classroom experiences for four-year-olds and offered parents the chance to become involved in the classroom. Placement in special education classes was three percent lower for those who had attended preschool and a five percent lower retention rate was found for preschool subjects.

The Rome Head Start Program began in 1966 in Rome, Georgia. This program identified all first graders in Rome, Georgia, public

schools who qualified for federal funds for the economically disadvantaged. Program participants were given hands-on active learning experiences with several home visits and chances for parental involvement in the classrooms. In a follow-up study conducted when the subjects were age 20, children who had attended Head Start had a 17 percent lower high school dropout rate, a 14 percent lower grade retention rate, and a 14 percent lower assignment to special education classes than those children who had not attended Head Start.

Lazar's (1979) study of the persistence of preschool effects revealed some interesting data 15 years after low-income children in New York City participated in experimental preschool intervention programs. The results are as follows:

1. Early education significantly reduced the number of low-income children entering special education classes.
2. Children who participated in preschool were more likely to meet at least minimal standards of their schools.
3. Early education positively affected later school performance independently of the effects of background measure.
4. Children who attended preschool performed better than those who did not attend for at least three years after participation in the program.
5. Preschool still affected special education, independently of IQ scores at age six and all the other background measures.
6. Preschool helped children avoid assignment to special education and retention regardless of sex, ethnic background and

family background.

7. Preschool elevated mothers' aspirations over their childrens'.

8. Children who attended preschool were more likely to give achievement related reasons for feeling proud of themselves than those who did not attend preschool.

9. Children who attended preschool rated themselves as better in school than those who did not attend preschool.

10. Children who attended preschool were as socially active as those who had not attended.

Nielsen (1989) reported that one year after Head Start, the difference between Head Start and non-Head Start children on achievement and school readiness tests continued to be in the educationally meaningful range, while the two groups scored at about the same level on intelligence tests. In addition, Bee (1986) found that children who attended Head Start were less likely to fail a grade in school or to be assigned to special education classes than children who did not attend.

The Head Start children's higher self-esteem, achievement motivation, and social behavior would most likely contribute to early success in school (McKey, Condelli, Ganson, Barrett, McGonkey, & Platz, 1985). The early success may help to influence children's commitment to remain in school and graduate (Neilsen, 1989).

Review of studies involving the effects of early childhood education reveal that good early childhood education programs are not

only a benefit to children now and in the future but are also a wise investment of public schools.

The Elementary Principal's Role in Early Childhood Education

Most research indicates that the principal of an elementary school has more influence on the quality of the school's programs than any other individual. Further, elementary school principals have more impact on all operational phases of the school program than any other level of school administrator (Krajewski, Martin, & Walden, 1983).

Sciarra and Dorsey (1990) stated that the interpersonal relationships are the core of every management position. They further stated that it is important to have knowledge of writing job descriptions, drawing up budgets, policies, and the like, the real task of the administrator is to work effectively with and provide support for those who will implement the program.

According to Decker and Decker (1986), the first step in administering an early childhood program is the development of a philosophy of early childhood education. They further stated that this would include the determination of:

1. goals and objectives of the program;
2. types of provisions for individual differences;
3. grouping strategies (e.g. chronological age, mental age, achievement, fixed groups, flexible groups, large or small);
4. staff roles;

5. staff positions;
6. materials necessary to implement the program;
7. physical arrangement;
8. scheduling; and
9. types of evaluation.

Hewes and Hartman (1979) listed the duties of the administrator of an early childhood program to include:

1. The planning of the center (setting goals and standards, planning the learning environment, instituting and maintaining operating policies, and formulating staff policies;
2. operating the center (including the budget, food services, first aid systems, and public relations);
3. providing leadership;
4. selecting and working with staff and families; and
5. evaluating the center.

Finance is always a consideration in education and initially good early childhood programs are expensive (Butler, 1974). The financial operation of a school should always be as smooth as possible to insure the administrator can maintain control of the finances while avoiding the situation where personnel and programs are constantly lacking funds due to poor financial management (Sciarra & Dorsey, 1990).

All centers need a long-range financial plan in which funds are allocated properly to insure a developmentally appropriate program. This plan can be accomplished by (1) estimating how much the program will cost, (2) determining the amount of available monies, and

(3) seeking more income to equal expenditures, adjusting expenditures to equal monies, or both (Sciarra & Dorsey, 1990).

Many early childhood programs are subsidized by state or federal grants, foundation grants, donations, and/or fund raisers. It is the administrator's job to see that the monies obtained are administered efficiently, fairly, and legally (Krajewski et al., 1983).

Curriculum improvement is another of the many jobs of an administrator and the elementary principal has the responsibility to influence curriculum decisions positively. This task can be done through (1) assessing the need for curriculum improvement; (2) setting curriculum goals; (3) improving subject matter content; (4) providing instructional materials; (5) utilizing instructional time and human resources; (6) improving teaching methods and activities; (7) evaluating curriculum improvement (Krajewski et al., 1983).

Hughes and Ubben (1989) stated that even though an elementary principal cannot be expected to be knowledgeable in all areas of the curriculum, he/she must have a basic understanding of curricular concepts. They believe this understanding is basic to provide direction for the school's curriculum.

An elementary school is only as good as the people who manage it and elementary principals are responsible for organizing the faculty and staff to insure an educationally sound program (Krajewski et al., 1983). The first step in the organizational process is the selection of personnel. This vitally important role may assure a first-rate faculty and staff (Hughes & Ubben, 1989).

Organization of instruction is another role the elementary principal must assume. The organizational structure is the interrelationship of roles in the school. This structure is affected by the administrator's leadership style which determines the degree of formality (Krajewski et al., 1983).

When organizing instruction, four points need to be considered. These points are (1) the nature of the learner; (2) instructional materials which are available; (3) individual differences; and (4) implications of these instructional processes for the other organizational components of the school (Hughes & Ubben, 1989).

As reported, the elementary principal has more influence on the school's quality of program and operation than any other administrator (Krajewski et al., 1983). Therefore, this individual may be able to help develop the best kindergarten possible at the local level.

The Teacher's Role in Early Childhood Education

Various leaders in the field of early childhood education have defined the role of the teacher in many different ways. Spodek (1974) reported that teaching is learning all that can be learned about the child, modeling desired behaviors, and being aware of one's self and its impact on children. Broman (1982) called the teacher a "viewer of children, a catcher of their signals, and a perceptive responder".

Jessie Stanton, an early pioneer in the field, took this view:

She should have a fair education. By this I mean she should have a doctor's degree in psychology and medicine. Sociology as a background is advisable. She should be an experienced carpenter, mason, mechanic, plumber, and a thoroughly trained musician and poet. At least five years practical experience in each of these branches is essential . . . Now at 83, she's ready! (Broman, 1986).

The many roles a teacher must play can add excitement and challenge to the job. One of these multiple roles of the teacher is that of being an observer. Through observation, the teacher can gather information which will add to the evaluation of the program, the child's development, and the teaching methods used (Gordon, 1985).

The teacher must also create the learning environment. The physical environment influences behaviors and learning (Seefeldt, 1986). When doing this the teacher needs to take several items into consideration. These items include (1) reality of the situation; (2) goals and objectives; (3) health and safety factors; (4) needs of individuals with physical disabilities; and (5) the need for flexibility (Seefeldt, 1986).

Reality of the situation refers to the assessment of the physical properties of the classroom. Rooms for young children should be bright and cheerful with furniture which is designed for children. Each room should have a bathroom with hot and cold running water, doors and patios which connect indoors with the outside (Seefeldt, 1986, p. 99). However, the reality of the situation may not measure up to the ideal and teachers must then plan the best arrangement of the room and its facilities as possible.

The basic goals and objectives of the early childhood program will help to determine arrangement of the environment. Goals to foster problem-solving abilities would necessitate room arrangement which included interest centers that required physical and mental activity. Social development goals would require spaces for small group work which would enable children to interact freely (Seefeldt, 1986).

According to Seefeldt (1986), health and safety factors are always of utmost concern to teachers. Restrooms must be checked for sanitary conditions as well as the classroom itself. Physical characteristics of the room such as proper heating, lighting, and ventilation must also be checked.

The needs of children with physical disabilities must also be addressed. It is vital that the physical arrangement of the classroom be such that all children are allowed safe access to all areas of the room (Seefeldt, 1986).

Flexibility in the learning environment is not only an ideal but also needed for children to learn and grow. As the children grow and mature so will their interests (Seefeldt, 1986, p. 102). These changes will make it necessary for the physical environment to accommodate those changes.

When arranging the indoor space, teachers must be aware of the following needs: (a) child-sized furniture, (b) clearly defined pathways, (c) compatible grouping of learning areas, and (4) centers which accommodate different sizes of groups.

Indoor space also needs to include areas where noise is acceptable while others are relatively quiet. Space to display children's work is vitally important for a secure sense of belonging. Last but not least, consideration must be given to the utilization of storage areas (Vergeront, 1987).

When planning outdoor spaces a balance between vigorous play areas and quiet areas needs to be present. Play equipment should include safe climbing apparatus, pushing and pulling experiences, balls for catching and throwing, with safety as a paramount factor (Kritchevsky, Prescott, & Walling, 1987).

Outdoor spaces also need areas where children can rest and relax. Climate of the area needs to be taken into consideration too. For example, in a climate where heat is a factor then shade trees need to be included or in an area where rain is frequent then a covered area where children may play outside without getting wet is necessary (Kritchevsky et al., 1987).

Curriculum planning may be one of the most challenging aspects of the teacher's tasks. Not only must teachers plan for the various curricula areas, they must also include provisions for children with special needs. Planning must include a basic understanding of child development in order to insure the best educational experiences (Maxim, 1985).

Teachers must become aware of current teaching trends and methods. These trends should include (a) multicultural education, (b) the inclusion or deletion of computers in the early childhood

classroom, (c) the teaching of values, and (d) fostering of divergent thinking skills (Maxim, 1989).

Last, but not least, the teacher must help children develop the desire to comply with acceptable standards of behavior. According to Maxim, discipline is not punishment. He further stated that discipline cannot involve yelling, shouting, or hitting. Teachers must understand that behaviors take a long time to learn and therefore, will take some time to relearn. Maxim (1989) stated that the best disciplinary techniques must involve a consummate understanding of behavior from a developmental perspective. According to Maxim, realistic expectations can then be implemented.

Curriculum Design for the Young Child

Problems in early childhood curriculum design are numerous. These problems range from selecting the content, to setting comprehensive and specific goals, to choosing the methodology (Schwartz & Robinson, 1982).

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the curriculum is designed to develop children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas--physical, social, emotional, and intellectual--to help children learn how to learn and to establish a foundation for life long learning. The association further stated that one method of determining the quality of an early childhood program is the extent to which it is developmentally appropriate for children (NAEYC, 1988).

Developmentally appropriate practices include:

1. An integrated curriculum so that learning in all the traditional areas occurs primarily through projects and learning centers which are planned by teachers and reflect the children's interests.
2. Individual children or small groups work and plan cooperatively or alone in learning centers.
3. Frequent outings are planned.
4. Learning materials and activities are concrete, real, and relevant to the children's lives.
5. The goals of the language and literacy program are for children to expand their ability to communicate orally and through reading and writing.
6. Time is provided for children to dictate stories, listen to stories, plan projects, and a variety of activities to develop language.
7. Subskills such as learning letters, phonics, and word recognition are taught as needed by individual children.
8. Math skills are acquired through exploration, discovery, play, and solving meaningful problems.
9. Math manipulatives are provided and used.
10. Social studies themes are learned through a variety of projects, playful activities, discussions, where the classroom is treated as laboratory of social relations.
11. The science program is built on children's natural interest in the world and incorporates thinking skills with natural phenomena.

12. Opportunities for children to express themselves aesthetically are provided throughout the day.
13. Multicultural and nonsexist activities and materials are provided to enhance self-esteem and for enrichment.
14. Outdoor activity which is provided to help develop large muscle skills and to learn about the outdoor environment.
15. Decisions which have a major impact on children such as enrollment, retention, and assignment to remedial classes are based primarily on information obtained from teacher observation, parent observation, and not on the basis of a single test score.
16. All public schools should allow children who are legally entry age into the program regardless of developmental level.
17. Groups are composed of children who are mostly the same age (NAEYC, 1988).

According to Franks-Doebler (1988), coordinator of early childhood curriculum at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), the aforementioned items were the basis for the development of the Kindergarten Suggested Learner Outcomes by the OSDE.

Articulation is the term Schwartz and Robison (1982) used to describe the issue which arises when a program in the previous school year does not meet the expectations of the current program. They further pointed out that it was usually the kindergarten teacher who bore the brunt of these attacks. Thus, if a child moves from a developmentally oriented kindergarten to an academically oriented first grade it is the child who will experience the discontinuity in learning experiences (Schwartz & Robison, 1982).

Schwartz and Robison suggested four ways in which continuity may be built into a program. Their suggestions included

- . . . selecting a unified program to serve preschool and primary classes;
- . . . assigning teachers to groups to serve for more than one year (continuity of staff);
- . . . maintaining classes intact from preschool into primary grades (continuity of peers); and
- . . . establishing parental training programs (continuity of parents) (Schwartz & Robinson, 1982).

Beginning teachers of young children learn how much knowledge children seek as they engage in different activities. Nathan Isaacs as quoted by Hardeman (1974) refers to this as the "illimitable subject of the world".

Establishing objectives is another problem when curriculum for young children is designed. While behavioral objectives are easily composed and evaluated, objectives which deal with development or concepts are much more difficult to develop and evaluate (Schwartz & Robison, 1982).

Schwartz and Robison (1982) suggested four common problems in stating objectives. These problems included: (1) the tendency to be over-inclusive and therefore contradictory; (2) finding solutions to the process-product dilemma; (3) setting long-term versus short-term objectives; and (4) making statements that are too abstract and ambiguous.

Both arguments have many options but the problems lie in the degree of clarity, predictability, and prescription. For all goals and objectives to be clear and predictable then flexibility must be built into pacing, instructional materials, learning style,

and duration and type of instructional activities (Schwartz & Robison, 1982).

Dr. Carol Seefeldt (1989), professor and director of the Institute for Child Study at the University of Maryland, stated that a successful kindergarten curriculum is found in teachers who have knowledge of children, knowledge of content, and knowledge of process.

Seefeldt contended that child development and growth have remained constant regardless of changes in the world around them. She believes teachers should incorporate knowledge of that growth and development into the curriculum. According to Seefeldt (1989), kindergarten teachers should talk with their students, try to understand each individual's thinking processes, and then adapt the curriculum in concrete ways to meet those needs.

Due to children's curiosity and their desire to learn, knowledge of the content involves a broad and in-depth knowledge of the structure of each content area. Armed with this knowledge, teachers will be better able to ascertain the scope and sequence of the learning experiences and, in turn, insure these experiences are more meaningful to children (Seefeldt, 1989).

Seefeldt advocated that kindergarten classrooms have ten or more centers. She further described the centers as environments where children are given hands-on activities, and children are allowed to make their own choices, thereby insuring success. Dyson (1987) found "intellectual development in general, and literacy growth in

particular" take place through informal conversations and interactions.

Not only should children be able to exchange ideas freely, they should also sing songs, repeat rhymes and chants, and listen to poetry. Through these activities children's auditory memories develop, while building a base for phonics and word attack skill. In addition, cultural heritage and traditions are transmitted through these poems, chants, and songs (Seefeldt, 1989).

Seefeldt (1989) maintained that kindergarten curriculum should be designed for children between the ages of five and six. If children are six or older at midyear then the kindergarten curriculum is "too soon, for too many young children" (Upchurch & Gilmore, 1986). The preceding points made by Seefeldt later became part of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument which was used in this research study.

Testing of Young Children

As young children get ready for school each fall they must not only choose that all important clothing for the first day of school but in many school districts, children must also be determined as "ready" for school by passing or scoring well on a readiness test.

Two types of tests are used to determine school readiness. The first type is a developmental screening test. Developmental screening tests have several purposes. These tests help identify children who may need some type of early intervention of special

education or children who might need some individualized program (Meisels, 1987).

The second type, readiness tests, measures curriculum related skills and/or abilities which the child has already acquired. The items on these tests focus on general knowledge, performance, and skill achievement (Meisels, 1987).

The Gesell School Readiness Test is a widely used test and, in fact, the Gesell Institute reports that 18 percent of school districts use this test to assess childrens' readiness for kindergarten or first grade. However, some problems do exist with this test. Norms for this test were established in the late 1960's with a sample of 50 females and 50 males who were mostly white and residents of Connecticut. No scoring procedures or standard deviations are reported for this test. The psychometric properties of the Gesell Test do not meet the standards of professional test development of the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1985).

The Metropolitan Readiness Test is another widely used readiness test. According to Bradley (1985), it is one of the technically best tests available. This test is intended to be used by teachers to help organize instruction and plan curriculum, not to sort children into ready or not-ready groups (Shepard & Smith, 1986). Authors of this test warn that as many as one-third of the children taking the test would be misidentified as "unready" if it were used for

kindergarten placement (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1989).

According to Meisels (1987) one of the major abuses of screening and readiness tests is the substitution of readiness tests for screening tests. Used in this manner, readiness tests lack predictive validity and, therefore, cannot be considered developmental screening tests (Meisels, 1987).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has issued a position on standardized testing of young children. The Association favors the ongoing assessment of children's development and learning for planning developmentally appropriate curriculum and individualized instruction. However, the Association applies rigorous standards for these tests. Tests must not only be valid and reliable but must also be used to benefit children in some way (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1989).

The Association supports the use of standardized tests when they are used to determine or screen children who need further diagnosis and treatment of a potential developmental difficulty, a health problem, or treatment of a potential learning problem. However, the Association opposes the use of a standardized test to determine "readiness" because the test is used for a reason other than the one for which it was designed. Denying access to schooling has been proven to be harmful to children (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1989).

Inherent linguistic and cultural biases when using readiness tests for screening and placement constitutes another problem. Because the tests cannot measure inherent or biological readiness,

children who do not have an English-language background and a great deal of experience with schooling are at a distinct disadvantage when taking the test (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1989).

Brandekamp and Shepard (1989) cite two reasons that using readiness tests for kindergarten entry or transitional placement is harmful. First, children are labeled as failures before they enter school. Rather than fitting the educational programs to meet the child's needs the child must conform to the educational programs.

Secondly, assignment of "ready" children to kindergarten encourages educators to push the curriculum "down". The average ability of the "ready" group will be higher than the average ability of the "unready" group. Thus, the expectations of the regular kindergarten and regular first grade will shift and become more like the expectations of the higher grade level (Brandekamp & Shepard, 1989).

Finally, Brandekamp and Shepard (1988) warned that young children deserve the best education possible but the use of standardized tests as the basic indicator of accountability is "ill-advised".

Summary

An overview of the history of early childhood education, importance of early childhood education, the elementary principal's role in early childhood education, the teacher's role in early childhood education, curriculum design for young children, and the

testing of young children was presented in this chapter. Numerous early childhood authorities' views of appropriate early childhood practice and curriculum as well as research in the field were reviewed. It was noted that elementary school principals have a great deal of influence on the elementary school program. Principals' roles were examined and steps for improvement of the curriculum were cited. The teacher's role in kindergarten is essential. These individuals have the exhausting task of planning both the indoor and outdoor environment, developing and implementing the curriculum, and monitoring children's behavior. Ongoing research supports the long range benefits of quality early childhood education programs for both the participants and society. The chapter was concluded by citing literature concerning testing instruments. It was noted that many times tests were intended for one purpose and used for another; misplacement and misdiagnosis were the result.

Research Questions Guiding the Study

The following is the rationale for the seven research questions which shall be examined in this study.

According to Young (1985), teachers have a different concept of the curriculum than do administrators. Teachers believe the administrators are lacking in the area of classroom expertise which, in the teachers' opinion, is necessary for appropriate development of curriculum. On the other hand, principals believe they are effectively dealing with the curriculum while teachers view the

administrators as spending more time and effort in dealing with plant management (Berlin et al., 1988). Herein lies an obvious difference of opinion concerning the curriculum.

In a 1982 study by Nicholson and Tracy, correlations were found between the educational level of educators and their attitudes toward the curriculum. Two other factors were found to influence the attitudes toward the current curriculum. These factors included the years of teaching experience and the years in the present position. All of these factors were found to have an effect upon the educators' attitudes toward the curriculum. While the grade level taught was also analyzed, no relationship was found in this study.

Two other factors which may affect the perception of the existing kindergarten curriculum were of particular interest to the researcher. These factors included the teacher certification of the educator completing the survey and the number of biological children aged from birth to age eight which the educators had.

While completing an administrative internship at an early childhood learning center, the researcher noticed friction between teachers who had early childhood certification and those who had elementary education certification. This phenomenon was also noticed in other settings such as staff development workshops and university classes where those educators with early childhood certification were grouped with educators who had elementary education certification. In discussing these observations with professional colleagues, the researcher found that she was not alone in these observations. This

factor became intriguing to the researcher and resulted in one of the seven research questions.

The second factor which was of particular interest to the researcher was the number of biological children which educators who were to be surveyed had. Many textbooks used in teacher education courses have a section concerning the involvement of parents in the classroom. These chapters encourage teachers to reach out to the parents and develop a classroom atmosphere where parents feel comfortable and a part of their child's learning. Therefore, if educators are encouraged to involve the parent of their school children would they strive to be involved and aware of the curriculum provided for their own children or would these individuals have a laissez faire attitude toward the existing kindergarten curriculum?

These aforementioned concerns and research served as the basis for the following research questions:

1. Is the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum congruent for these groups, (a) the elementary school principal; (b) the first grade teacher; and (c) the kindergarten teacher?
2. Does the type of certificate held by an individual affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?
3. Do the number of years taught in the elementary school affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?
4. Does the age of the respondents' own children affect their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?
5. Does the level of college degree affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

6. Do the number of years as an administrator affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

7. Does the number of years in a position affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to compare elementary principals', first grade teachers', and kindergarten teachers' views of the existing kindergarten curriculum in their schools. This chapter describes the research methodology and the procedures used for collection of data. Included are the development of the instrument, demographic tables, sampling of schools, and statistical treatment of the data.

Instrumentation

Kindergarten Curriculum Survey

Instrument

The instrument used to determine the educators' views of the kindergarten was developed using the Suggested Learner Outcomes written by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Statements were selected from the following areas: self-help, social skills, attending skills, work habits, creative skills, language skills, mathematics, motor skills, science, and social studies. The early childhood curriculum specialist from the Oklahoma State Department of Education helped in the selection of representative statements used.

A general information portion consisting of ten questions was included in the survey along with ten questions taken from Seefeldt's (1986) article, "How Good is Your Kindergarten?."

A jury of experts judged the items of the Kindergarten Survey Instrument as being representative of the information being gathered. The jury of experts consisted of one early childhood specialist, the early childhood curriculum specialist from the Oklahoma State Department of Education, a principal of an early childhood center in a public school, and an early childhood specialist from the home economics department at a regional university.

The jury of experts offered suggestions for improvement of the survey. Responses were analyzed and revisions were made in the instrument in order to clarify the desired information being requested.

A pilot study was conducted using the revised Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument. A total of 86 graduate students participated in the study. Participants were asked to offer suggestions for improvement of the questionnaire. These suggestions resulted in further revisions of the instrument.

The directions for completion of the survey instrument were on each page of the three page questionnaire and were self-explanatory. All responses were kept confidential.

The general information portion consisted of a checklist with three to five possibilities. Participants were asked to check the category which best described themselves such as elementary

principal, first grade teacher, or kindergarten teacher (See Appendix A).

On the second page, participants were asked to rank kindergarten objectives as to how closely they described the kindergarten curriculum in their school. These items consisted of specific objectives such as "the child completes personal tasks related to clothing". The number 1.00 was considered to most accurately describe the kindergarten curriculum at their school while a rating of 10.00 would least accurately describe the existing kindergarten curriculum at their school (See Appendix B).

The last page of the survey was taken from Seefeldt's (May, 1989) article in Principal. Respondents were to choose the supplied answer which best described the existing kindergarten curriculum at their school. For example, "Is there a dramatic play area in which children can dress up and 'make believe'?" (See Appendix C).

An analysis of variance was performed on all responses to the survey using the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" computer program. A Cochran's Chi Square and Bartlett's Chi Square were performed to test for homogeneity of variance. When a significant difference was determined, a Tukey HSD was performed to find where the significant differences lay.

Sample Selection

All of the 78 public elementary schools from the following Northeastern Oklahoma counties were sent surveys: Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, Sequoyah, and Wagoner. The total

number of surveys sent was 234 while the total number of schools surveyed was 78. Schools from this area were selected as being representative due to the fact that Oklahoma is basically a rural state with a few large cities, many school districts only offer grades kindergarten through eight, and the state has a largely agrarian economy. The relatively large population of these eight counties coupled with the facts that ten of the school districts surveyed were located in small cities with a population of more than 5,000, 31 of the schools surveyed only offered grades kindergarten through eight, and the agricultural economic base of the area surveyed, added to the appropriateness of the survey group.

Surveys were mailed to the elementary principals in these eight counties during the third week in November, 1989. A cover letter asked the administrator to complete a survey and then to give survey forms to one first grade teacher and to one kindergarten teacher. After completion of the survey, participants were then asked to mail the survey to the researcher in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Demographics

Biographical information was requested from each subject. This information aided in the development of the demographic variables for elementary principals, first grade teachers, and kindergarten teachers described in this study.

Three weeks after the initial mail-out, 117 forms were returned. A total of 37 principals, 36 first grade teachers, and 44 kindergarten teachers returned the questionnaire. A follow-up letter

was sent which resulted in a total of 180 surveys being returned.

A total of 74.36 percent of the elementary principals, 69.23 percent of the first grade teachers, and 76.92 percent of the kindergarten teachers returned the survey instrument. According to Gay (1981) if the percentage of questionnaire return is not at least 70 percent then the validity of conclusions will be weak. Twelve forms were discarded because they were either incomplete or filled out incorrectly.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data used to answer the research questions concerning the relationship of elementary principals', first grade teachers', and kindergarten teachers' views of the kindergarten curriculum in their school. The statistical measure used to determine the relationship was the one-way analysis of variance. The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program.

Examination of the Research Questions

Research Question 1

Is the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum congruent for these groups, (a) the elementary school principal; (b) the first grade teacher; or (c) the kindergarten teacher?

Significant differences were found on eight items of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey. No significant differences were found on the Seefeldt Survey; however, all scores were found to be low. Elementary principals scored a mean of 2.11, first grade teachers scored a mean of 2.12, and kindergarten teachers scored a

mean of 2.06 (See Table I). A score of ten was considered to be perfect.

TABLE I
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	2.11	2.23	.37
First Grade Teachers	55	2.18	1.67	.25
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.06</u>	<u>1.77</u>	<u>.25</u>
Total	167	2.12	1.87	.16

F ratio .05

Item three of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey dealt with the attentive behavior of a child in a group setting for 15 to 20 minutes provided the presentation was interesting. A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between the elementary principals who scored a mean of 3.63 with a standard deviation of 2.93 and kindergarten teachers who scored a mean of 3.24 with a standard deviation of 2.21 (Table II). The F ratio was 6.35.

TABLE II
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER THREE

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.63	2.93	.40
First Grade Teachers	55	3.24	2.21	.30
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.09</u>	<u>1.96</u>	<u>.26</u>
Total	167	2.97	2.46	.19

F ratio = 6.35
Significant at .05

Item four stated, "The child works independently and completes tasks". A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between first grade teachers and kindergarten teachers. The mean score for first grade teachers was 3.37 with a standard deviation of 2.35 while the kindergarten teachers' mean was 2.05 with a standard deviation of 1.73 (See Table III). The F ratio was 8.71.

Item five dealt with the child involving herself in activities which promoted self-expression. A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between first grade teachers and kindergarten teachers. The first grade teachers' mean was 3.33 with a standard deviation of 2.18 while the

mean for the kindergarten teachers was 2.33 with a standard deviation of 1.74 (See Table IV). The F ratio was 4.05.

TABLE III
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER FOUR

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.83	2.87	.39
First Grade Teachers	55	3.37	2.35	.32
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.05</u>	<u>1.73</u>	<u>.23</u>
Total	167	2.46	2.46	.19

F ratio = 8.71
Significant at .05

TABLE IV
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER FIVE

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.25	2.97	.31
First Grade Teachers	55	3.33	2.18	.30
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.33</u>	<u>1.74</u>	<u>.23</u>
Total	167	2.96	2.12	.16

F ratio = 4.05
Significant at .05

Item six stated the child paid attention and contributed relevant ideas in a conversation or group discussion. A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between the elementary principals and the first grade teachers. The elementary principals' mean was 3.18 with a standard deviation of 2.30 and the first grade teachers' mean was 3.23 with a standard deviation of 2.04 (See Table V).

TABLE V
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER SIX

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.18	2.30	.31
First Grade Teachers	55	3.23	2.04	.27
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.25</u>	<u>1.83</u>	<u>.24</u>
Total	167	2.88	2.10	.16

F ratio = 4.16
Significant at .05

Item seven stated that the child dictated personal experiences. A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between first grade teachers and kindergarten

teachers. The mean score for the first grade teachers was 4.07 with a standard deviation of 2.74 and the mean score for kindergarten teachers was 2.84 with a standard deviation of 2.74 (See Table VI). The F ratio was 3.27.

TABLE VI
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER SEVEN

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.15	2.37	.32
First Grade Teachers	55	4.07	2.74	.38
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.84</u>	<u>2.74</u>	<u>.36</u>
Total	167	3.34	2.66	.21

F ratio = 3.27
Significant at .05

Item eight dealt with left-to-right and top-to-bottom eye movement. Elementary principals' concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was significantly different from kindergarten teachers. Elementary administrators' mean was 3.39 with a standard deviation of 2.59 and kindergarten teachers' mean was 1.92 with a standard deviation of 1.79 (See Table VII). The F ratio was 6.23.

TABLE VII
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER EIGHT

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.39	2.59	.35
First Grade Teachers	55	2.70	2.19	.29
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>1.92</u>	<u>1.79</u>	<u>.23</u>
Total	167	2.65	2.27	.18

F ratio = 6.23
Significant at .05

Item 13 discussed the child's knowledge of spatial relations. Significant differences in the existing kindergarten curriculum were found between administrators and kindergarten teachers. The mean score for administrators was 3.09 with a standard deviation of 2.72 and the mean for kindergarten teachers was 1.71 with a standard deviation of 1.59 (See Table VIII). The F ratio was 5.85.

Item 16 dealt with the child classifying objects according to their common properties. Significant differences in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum were found between the first grade teachers and kindergarten teachers. First grade teachers' mean was 3.79 with a standard deviation of 2.78 while kindergarten teachers' mean was 2.52 with a standard deviation of 2.10 (See Table IX). The F ratio was 4.10.

TABLE VIII
 RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER THIRTEEN

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.09	2.72	.37
First Grade Teachers	55	2.50	2.03	.27
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>1.71</u>	<u>1.59</u>	<u>.21</u>
Total	167	2.41	2.21	.17

F ratio = 5.85
 Significant at .05

TABLE IX
 RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY QUESTION NUMBER SIXTEEN

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Principals	54	3.79	2.78	.38
First Grade Teachers	55	3.22	2.18	.29
Kindergarten Teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>2.52</u>	<u>2.10</u>	<u>.27</u>
Total	167	3.16	2.41	.19

F ratio = 4.10
 Significant at .05

Research Question 2

Does the type of certificate held by an individual affect their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

The Kindergarten Curriculum Survey showed no significant differences in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum between those educators who held administrator certificates, elementary certificates, or early childhood certificates. However, significant differences were found on the Seefeldt Survey. Early childhood certified teachers were significantly different from administrators and elementary certified teachers in their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum. Individuals who had an administrator's certificate mean score was 2.18 with a standard deviation of 2.15, individuals who held an elementary certificate mean score was 1.89 with a standard deviation of 1.48, and those who held an early childhood certificate mean score was 4.83 with a standard deviation of 2.00 (See Table X). Persons holding an administrator's certificate scored higher than those holding an elementary certificate.

Research Question 3

Do the number of years taught in elementary school affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found between those who had taught zero to five years and those who had taught 11 to 15 years. The mean

TABLE X
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY GROUPED BY CERTIFICATE

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Administrator Certificate	45	2.18	2.15	.34
Elementary Certificate	110	1.89	1.48	.16
Early Childhood Certificate	<u>6</u>	<u>4.83</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>1.22</u>
Total	167	2.11	1.87	.16

F ratio = 7.73
Significant at .05

score for those having taught zero to five years was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 2.70. The mean score for those having taught 11 to 15 years was 6.22 with a standard deviation of 3.06 (See Table XI). The F ratio was 3.01. No significant differences were found in the Seefeldt Survey.

Research Question 4

Does the age of the respondent's own children affect their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

No significant differences in the concept of the existing kindergarten were found in the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey or the Seefeldt Survey.

TABLE XI
 RESPONSES TO ITEM NINE OF THE KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM SURVEY
 GROUPED BY YEARS TAUGHT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
0 - 5 Years	44	4.04	2.70	.42
6 - 10 Years	35	5.31	3.02	.52
11 - 15 Years	33	6.22	3.06	.53
16 - 20 Years	30	5.72	3.19	.58
More than 20 Years	<u>25</u>	<u>5.81</u>	<u>3.13</u>	<u>.62</u>
Total	167	5.20	3.09	.24

F ratio = 3.01
 Significant at .05

Research Question 5

Does the level of college degree affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

No significant differences in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum were found in the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey. However, significant differences in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum were found on the Seefeldt Survey between those educators who held a master's degree and those educators who had a master's plus 30 hours of college work. The persons who had the master's only scored a mean of 1.54 with a

standard deviation of 1.56 while those who had a master's plus 30 hours scored a mean of 2.83 with a standard deviation of 2.61 (See Table XII). The F ratio was 4.18. The perfect score for this survey was ten. Therefore, those persons who held a master's plus 30 hours scored higher than those who had the master's only.

TABLE XII
RESPONSES TO SEEFELDT SURVEY GROUPED BY COLLEGE DEGREE

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Bachelor's Degree	67	2.03	1.43	.18
Master's Degree	56	1.54	1.56	.26
Master's Degree Plus 30 Hours	44	2.83	2.61	.48
Total	167	2.09	1.85	.16

F ratio = 4.18
Significant at .05

Research Question 6

Do the number of years as an administrator affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

No significant differences were found on the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey or the Seefeldt Survey.

Research Question 7

Does the number of years in a position at a school affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

A significant difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was found on one item of the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey. Item seven stated that the child dictated personal experiences. Educators who had been in the same position for more than 20 years scored significantly different from all other groups. These long-time educators' mean was 6.05 with a standard deviation of 3.80 (See Table XIII). The F ratio was 3.36. No significant differences were found on the Seefeldt Survey.

TABLE XIII

RESPONSES TO ITEM SEVEN OF THE KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM SURVEY GROUPED BY YEARS IN THE SAME POSITION

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
0 - 5 Years	63	2.95	2.65	.34
6 - 10 Years	45	3.27	2.50	.37
11 - 15 Years	30	3.23	2.00	.36
16 - 20 Years	18	3.48	2.66	.63
More than 20 Years	<u>11</u>	<u>6.05</u>	<u>3.80</u>	<u>1.15</u>
Total	167	3.35	2.70	.21

F ratio = 3.36

Significant at .05

Additional Analysis

The following additional analysis was derived from the survey instrument. The researcher believes the following information to be of importance and it was therefore included in the report of the findings.

The second page of the survey instrument consisted of suggested learner outcomes for kindergarten taken from the list of Suggested Learner Outcomes developed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education and was based on developmentally appropriate practices from NAEYC. The number "one" was considered to perfectly match the suggested learner outcome. It was interesting to note that the elementary principals' total mean for all 17 suggested learner outcomes was 3.02, first grade teachers' total mean was 3.52, and kindergarten teachers' total mean was 2.66. This result suggested that of the 17 suggested learner outcomes, first grade teachers were the farthest from the perfect score of 1.00. On three items the elementary principals, first grade teachers, and the kindergarten teachers scored greater than 4.00. These items included the use of invented spelling to write labels, sentences, and simple stories; the use and interpretation of graphs; and the comparison of likenesses and differences in countries and peoples.

The Seefeldt Survey yielded some more interesting information as illustrated in Table I. With a possible score of ten the means for all three groups were very low. Principals' mean was 2.11, first grade teachers' mean was 2.19, and kindergarten teachers' mean was

2.06. An analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in scores. The total mean for all three groups was 2.12.

Of the 79 educators who responded to the question concerning which developmental screening test was used in their school, 56 stated that their school district used the Gesell Screening Test. Thirty-five respondents stated the Brigance Readiness Test was used while five responded that the Children at Risk Test was used, and seven schools used the Missouri Kids Test.

Summary

Concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum were analyzed. Some significant differences between the elementary principals' and kindergarten teachers' concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum were found. Significant differences were also found between kindergarten teachers' and first grade teachers' concept of current kindergarten curriculum.

Educators who held early childhood certification scored significantly higher on the Seefeldt Survey than those who held administrative or elementary education certificates. However, with only six educators holding the certificate this would be a somewhat suspect conclusion (Table X). The number of years taught in the present position also proved to be significant. Those educators who had taught in the same position for more than 20 years scored significantly lower on the Seefeldt Survey than any other group (See Table XI).

Educators who had a master's degree scored significantly different on the Seefeldt Survey from those who had a masters' degree and 30 additional hours (Table XII). Those educators with the 30 or more hours scored closer to the perfect score.

The number of children educators had between the ages of birth through eight made no difference in the concept of the kindergarten curriculum nor did the number of years spent as an administrator. Additional analysis revealed the mean of the first grade teachers to be farthest from the perfect score of "one" on the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey (See Table XIV). However on the Seefeldt Survey where ten is considered to be a perfect score, elementary principals scored higher than first grade teachers or kindergarten teachers (See Table I).

TABLE XIV

TOTAL MEAN FOR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS, FIRST GRADE TEACHERS,
AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS ON KINDERGARTEN
CURRICULUM SURVEY

Group	Mean
Principals	4.65
First Grade Teachers	5.79
Kindergarten Teachers	4.23

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The major purpose of this study was to determine if a difference occurred between the views of the existing kindergarten curriculum held by the elementary principal, first grade teacher, and kindergarten teacher. The available literature concerning the kindergarten curriculum has been broad in concept and little specific information about perceptions of the kindergarten curriculum has been published. Literature pertinent to early childhood education was reviewed.

The Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument was developed from a selection of the Suggested Learner Outcomes for Kindergarten from the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Ten questions from a survey written by Seefeldt (1989) were also included. Educators compared their kindergarten curriculum with the 27 items on the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument. The general information of the survey was developed to gather information which might affect educators' concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum.

The subjects of the study consisted of all elementary principals, first grade teachers who were given the survey by the principal, and kindergarten teachers who were given the survey by the principal in Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa,

Sequoyah, and Wagoner counties in northeastern Oklahoma. Data were gathered through an instrument mailed to each elementary principal in the eight counties. Seven research questions were examined. The statistical measure used to determine differences was the one-way analysis of variance. The surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program.

Findings

This section will review the findings as they relate to the research questions.

Research Question 1: Is the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum compatible for these groups: (a) the elementary school principal; (b) the first grade teacher; and (c) the kindergarten teacher?

1. The differences between kindergarten teachers' concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum and the first grade teachers' concepts were significantly different.

2. The differences between elementary principals' concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum and the kindergarten teachers' concepts were significantly different.

Research Question 2: Does the type of certificate held by an individual affect their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

2. Teachers with early childhood certification scored somewhat better than those educators who held administrator certification or elementary certification.

Research Question 3: Do the number of years taught in elementary school affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

4. The concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was significantly different for those teachers who taught zero to 5 years from those who had taught 11 to 15 years.

Research Question 4: Does the age of the respondent's children affect their concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

5. Having children from birth to age eight made no difference in the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum.

Research Question 5: Does the level of college degree affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

6. The level of college degree made no significant difference except between those individuals who had a master's degree and those who had a master's degree plus 30 additional hours of college work.

Research Question 6: Do the number of years as an administrator affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

7. The number of years as an administrator did not significantly alter the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum.

Research Question 7: Does the number of years in a position at a school affect the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum?

8. Educators who had been in a position for more than 20 years had a significantly different concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum than those with less tenure. Those educators who had been in the same position for more than 20 years had perceptions of the

existing kindergarten curriculum that were less congruent with the Seefeldt Survey than any other group.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there are some significant differences between first grade teachers' and kindergarten teachers' concepts of the existing kindergarten curriculum. These findings may be explained by the differences in perceptions of what kindergarteners need to "know". This incompatibility in the expectations of children could also explain the perceived need for many of the transitional or developmental first grades. This finding refuted that of the Nicholson and Tracy (1982) study in which the grade level taught had no bearing on attitudes toward the curriculum.

Consistent with Young's (1985) report that teachers and administrators have different views of the curriculum, first grade teachers' and elementary school principals' perception of the existing kindergarten curriculum were significantly different. These differences may be explained by the fact that many principals' teaching experience was at the upper elementary grade level or at the secondary level. Therefore, such administrators would have very little direct knowledge of appropriate kindergarten curriculum.

The mean score for all three groups on the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey was 3.07 with 1.00 being a perfect score. This indicates that kindergartens in northeastern Oklahoma are perceived by these educators to be doing fairly well in achieving the Suggested Learner Outcomes listed in the survey. However, the mean score

mean score of all three groups on the Seefeldt Survey was very low. Ten was considered to be a perfect score on this survey and the mean for all three groups was 2.11. According to this factor, the kindergartens in northeastern Oklahoma are not completely adequate. This finding leads to the conclusion that while kindergarten classrooms are meeting some of the Suggested Learner Outcomes they fail on a broader scale in terms of early childhood philosophy.

With only six educators in its sample holding early childhood certification, it is difficult to conclude that significant differences exist between educators who have early childhood certification and those with elementary education certification or administrative certification. However, this finding was congruent with the researcher's observations of educators who held elementary education certification and early childhood certification. University coursework which is required for elementary education certification must cover nine grade levels and kindergarten is often "lumped" into primary grade level methods. This is unfortunate because kindergarten should be a very different learning experience from that of first, second, or third grades. According to Peck, McCaig, and Sapp (1988), the purpose of kindergarten is to promote children's development while first graders focus on very different skills and thinking abilities (Foreman & Kushner, 1983).

It is interesting to note that educators with elementary administrator certification scored better than those who just held elementary certification. This finding may be due to the additional hours required for elementary certification or to the recency of

attending a university to complete the hours needed for certification.

The finding that the concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum was significantly different for teachers who taught zero to five years from those who taught 11 to 15 years may be explained by the fact that teacher training institutions are doing a better job of teaching developmentally appropriate methods which meet the Kindergarten Suggested Learner Outcome as written by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Perhaps teachers who have taught 11 to 15 years are not finding time to read professional journals or attend professional meetings in order to keep up with newer trends in teaching. Another possible explanation may be that teachers who have been in the teaching profession for a longer period of time are not as enthusiastic or as willing to take risks as those who are new to the profession. School districts may not be conducting appropriate in-service training for primary teachers. This finding was also supported by the Nicholson and Tracy (1982) study.

The finding that the age of the respondent's own children had no effect on the perception of the existing kindergarten curriculum was the most surprising finding in the study. Parents of children are usually interested in the child's growth, development, and acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, it would seem that educators who were parents of children ages birth through age eight would be more sensitive to and ware of developmentally appropriate practices of kindergarten. It is further problematic that these individuals are not only parents of young children but are also educators whose

job it is to be cognizant of the best methods for educating young children.

Perhaps teachers trust their colleagues' ability to develop appropriate kindergarten curriculum and by putting faith in these teachers, parents are not attending to the available literature pertaining to developmentally appropriate curriculum. However, it would seem that educators who are concerned about not only their own children but also the improvement of themselves as professionals would be more aware of current curriculum concerns.

Another possible explanation may be that parents of young children do not have large blocks of time in which they would be able to review current professional literature. The hectic schedule of a working parent may be part of the cause for this lack of awareness.

The finding that the level of college degree affects educators' perception of the curriculum is supported by the Nicholson and Tracy (1982) study. Possible explanations for the findings in this study could be the recent initiation of the early childhood graduate programs at regional universities. Another possible explanation would lie in the possibility that these educators may have taken coursework after obtaining the master's degree which applied toward the early childhood certificate.

The findings that the number of years as an administrator did not affect the perception of the existing kindergarten curriculum may be explained by the fact that, to obtain an elementary administrator's certificate in the State of Oklahoma, coursework in early childhood education is not required. Perhaps, administrators

are too involved in other administrative activities to keep abreast of current early childhood literature.

Human beings tend to feel secure in routine. However, these routines may not always be the best for all concerned. This factor may explain the finding that educators in the same position had significantly different perceptions of the existing kindergarten curriculum than all other groups. Perhaps teachers with 20 or more years in the same position are not interested in new methodology or believe they are more competent and less threatened when using the same methods which have proven to be successful in their eyes. This finding was consistent with those of the Nicholson and Tracy (1982) study.

Additional analysis suggested that kindergartens in northeastern Oklahoma were perceived to be meeting the Suggested Learner Outcomes for kindergarten, developed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education with a good degree of accuracy. Perhaps these educators had reviewed the Suggested Learner Outcomes previously and when completing the survey they were influenced so as to describe the existing kindergarten curriculum at their school as being congruent with the statements. Possibly the respondents were accurate in their description of the current kindergarten curriculum.

However, when the Seefeldt Survey was analyzed, this analysis revealed that the kindergartens in northeastern Oklahoma were not perceived to be meeting the guides of a developmentally appropriate kindergarten as described by Dr. Carol Seefeldt, a recognized early childhood education authority. Educators' average of 3.03 out of a

possible ten points suggested that kindergarten curriculum needs to be changed.

The great difference in the educators' scores on the two surveys raises several issues. Are the educators professing one method and yet teaching another? Perhaps, the Suggested Learner Outcomes were recognized and in turn, educators agreed with them for that reason.

An overwhelming majority of those who responded to the question concerning the screening test used for admittance to kindergarten responded that their school district used the Gesell Readiness Test. As reviewed in Chapter II, this test lacks not only validity but also reliability. However, the popularity of using this test in northeastern Oklahoma may be due to the presence of several teachers who have received the Gesell Test administration instruction and are adamant about the usefulness of this test.

When questioned about the lack of reliability and validity the teachers to whom the researcher has spoken stated that the test was renormed "two or three years ago". However, the researcher was not able to find evidence of this. Other teachers seemed to dismiss the lackings of the test and stated that it did not really matter because it "worked".

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study indicated the need for further research related to:

1. Repetition of the study following the 1995-96 school year when all kindergarten teachers in the State of Oklahoma are required

to have early childhood certification.

2. Repetition of the study to compare the different geographic areas of the state using a larger population.

3. Repetition of the study using a metropolitan population.

4. Conduct a study comparing the existing kindergarten curriculum with the NAEYC developmentally appropriate guidelines.

5. Conduct a study comparing the elementary principals', first grade teachers', and kindergarten teachers' concept of the existing kindergarten curriculum with consideration of the size of the school district.

6. Conduct a study of the perceptions of elementary school principals, first grade teachers, and kindergarten teachers using the interview method.

7. Conduct an ethnographic study of the kindergarten curriculum comparing various kindergarten classrooms.

8. Conduct an observational study of the current kindergarten curriculum in comparison with NAEYC developmentally appropriate practices.

9. Conduct an observational study of the current kindergarten curriculum in comparison with the Suggested Learner Outcomes for Kindergarten written by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

10. Conduct an observational study of the current kindergarten curriculum in comparison with the Seefeldt (1989) article "How Good is Your Kindergarten?"

Recommendations for Kindergarten Practices

Based on the review of the literature and research conducted for this study, the author makes the following recommendations:

1. Elementary administrator certification should include coursework in early childhood education.
2. Early childhood certification should be required for all teachers teaching N-third grade.
3. Ongoing early childhood staff development for primary grade teachers should be required.
4. There should be coordination of the kindergarten curriculum with other elementary grades to insure continuity.
5. Graduate programs should be revised to focus on recent research in early childhood education.

Controversy continues over the kindergarten curriculum and differing opinions over content, methodology, and the omnipresent testing rage. However, most educators agree that kindergarten is of vital importance and that the future of our society may depend upon how well or poorly we deal with and resolve the conflict facing modern early childhood education.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

GENERAL INFORMATION SURVEY CHECKLIST

General Information

DIRECTIONS: Please enter one check mark for each appropriate statement. All information will be treated as confidential.

1. Present position: Principal _____ First Grade Teacher _____
Kindergarten Teacher _____
2. Years in present position: 0-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____
16-20 _____ More than 20 _____
3. Ages of the children in your family: Number of children:
0-2 _____ _____
3-5 _____ _____
6-8 _____ _____
4. Highest degree held: Bachelor's _____ Master's _____
Master's + 30 _____ Ed. Spec. _____
Doctorate _____
5. Year last degree was obtained: 1989-1984 _____ 1983-1978 _____
1977-1972 _____ 1971-1965 _____ 1964-1958 _____
Before 1958 _____
6. Type of certificate(s) held please check all which are applicable:
elementary administrator _____ elementary teacher _____
early childhood teacher _____
7. Number of years taught in Elementary (K-8):
0-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____
More than 20 _____
8. Number of years taught in Secondary (9-12):
0-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____
More than 20 _____

9. Years as a teacher:

0-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____

More than 20 _____

10. Years as an administrator:

0-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____

More than 20 _____

APPENDIX B

KINDERGARTEN SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Kindergarten Survey Instrument

Listed below are some kindergarten objectives. Please rank each item as to how closely it describes the kindergarten curriculum at your school. You may use any number between 1.00 and 10.00 (i.e. 4.89, 2.2, 8.09 etc.). The number 1.00 is considered to most accurately describe the kindergarten curriculum at your school and 10.00 would least accurately describe the kindergarten curriculum at your school.

1. The child completes personal tasks related to clothing.
Rank: _____
2. The child works and plays in large and small groups.
Rank: _____
3. The child demonstrates attentive behavior in a group setting for a period of 15 to 20 minutes provided presentation is interesting and varied.
Rank: _____
4. The child works independently and completes tasks.
Rank: _____
5. The child involves himself or herself in a variety of activities which promote self-expression.
Rank: _____
6. The child pays attention and contributes ideas that are relevant in a conversation or group discussion.
Rank: _____
7. The child dictates personal experiences.
Rank: _____
8. The child demonstrates left-to-right and top-to-bottom eye movement when completing appropriate activities.
Rank: _____
9. The child uses invented spelling to write labels, sentences, and simple stories.
Rank: _____

10. The child identifies and names the four basic shapes (circle, square, rectangle, and triangle).

Rank: _____

11. The child constructs a set of objects and names its common properties.

Rank: _____

12. The child makes, interprets, and explains a simple graph.

Rank: _____

13. The child demonstrates a knowledge of spatial relations by naming locations such as above, over, on top of, behind, or over.

Rank: _____

14. The child follows oral directions and demonstrates with his or her body the basic locomotor movements.

Rank: _____

15. The child demonstrates hand and eye coordination while manipulating activities such as strings, beads, works with pegs at a pegboard.

Rank: _____

16. The child observes, describes, and classifies objects according to their common properties.

Rank: _____

17. The child compares cultures and determines likenesses and differences in countries and peoples.

Rank: _____

APPENDIX C

**SEEFELDT'S PORTION OF KINDERGARTEN SURVEY
INSTRUMENT**

Please provide the answer which best describes the kindergarten at your school.

1. How many kindergarten teachers hold specialized degrees in early childhood education?
 - a. 100% - 76%
 - b. 75% - 51%
 - c. 50% - 26%
 - d. 25% - 0%
2. How many centers of interest are in any one kindergarten classroom?
 - a. 0-3
 - b. 4-7
 - c. 8-10
 - d. More than 10
3. Is there a dramatic play area in which children can dress up and "make believe"?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
4. Is there a focus on rules of behavior? For example, are children always expected to raise their hands before speaking?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
5. What is the average age of kindergarten children at midyear?
 - a. 6 1/2
 - b. 6
 - c. 5 1/2
6. How often do kindergarten children take walking field trips in the school building or neighborhood?
 - a. once a week
 - b. once a month
 - c. once or twice a year
7. Are children taught to recognize all 26 letters of the alphabet, both lower and upper case, and to make letter-sound correspondence?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

8. How many children fail kindergarten and are placed in some other program before attending first grade?
 - a. none
 - b. less than 20%
 - c. more than 20%

9. How many poems, songs, or finger plays should a kindergarten child know by the end of the year?
 - a. 0-6
 - b. 7-12
 - c. More than 12

10. Before children are permitted to attend kindergarten, must they pass a test of some type of developmental screening to guarantee that they can do the work successfully?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

11. If children must pass some type of developmental screening, please list the name of the screening device used in your school.

APPENDIX D

LETTERS

Dear Educator:

As a part of my work for the doctorate degree in education at Oklahoma State University, I am conducting a study of kindergarten curriculum in Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, Sequoyah, and Wagoner counties. I would appreciate you taking about fifteen minutes of your time to provide some general information about yourself and completing the Kindergarten Curriculum Survey Instrument as it relates to your school district and its existing kindergarten curriculum. If you desire a summary of this study, please make a notation of your name and school district on the last page of the questionnaire.

YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Jana Mann Sanders, Assist. Prof.
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
Northeastern State University
Tahlequah, Ok 74464

Dear Administrator:

Please complete one of the survey instruments yourself and give one to a first grade teacher and one to a kindergarten teacher. Thank you very much for your time.

Jana M. Sanders

November, 1989

Dear Educator:

Two weeks ago you were sent a survey concerning the kindergarten curriculum at your school. If you have not completed and mailed your copy of the survey please take a few minutes and do so. Your time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jana Mann Sanders, Assist. Prof
Elem. Educ. and Early Childhood Educ.
Northeastern State University

VITA

Jana Mann Sanders

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM: A COMPARISONAL STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, THE FIRST GRADE TEACHER, AND THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER IN EIGHT NORTHEASTERN COUNTIES IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Poteau, Oklahoma, November 11, 1956, the daughter of Mitchel and Ruth Mann.

Education: Graduated from Tahlequah High School, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in May 1975; received Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in December, 1979; received the Master of Science degree in Elementary Education from Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in May, 1981; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1990.

Professional Experience: Elementary Teacher, Muskogee Public Schools, Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1979; Elementary Teacher, Broken Arrow Public Schools, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1979-1984; Preschool Teacher, Fort Gibson Public Schools, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, 1985-1986; Middle School Teacher, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 1986-87; Assistant Professor of Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, 1987-Present.

Professional Organizations: National Education Association, Oklahoma Education Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children, Southern Association for Children Under Six, Oklahoma Association for Childhood Education International, Oklahoma Association of Childhood Education International Phi Delta Kappa.