

“Forming Meaningful Relationships with each Child”:
Examining the Impact of the Two-by-Ten Guidance Strategy on Preservice Interns

By

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“FORMING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH
EACH CHILD”:
EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF THE TWO-BY-TEN
GUIDANCE STRATEGY ON PRESERVICE INTERNS

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Abstract: Early Childhood and Elementary preservice teachers are ill equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully teach the children in their classrooms. Preservice interns do not feel confident in the guidance and classroom management strategies they have been taught in preservice programs upon graduation. Relationship building is a type of positive, proactive guidance strategy to reduce conflict in the classroom. Research and preservice intern programs support and encourage relationship building; however, preservice interns do not get much experience with these types of strategies prior to graduation. The Two-by-Ten guidance strategy is used to help teachers and interns building relationships with the students in their classroom and reduce the amount of conflict. The current study aims to examine the outcomes and changes in level of closeness and conflict between PSI and student after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy. The researcher first reviews the literature regarding guidance strategies and preservice interns’ preparedness to handle classroom conflict. Next, the researcher uses the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) to examine the change in measure of closeness and conflict between PSI and student before the Two-by-Ten strategy was implemented to after the strategy was implemented. The researcher used a grounded theory lens to identify emergent themes from the preservice interns’ reflections of the project. Lastly, the researcher identifies strengths and weakness of the current study and discusses implications and proposes future directions in the field.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

In early childhood classrooms across the nation, teachers struggle to meet the educational and behavioral needs of at least one student in their classroom. As a teacher, it is in our nature to exhaust the techniques and strategies we were taught in our preservice intern (PSI) courses to handle behavioral concerns in our classrooms. However, what happens when these strategies do not address problems in the classrooms? For years, researchers have studied how relationship building and bonding strategies improve relationships between people. This concept has been researched and applied from an educational perspective, as well. Applied research refers to research that aims to develop and implement or test interventions or strategies that can be used to improve practice (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). Copple and Bredekamp (2009) believe that in order to be an excellent teacher, one must be intentional with everything they do. The first and most important intentional, applied practice highlighted by the authors is to create a “caring community of learners” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 35). In order to do this, teachers must make a point to get to know each and every student in their class, as well as their families.

The first step in forming a relationship with another person is initiating a conversation with them. Espinoza (2012) suggests talking with students about their individual and family lives in order to get to know them on a more personal level. In doing so, teachers can get to know their students’ likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, and plan activities that focus the individual child’s creativity and spark learning. Teachers must understand each child’s personality, abilities,

interests, and ways of learning. When teachers understand the students in their classroom, they are better able to meet each child's guidance, academic, social, and developmental needs.

Intentional teachers make an effort to form warm, positive, trusting relationships with each child, making communication and understanding easier for both the teacher and child. Teachers can ask questions to learn about changes in the student's home environment that could be causing the child stress. These changes may generate behavior challenges from the child when they are at school. This is also a good time to observe and learn about triggers that set off the child's anger or disruptive behavior in hopes to prevent these triggers from happening (Newberry, 2010).

With the ever increasing number of demands on academia in the classroom, teachers scarcely have time to get to know each of their students on an individual level, develop a relationship, and gain knowledge about the backgrounds from which their students come. Students may feel as though they do not know their teachers and their teachers know nothing about them. In order to be a quality educator and role model, teachers must take the time to develop reciprocal relationships with their students and gain a respectful understanding of where their students come from. Preservice teachers must be trained and experienced in implementing strategies, and experience the effects of these strategies to form and maintain trusting partnerships with their students in order to be effective educators. This study builds upon current research regarding relationship building between teacher and student and how the formation of a relationship affects the child's behavior in the classroom. This study extends the current research to include preservice teachers' experiences in building relationships with students.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the development of preservice Early Childhood Education (ECE) interns' relationships with children in their field experiences using

the guidance strategy “Two-by-Ten” in a mixed methods research study design. The Two-by-Ten strategy requires teachers to spend two minutes a day talking to and getting to know students for ten consecutive opportunities. The Two-by-Ten strategy was developed by educator and psychologist, Raymond Wlodkowski. The current research is significant due to the sheer importance of developing guidance strategies to build relationships between preservice interns and their students. This information will provide future classroom teachers with one possible strategy to build relationships with their students in order to get to know the personalities and specific needs of each student and gain a better understanding of each student’s background. Knowing and understanding more about each individual child will help teachers to identify and work through classroom behavior issues as individualized occurrences rather than using generic guidance strategies that do not work for every child.

Research Questions

The three research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1: Is there a change in the closeness measure between the preservice intern and the focus children after the Two-by-Ten strategy has been implemented?

Research Question 2: Is there a change in the conflict measure between the preservice intern and focus children after the Two-by-Ten strategy has been implemented?

Research Question 3: What themes emerge from the preservice intern’s reflections over their experiences with the Two-by-Ten strategy?

Key Terms

The following key terms are found throughout the current research.

Preservice Interns (PSI): Students enrolled in a teacher preparation program with the intention to attain a degree in the field of early childhood education.

Strategy: Refers to methods used to help students learn the desired course content, be able to develop achievable goals in the future, or guide students to develop decision making skills.

Student-Teacher Relationship: The relationship between teacher and student, characterized by varying levels of closeness, conflict, and dependency.

Two-by-Ten Guidance Strategy: A classroom strategy implemented by a teacher who spends two minutes a day for ten consecutive days talking with and getting to know a student with the intention of forming and developing a relationship.

Closeness: The degree of affection, warmth, and open communication. In the Student Teacher Relationship Scale, high levels of closeness indicate the student uses the teacher as a source of support. Also, the teacher feels he or she is being effective and is confident that the student is well.

Conflict: The degree of negativity and conflictual experiences. In the Student Teacher Relationship Scale, high levels of conflict indicate that the teacher struggles with the student and may feel emotionally drained and ineffective. The teacher perceives the student as angry or unpredictable.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Developing a strong, trusting relationship with another person takes time and commitment. All humans have an internal desire to connect with another person, especially to those who provide for and take care of them (Bowlby, 1969). The current research is influenced by two primary theories: Attachment theory and Ecological Systems theory. Attachment theory is a vital underpinning to the development of teacher – student relationships. Another theory that plays an important role in this topic is Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems theory, which suggests that layers of outside factors, as well as heredity, influence child growth and development of relationships with others in their life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Attachment Theory

From the time children are born, they have a strong desire and need to develop a secure, trusting relationship with an adult caregiver in order to learn, develop, and survive, which is the central tenet of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969). Attachment can be described as a strong bond formed with an important person whom someone enjoys being with. A person experiences joy in seeing or seeks out comfort from the person to whom they are attached (Berk, 2012). However, attachment to another individual is not molded easily or automatically; it is formed with time, patience, and effort.

During infancy, children test their caregiver to see if they will be able to trust them by crying out for their caregiver and awaiting a response. Once the child has learned they are able to trust their caregiver, they begin to open up more to their caregiver. Next, they favor their

caregiver over others and have a yearning to be close to them. The child will become upset and protest when the caregiver whom they are attached to leaves but will become comforted and filled with delight upon their caregivers return. This is known as secure attachment (Berk, 2012). Children who have a secure attachment with a caregiver will feel more confident to explore, grow, and initiate or reciprocate social interactions with peers (Bredekamp, 2014). While the attachment theory was conceptualized with the parent – child relationship in mind, research shows that this theory is applicable to the teacher – student relationship in the classroom. In fact, many teacher preparation books consider forming a strong relationship with students to be a necessary and effective practice when teaching young children (Bredekamp, 2014; Copple & Bredekamp, 2014; Couse & Recchia, 2016; Fields, 2014; Petersen & Wittmer, 2013).

While developing a secure attachment with a caregiver is an important goal with any parent – child relationship, this does not always occur. Other forms of attachment include avoidant, resistant, or disorganized/disoriented attachment. Some children form avoidant attachments in which children are unresponsive to the parent when he or she is present. The child demonstrating an avoidant attachment usually does not get upset when the parent leaves and is avoidant or slow to greet the parent when they return (Berk, 2013). Another type of attachment is resistant attachment. Children with resistant attachments cling to the parent and do not explore their environment before their parent leaves. After the parent leaves, the child usually becomes distressed. When the parent returns, the child may cling to the parent and become angry, struggle when being held, push or kick, and remain distressed for a period of time (Berk, 2013). Children with the greatest insecurity in their parent – child relationship have formed a disorganized/disoriented attachment. Children with this type of attachment may appear confused,

dazed, or depressed upon reunion with their parent. They express flat emotion or may even cry out unexpectedly after having calmed down (Berk, 2013).

When teacher – student relationships are examined from an attachment perspective, many similarities between this relationships and the parent – child relationships emerge. Characteristics of the parent – child relationship, such as security, affection, comfort seeking, separation-reunion behaviors, and sensitivity, have been seen in teacher – student relationships (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). However, the teacher – student bond differs from the parent – child bond because the parent – child bond is enduring, is not interchangeable, and is not always considered as an attachment bond. If the child has a stable home environment and is securely attached to a parent, the child is less likely to form a strong attachment bond with their teacher (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). This does not mean they do not form a meaningful relationship with their teacher, it simply means the relationship with a securely attached child will most likely be different than a relationship with a vulnerable child. The term vulnerable child refers to a child who has experienced some type of adversity in their life, whether it directly affects the child or their family (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). The teacher – student relationship has the potential to have a stronger and longer enduring effect on a vulnerable child because the relationship is necessary to their survival and efforts to thrive (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012).

Bioecological Systems Theory

When we think about child development, we typically think of the ages and stages children go through as they grow. Sometimes, we think about the child’s upbringing: the parenting style that was used or who raised them. These are important factors in the growth and development of who a person becomes. There are many other influences in a person’s life that shape them into whom they will become. Urie Bronfenbrenner proposed a theoretical perspective of human development that considers the developing person, the environment surrounding that

person, and the changing interaction between the person and their environment to further explain his own understanding of human development known as the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory looks at child development within the context of complex layers of systems in the child's surroundings that influence his or her development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes this theory as "a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian (nesting) dolls" (p. 3). Each layer in the child's environment interacts with the child's growth and development to influence the person they will become. The Ecological Systems theory has been renamed the Bioecological Systems theory to encompass the important role the child's own biology has in influencing the growth and development of the child.

The first layer described by Bronfenbrenner, the layer closest to the child, is the microsystem. The microsystem encompasses the people who come in direct contact with the child or things in the child's immediate surroundings that are considered bi-directional influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This system includes the child's family, school, neighborhood, friends, and molar activities. Molar activities refer to forms of behavior exhibited by the developing person or behavior exhibited by others that have direct influence on the environment of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The bi-directional nature of these structures refers to the give and take between the child and the people included in this system. The people with whom the child is friends with have an influence on the way the child behaves and the things they believe, but the child also has influence on the way their friends behave and what they believe. This layer also includes the activities and social roles experienced by the child, any face-to-face interactions that take place (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The second layer is the mesosystem which provides a connection between the structures of the child's microsystem. The mesosystem is a "system of microsystems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 40). The mesosystem is the layer where all aspects of the child's microsystem interact. The same child has connections with multiple settings in which they are active members. As a child moves through the multiple settings of his environment, he engages in ecological transitions – a transition from one setting to another. Essentially, it is the link between the child's parents and friends or the child's neighborhood and teacher. Within this layer, it is common to have supplementary links. These links are the people connected to the child who are active in more than one setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, a child makes a friend in their class and invites them over for a play date. The child's friend is active in both the school environment and the home environment.

The exosystem is the third layer is larger than the previous systems. The child is an inactive participant in the exosystem. The events which take place here still have influence over the child's development. The events in the exosystem do not directly affect the child's development but affect the child indirectly through a series of steps (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The child can also indirectly affect the aspects in the exosystem through a reverse series of steps. For example, the work schedule of the child's parents is included in this system because, while the parent's work schedule does not directly affect the child, it does impact the child's daily life or even influence the child's daily routine. The extracurricular activities of the child's siblings is also included as an aspect of the exosystem because sporting events or club meetings can influence the child's regular routine.

The next layer in the ecological systems theory is the macrosystem, which is considered the outermost layer of the child's environment. This layer encompasses cultural customs, values,

and laws. This layer also includes the class, ethnicity, and culture the child or the child's family identifies with (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The functions in this layer have a rippling effect throughout each layer of the child's environment. This layer is thought of as the "societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 40). The mechanisms of this system are often examined and considered important when looking at research involving human participants. For example, Bassok and Reardon (2013) found academic redshirting – the practice of delaying a child's kindergarten entry one year with the intention to give the child an extra year to mature socially and academically – to be most prevalent among White, upper class families. The researchers in this study strongly considered aspects of the child's macrosystem to be influential in the predicting if they would or would not be redshirted (Bassok & Reardon, 2013).

The final layer is the chronosystem, which represents time. This refers to timing of certain events that have an influence on the child. This could be the time the child starts formal schooling, the timing of the death of parents or grandparents, or the timing the child goes through a developmental change. The early years of a child's life have significant influence on the child's growth and development throughout life. The majority of brain development and milestones occur in the first 5 years of a child's life. The chronosystem is a crucial part of human development.

The current state of education today falls within the chronosystem. The Oklahoma State Department of Education currently puts a heavy emphasis on the testing of students. Oklahoma students are expected to pass state mandated tests over core content with the first test beginning as young as 3rd grade. Classroom teachers often struggle to focus on each individual student, build a relationship, and meet their needs because they are anxious about the state mandated tests

that lie ahead. Although kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade teachers are not directly impacted by state mandated testing in their grades, they do feel the stress and pressure due to the high expectations of preparing students to move onto the following grade (Reid, 2010). Teachers are unable to focus solely on helping their students reach the academic goals for their current grade because they have to focus so much on preparing them for the next grade or state-mandated test. When teachers are anxious in the classroom, it creates an unhealthy, anxiety ridden, non-learning conducive environment (Reid, 2010).

While all systems impact a child's life, the system which primarily impacts and supports this research is the microsystem. Classroom teachers are included in the inner most layer of this system, the microsystem, because teachers affect the child's growth and development a great deal. School-age children spend the majority of their waking hours in the presence of their classroom teachers. The nature of the teacher-child relationship is a key aspect on the positive or negative effect the teacher has on the child. Due to the amount of time children spend with their classroom teachers, it is vital that the teacher and child develop a positive, supportive relationship. Getting to know students on a more personal level can give teachers insight into the complex layers that make up each child's bioecological system. The more a teacher learns about the child's bioecological system, specifically the microsystem, the more understanding and supportive that teacher can be in helping the child reach their full potential (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The formation of relationships between students and teachers is vitally important to both the teacher's and student's success in school. When students have a good relationship with their teacher, they are more likely to ask questions, request help when needed, and explore their own creativity using the teacher as a support system (Espinoza, 2012). When students do not have good relationships with their classroom teacher, they may fall behind in either academic or social development. Likewise, if teachers do not form relationships with their students, they will be unable to meet each student's specific learning needs or interests. When teachers work on forming relationships with each and every one of their students, they are able to better understand where each child is coming from, how they best learn, and what their individual goals are. Research indicates that time spent with children contributes to the formation of a close personal relationship between students and their teachers (Espinoza, 2012; Newberry, 2010; Quan-McGimpsey, Kuczynski & Brophy, 2011; Quan-McGimpsey, Marziliano, Hassen, Brown, & Kuczynski, 2015).

In this section, positive relationships between teachers and students, effective guidance and classroom management strategies, how preservice interns are prepared to use guidance strategies and form relationships with students, and Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale will be examined.

Guidance and Classroom Management Strategies

In the early years, children need the opportunity to learn how to interact and form relationships with teachers and peers; develop prosocial behavior (caring, sharing, and helping others); control aggression and other challenging behaviors (frustration, hitting, kicking, etc.); and develop a sense of self in relation to others (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). One way teachers can support the growth of social development is through effective guidance and classroom management strategies. Guidance refers to teacher strategies that oversee student behavior, student interactions, and learning (Martin & Sass, 2010). Some aspects of classroom management include, but are not limited to: arrangement of classroom furniture, maintaining routines, creating classroom rules, engaging and maintaining students' attention, and creating socialization opportunities (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Guidance in the classroom refers more to techniques or strategies that are selected and properly implemented by teachers. In order for a strategy or practice to be effective, it must create effects on student success that are replicable and predictable (Cooper & Scott, 2017). Teachers who address misbehavior in the classroom reactively may use assertive discipline techniques to establish, regain, or maintain control. Proactive guidance and classroom management strategies are strategically implemented by the teacher to create a positive classroom environment where rules and expectations are clearly defined (Korpershoek, Harms, Boer, Kuijk, & Doolaard, 2016). Teachers who use prevention/proactive strategies are likely to have fewer behavioral concerns in the classroom than teachers who use reactive strategies (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012).

Proactive Strategies. When it comes to behavior in the classroom, one of the characteristics a teacher needs in order to give effective guidance is a strong, supportive relationship with the student (Cooper & Scott, 2017; Hemmeter, 2007; Korpershoek et al., 2016;

Sun, 2015). Relationship building is considered to be a prevention strategy because teachers are proactive and form a trusting bond with students as to be more understanding if a problem were to arise (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). The guidance strategy used in this research is the Two-by-Ten strategy created by Dr. Raymond Wlodkowski. Teachers spend two minutes a day talking to and getting to know students for ten consecutive opportunities. Spending time having one-on-one conversations with students about their personal and home lives can initiate a positive relationship between adult and child (Smith & Lambert, 2008). When a positive relationship is formed based on trust and respect, a partnership can be formed. This trusting collaboration between students and teachers forms a mutual respect and can have a positive influence of student behavior and overall teacher wellbeing (Smith & Lambert, 2008). The two-by-ten strategy is not a one stop solution to fixing all of the behavioral concerns that occur in the classroom, but the strategically planned, one-on-one, two minute conversations over ten different opportunities in order to initiate the formation of a mutual relationship where the teacher and student gain a deeper connection and a greater understanding of one another (McKibben, 2014). Currently, there is limited research on the Two-by-Ten strategy, thus the current research hopes to expand the existing literature base. Teachers who implemented the Two-by-Ten strategy in their classrooms reported a collaborative experience where “their worst student became an ally in the class when they forged a strong personal connection with that student” (Smith & Lambert, 2008, p. 19).

Other basic classroom management strategies include creating a teaching environment conducive to both student behavioral and academic success. Teachers can do this by establishing consistency and through the arrangement of the classroom (Mitchell, Hirn, & Lewis, 2017). Establishing consistent routines and schedules can help students know what time of the day it is

and anticipate what activity will be coming next. This way, students will know the layout of the day and teachers can avoid or diminish transition issues. In addition to this, arranging the classroom so that students have enough space to work, optional seating, and can be within certain proximity to the teacher can create an environment that reduces student misbehavior and increases student enjoyment and engagement (Cooper & Scott, 2017).

Another proactive instructional practice mentioned by Cooper and Scott (2017) is to give students direct and explicit instructions. Telling students that they can't do this or that does not give them options of what they are able to do. Telling a student to use their words to let someone know how they feel tells them explicitly what they need to do when they are upset. If a teacher makes a classroom rule that says "no hitting or kicking," this tells the students that it is not okay to hit or kid friends when they are upset. However, the child may then think, "Is it okay to spit or push instead?" Young children who have yet to develop good decision making skills are unaware that spitting or pushing would also be a bad choice. When teachers verbally state what they want a child to do, the child is more likely to understand exactly what the teacher is saying and be able to carry out the instruction (Cooper & Scott, 2017).

Reactive Strategies. One of the most common reactive strategies used by teachers is punishment or reprimand (Sun, 2015). The main purpose of this strategy is to regain control or assert power over students. While this strategy works to stop the behavior in the moment, it does not inhibit reoccurrence of the misbehavior and does not allow the student to take responsibility for the misbehavior. The use of punishment is also likely to have negative effects on the teacher-student relationship.

Another commonly used reactive strategy is giving praise to a student when they have completed a task properly or exhibited positive, prosocial behavior (Sun, 2015). While this

strategy is used when students are behaving well rather than when they are misbehaving, it may only have short-term effects on the student. The student is searching for and receiving the desired praise but does not always understand why they are being praised and is unable to take responsibility for the action.

Referrals are another strategy and involve the teacher utilizing a backup system (principal or counselor) where they send the student to another adult to get help when a misbehavior has occurred or is reoccurring. Research shows that referrals are used most often by teachers who are not confident in themselves when it comes to classroom management strategies (Sun, 2015). While referrals can be effective with the integration of multiple other guidance strategies used by the teacher and backup system, they should only be used as a last resort.

Positive Relationships

One important characteristic required in any positive relationship in order to form a connection is trust. Teachers are able to build trust with their students when they show students respect, are honest with them, show students they care, and have conversations that convey a personal rather than professional or authoritarian message (Espinoza, 2012). Espinoza (2012) suggests providing a safe place for students to express their concerns, showing sympathy, and providing support during times of need. In a study conducted over personal closeness between teachers and students, researchers found that reliance, trust, and consistency were significant indicators of strong teacher-student relationships (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). During one interview, a teacher stated that a necessary element for children to be responsive is, “trusting between each other because if they don’t have that, they’re not going to respond to you whatever you do” (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011, p. 238).

The need to develop secure, trusting teacher – student relationships can be compared to the positive effects parent – child relationships have on child behavior and overall school success. Research indicates that teacher interactions with children, expectations for children, attitudes about children, children’s feelings about their teachers, and the amount of time children spend with teachers have been related to school adjustment, performance, and success, similar to the outcomes of parent-child relationships (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991). In a study conducted in six elementary schools in a small city, Pianta and Nimetz (1991) found that relationships between teachers and children are multidirectional and mimic the expected observations seen in mother-child interactions. Secure parent – child attachments are characterized by security and dependency which are also found in secure teacher – child relationships (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991). Research indicates forming positive, strong teacher – student relationships increases student engagement and prosocial behavior and decreases externalizing behaviors in young children (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991).

By building positive, strong teacher-student relationships, relationships can grow and partnerships can be made. A student’s inspiration, participation, and success in school is a collaborative process between teacher and student (Reeve, 2006). When implementing positive guidance strategies, which emphasize relationship formation, one teacher found that her challenging student began seeking out her attention and working with her to strengthen the relationship they had formed (Newberry, 2010). Researchers also found that when teachers and young children shared control of the experiences in the classroom, the feeling of closeness was heightened because all members were actively engaged and working together (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2015).

In research conducted by Newberry (2010), one teacher recounts an incident where her student, Jacob (a pseudonym), quarrels with the substitute teacher over an incident and ends up having to be removed from the classroom, which was out of character because usually Jacob and his teacher can work together to solve most issues. Newberry (2010) attributed the difference in outcomes to the relationships that Jacob had time to build with each of the teachers. Jacob had a connection and respected his regular classroom teacher, as opposed to the substitute teacher that he had not had the time to get to know. Quan-McGimpsey et al. (2011) noted a reoccurring pattern that teachers attributed closeness to the long-term time frame of the relationships. Teachers felt that the cooperative environment encouraged the children to feel safe to express their thoughts and concerns which allowed students and teachers to work out problems together.

Intervening effects of teacher – student relationships are so important, especially to vulnerable children. The term vulnerable child refers to a child who has experienced some type of adversity in their life (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). Teachers who have a vulnerable child in their classroom can change the course of that child's life simply by engaging with him/her, getting to know him/her, and making him/her feel like a valued, contributing member of the classroom community. In a longitudinal study conducted with young, at-risk boys, Roorda, Verschueren, Vancraeyveldt, Craeyveldt, and Colpin (2014) noted a decrease in student externalizing behaviors as teacher – student closeness increased which lasted the following two years. Another behavioral factor that is influenced by strong teacher – student relationships is student engagement in academia and classroom discussion (Yang & Lamb, 2014). In a study involving British 4-year olds, Yang and Lamb (2014) found when students have higher levels of attachment to their classroom teacher, they are more engaged in the material and presentation of the material by that teacher.

Vancraeyveldt et al. (2015) generated a two component intervention to improve the quality of the teacher-child relationship based on the attachment theory. The intervention began by initiating child-directed play between the teacher and child with the intention to open the line of communication, build the relationship, and decrease conflict. Researchers found that the utilization of the intervention significantly decreased conflict, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and inattentiveness, and increased closeness (Vancraeyveldt et al., 2015). In a joint teacher-student relationship, the teacher has taken the time to get to know that student on a personal level. The teacher ideally learns the child's likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, and interests. The teacher can then use this information to structure curriculum and instruction in a way that works best for the child and sets high, achievable expectations for that child, which that child may then strive to meet. Yang and Lamb (2014) also found that strong teacher-child relationships have a positive influence on child self-organized regulatory behavior and impulse control. Due to the respect the child has for their teacher with whom they are attached to, the child most likely considers the teacher when making choices in the classroom. The child may then think before he or she acts because he or she is empathetic to her teacher's feelings and frustrations.

The type of relationship that a student develops with a teacher has a significant impact on the child's behavior, engagement, and success in school. Students who have a conflicted relationship with their teacher exhibit higher levels of aggressive behavior and anxiety than students who have a positive relationship with their teacher (Hughes, Bullock & Coplan, 2014). Children with conflicted relationships with their teachers have also indicated a lower expression of prosocial behavior than those with good relationships. In contrast, children who have positive relationships with their teacher exhibit less aggression and anxiety and exhibit more prosocial

behavior because they feel valued and accepted (Hughes et al., 2014). When students feel valued and supported in their environment due to love, warmth, affection, and approval given by their teachers, they exhibit fewer feelings of judgement and discomfort and are more engaged in the classroom (Reeve, 2006). Having this trusting relationship where students feel free to express themselves, learn, and be creative can inspire students and encourage them to take charge of their learning. Espinoza (2012) stated, “Teachers who make a deliberate effort to create these pivotal moments with students will have a positive influence that lasts long after their students leave their classroom (p. 59).

Research indicates 10-15% of children in preschool programs exhibit behavioral problems (Stacks, 2005). How teachers prepare for and respond to children sets the tone for the teacher-child relationship (Hughes et al., 2014; Newberry, 2010). Approaching the student, initiating open communication, and generating positive one-on-one conversations over a period of time will build a relationship of reciprocal trust and respect and improve student behavior (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). Studies have shown that when students and teachers develop a strong positive connection, externalizing behaviors decrease and classroom engagement increases (Alderman & Green, 2011). Not only do these relationships make students feel special and important to their teachers (Reeve, 2006), but they also have positive effect on overall teacher wellbeing, self-esteem, and retention (Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2011).

Newberry (2010) identifies the teacher-student relationship as a partnership from which both adult and child reap the benefits of cycling through the appraisal, agreement, testing, and planning phases identified in building and maintaining relationships. Newberry’s first phase, the appraisal phase, is where the child and teacher meet and informally gather information on each other. The teacher and child might ask each other questions or play simple games together to get

to know one another. The second phase, the agreement phase, is where the teacher sets rules and expectations for the students and establishes routines. This phase is intended to strengthen the attachment between teacher and child. Next comes the testing phase, in which students explore the limits and boundaries set by the teacher as well as the child's peers. During or after struggles in the testing phase, the relationship usually revisits the appraisal phase for a short time period. Lastly, the planning phase is where active parties reflect on the current patterns of the relationship and work on moving the relationship along. The reflection process and movement patterns occur often throughout this phase. The partnership formed between teacher and child is often successful because both parties recognize the need to be cognizant of the others emotional needs and boundaries (Newberry, 2010).

In another research study, Pianta (1994) hypothesized that the characteristics and positive outcomes exhibited by positive parent-child relationships could also be seen in positive teacher-child relationships. The participants included 436 children (between the ages of 4 and 6) and their kindergarten teachers. Pianta used the Student Teacher-Relationship Scale (STRS) and the Teacher-Child Rating Scale to determine the nature of the relationships at the end of the school year. Pianta found that teacher-student relationships that reported high levels of warmth, closeness, and open communication were low in conflict and anger (Pianta, 1994). Subsequently, relationships regarded as high in conflict and anger reported low warmth, closeness, and open communication scores and were characterized by anger and troubled feelings (Pianta, 1994).

In addition to this, Pianta, Steinburg, and Rollins (1995) used the STRS in a subsequent study to measure additional effects teacher-student relationships have on children long term (1995). The participants in this study were 413 kindergarteners and their kindergarten teachers. The children, teachers, and guardians first assessed the children in developmental domains at the

beginning and end of the kindergarten year. The teacher then completed an STRS on each student at the end of the kindergarten year. At the end of the 1st grade year for the same children, a second developmental assessment was given to the same children. Results showed that children who had quality relationships with their kindergarten teachers had better developmental outcomes than expected by the end of first grade. Likewise, they found that students who had a conflicted relationship with their kindergarten teacher reported a lower than expected score for their 1st grade developmental assessment. The researchers also found that quality relationships with kindergarten teachers reduced the likelihood for high-risk students to be retained or placed in special education at the end of the 1st grade year (Pianta, Steinburg, & Rollins, 1995). The results of this research shows that not only forming quality relationships between teachers and students can improve academics and engagement in that teachers class, but it can also positively impact academic and behavioral improvements for children long term.

Gregoriadis and Grammatikopoulos (2014) used a Greek version of the STRS to measure closeness, conflict, and dependency among teacher-child relationships. Similar to the results of Pianta's study (1995), the authors found high levels of closeness and dependency were correlated with low levels of conflict between teacher and child. When the teacher and child have formed a reciprocal bond, day-to-day classroom activities and transitions are smoother due to the mutual respect. Teachers set high, achievable expectations for their students' behavior because they trust they will be able to meet those expectations. Likewise, students trust that their teacher is going to meet their needs and respect the instructions they are given when it is time to complete an activity, such as reading a book or cleaning up toys.

Preservice Teacher Preparation Programs

In preservice teacher programs, instructors often focus on instructional strategies to teach academic content, psychology, and developmental growth. While these are incredibly important aspects of teaching in early childhood classrooms, little effort is focused on guidance and classroom management (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). Some teacher preparation programs include courses on guidance and classroom management, however, do not allow the PSIs the opportunities to try these strategies in a classroom setting. PSIs who come out of programs such as this reported feeling only moderately prepared to use guidance and classroom management strategies (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). Other teacher preparation programs, such as the program in this study, require PSIs to spend two to three days per week in courses at the university and two days per week in a classroom field site in the two semesters prior to student teaching. This gives PSIs the opportunity to gain firsthand experience using guidance strategies they have been taught in class. Researchers have found this type of program to be the most effective when preparing PSIs (Darling-Hammond, 2010). PSIs who have had experience using guidance strategies have reported that prevention strategies are the most effective type of guidance strategies. PSIs also reported that yelling, screaming, and giving verbal threats are highly ineffective strategies (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010).

PSIs who have more experience with implementing guidance strategies and have more confidence in themselves are more understanding toward student misbehavior. Reupert and Woodcock (2010) noted that when PSIs were not confident in themselves, they blame themselves for student misbehavior. However, when PSIs were confident in themselves and better understand misbehavior, they are able to interpret the students misbehavior and identify target antecedents. When PSIs use prevention guidance strategies such as building relationships

with students, it may be easier for teachers to determine what the antecedent to the behavior is and either stop it from occurring or comfort the student if the problem is related to the child's home life.

Due to the importance and usefulness of guidance and classroom management strategies, it is vital that PSIs gain the experience and confidence necessary to implement these strategies. The research regarding PSI's exposure to guidance and classroom management strategies is disheartening (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). It shows the absolute need to not only learn about guidance and classroom management, but allow PSIs the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the classroom using strategies that work to create a caring community of learners, teach students problem-solving and social skills, and encourage teacher confidence and self-efficacy.

The Current Study

The literature regarding the effects of developing positive teacher-child relationships within guidance strategies indicate a need to examine the questions stated in the introduction of the current study regarding the impact of implementing the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy on PSIs. This research will examine the impact of the Two-by-Ten strategy of the closeness and conflict measures on the STRS and what types of themes emerge during the conversations. The overall goals of the research are to examine how these frequent, personal interaction impact the nature of the relationship between the children and PSI and examine what themes emerge from the PSI reflections regarding what they learned from implementing the Two-by-Ten strategy.

The first research question explored if there was a change in the closeness measure between the preservice intern and the focus children. The researcher hypothesized that STRS scores for closeness between the children and PSI would increase from pre- to post- after the

implementation of the Two-by-Ten relationship building strategy. Additionally, the researcher explored if the implementation of the strategy decreased PSI-reported conflict between PSI's and children. The review of literature led the researcher to believe that the Two-by-Ten relationship building strategy would decrease the amount of conflict between the PSI and children from the first observation to the second observation. It was hypothesized that after the Two-by-Ten relationship building strategy was implemented, the researcher would find a decrease in PSI-reported conflict between the preservice intern and the focus children.

Lastly, the study aimed to discover what themes emerge from the PSI's reflections over their experiences with the Two-by-Ten strategy. The researcher used a grounded theory approach to identify emergent themes from the PSI reflections. Grounded theory is a specific form of ethnographic inquiry, an objective study of the situation, where the researcher attempts to take the place of the person being studied and view the situation from their perspective (Crotty, 1998). Specifically in grounded theory, the researcher attempts to seek out a possible theory that emerges from the data only, rather than from an outside source. The theory is "grounded" in the data itself (Saldaña, 2016 p. 55). In the first cycle of coding using grounded theory as the lens is the inductive or initial cycle of coding. During this cycle, the researcher coded the data listening to or reading the individual data set and created an identifier based on the nature of the data set. For this research, the PSI's reflections were read one at a time and an identifier was created that summarized the theme of each reflection. This identifier was one word or a phrase that represented the reflection. These are known as "preliminary jottings" (Saldaña, 2016 p. 21). For the current research, simultaneous coding was also used so that the researcher could identify multiple meanings and ideals from each passage as needed. Next, the researcher reviewed the initial codes to identify possible patterns emerging from the reflections. After

reviewing the initial codes in the first cycle of coding, the researcher recoded (deductive analysis) to refine the initial identifiers in the second cycle of coding. In this cycle, the researcher identified emergent themes from the data and created descriptive categories based off of these themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). After the reflections and categories of codes were reviewed several times to ensure accuracy and quality, the research noted the frequency of each category and theorized about the outcomes of the implementation of the strategy.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Research Background

The current research is based in part on previous research into the potential impact of the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy on PSIs conducted by Dr. Cole-Lade, Marie Collins, and the author. The research goals in the original study were: determining when PSIs systematically planned for and scheduled time during the school day to talk with their focus child(ren); and examining how the knowledge gained by the PSI's impacted their understanding of the child(ren) and their behaviors after using the Two-by-Ten strategy. Participants in the original study included PSI's in the field of Early Childhood Education who were required to complete an assignment based on the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy in their field placements. In the previous study, eighteen PSI's implemented the Two-by-Ten strategy in rural, urban, or suburban elementary and early childhood settings with children in grades Pre-K through third.

In the current study, the short version of the STRS short form was added as a pre- and post- assessment of the perspectives of the PSIs toward the relationships (both closeness and conflict) formed with each student before and after implementing the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy. The STRS short form was added to the study to provide additional data regarding the possible relationships formed between the PSI and the focus children in their field experience. For the current research, PSI's were required to choose the child(ren) in the classroom with whom they plan to implement the strategy, complete a pre-STRS over the child(ren) prior to implementing the Two-by-Ten strategy, plan, implement, and document each of the ten

interactions with the child(ren), and conduct a post-STRS over the child(ren). The STRS short form specifically measured the conflict and closeness of the relationship. After each interaction, the PSI's were required to document the date, time of day, activity in which the child(ren) was engaged, and what was learned about the child. The PSI's were also required to complete a reflection at the end of the Two-by-Ten assignment including what they learned overall about the child(ren), how their relationship with the child(ren) developed, and how the knowledge they gained impacted their understanding of the child(ren) and their behaviors

Participants

The participants in this study were preservice interns (PSI) enrolled in an Early Childhood Education program at Oklahoma State University during the fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters. Convenience sampling was used to recruit PSI's in this program by instructors' allowing their students to participate in this study. The ECE program at Oklahoma State University uses a cohort model and divides the required courses into four "Blocks" according to the levels of the courses and the courses which need to be taken concurrently. "Block 1" of the teacher preparation program signifies the PSIs' first semester in the program. Each following semester represents another "Block" in the program. During each "Block," PSIs must be enrolled in early childhood education related courses and complete a predetermined amount of field experience hours in a rural, urban, or suburban setting working with children ages birth through third grade. During enrollment in Block 2 (second semester juniors), PSI's receive training on how to teach math, science, social studies, and literacy, as well as, training in guidance and classroom management. PSI's in Block 2 spend eight hours a days, two days per week (Monday and Wednesday) for 15 weeks in their field placement, completing a total of 240 hours in the field.

Eighteen total PSI's from Block 2 participated in the Two-by-Ten assignment over the course of the two semesters. The PSI's were required to complete the assignment and the pre- and post-STRS short form for a grade as a part of their course work. After the assignment had been completed and graded, the PSI's were presented with a consent form requesting the inclusion of their data in the research. The consent forms were completed and sealed in an envelope when the researcher was not present. After final grades for the course were submitted, the envelope was opened for viewing so no undue influence occurred. Ninety-four percent of the PSI's consented to allowing the data from the STRS short form and their reflections to be included in the research.

Procedures

The PSI's who participated in this study were in "Block 2" of the professional education program. The PSI's assignment required them to select two children in their field experience classrooms to work with, identifying the two in the first three weeks of the semester to allow an adequate amount of time to complete the ten interactions. The PSI's then completed a pre-STRS short form on their relationship with the child(ren) in their field site before implementing the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy. Next, the PSI's were given a log to document the date, time of day, topic discussed, and knowledge gained from each of the conversations. The PSI's strategically planned to hold two minute conversations with the focus child each day they were in their field placements. PSI's were instructed to limit the conversations to ones that allowed the PSI to get to know the child personally following the requirements of the Two-by-Ten strategy. The conversations were not to be of an academic or behavioral nature. After completing and documenting the ten conversations of the Two-by-Ten strategy, the PSI's completed a post-STRS short form regarding their relationship with the same child(ren) and completed an open-

ended reflection over what they learned and how their relationship with that child developed over the course of the ten conversations. The documentation log, pre- and post-STRS, and reflection were then uploaded to the university website for the course.

Measures

Demographic information from the PSI's was collected, including Block number, type of placement, grade level, intern ethnicity, intern gender, and child gender (See Table 1). It should be noted that the sample size of the PSIs is smaller than the number of pre- and post-STRS's due to the fact that each PSI chose two children in their field experience and completed 2 STRS's for the research. The researcher used repeated measures to assess how the relationship changed from start to end. The results of the pre- and post-Student Teacher Relationship Scale's (STRS) short form, discussed previously, were used to measure the self-reported degree to which the PSI perceives the relationship changes from before the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy was implemented to after the ten sessions had been completed. A paired samples T-test was used to compare the pre- and post- results of the STRS short form.

The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) short form was developed by Dr. Robert C. Pianta in 1992. This scale is intended to be a measure of the quality of a relationship between a child and teacher from the teacher's perspective. The scale specifically measures the conflict and closeness of the teacher-student relationship. The STRS can also be used to assess improvements of the relationship between the teacher and student when given as a pre- and post-assessment of relationship quality. The STRS uses a 5-point Likert-type rating scale and includes 15-items relating to the teacher-child relationship from the teachers point of view, the level of interactive behavior between the teacher and child, and the teachers perceptions of the child's feelings about the teacher. This scale is intended to be used to assess relationships between

children in preschool through third grade and their classroom teachers. Pianta (1994) developed the STRS on the belief that students with family adversity tend to have a more difficult time bonding with their teachers. The STRS aims to identify possible mediating factors in order to develop a consultation and intervention plan with the intention of improving or enhancing these relationships.

The STRS is administered using a one page response form. The response form includes 15 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale where '1' is definitely does not apply, '2' is not really, '3' is neutral or not sure, '4' is applies somewhat, and '5' is definitely applies. The 15 item response sheet was completed by PSI's relating to their relationship with a child in their classroom between the ages of 4 and 8 years old. There are no requirements related to experience level, educational degree level, and race/ethnicity of the teacher complete the survey. Aspects of closeness are represented by statements such as: I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child; and if upset, this child will seek comfort from me. Conflict is measured through the use of statements such as: This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other; and this child easily becomes angry at me. This scale is then scored to identify the levels of closeness and conflict between the teacher and child as perceived by the teacher.

Table 1

Preservice Intern Demographic Information (N=17) for PSI, (N=34) for Child

Descriptor	n (%)
Current Field Placement	
Rural	3 (17.6%)
Urban	8 (47.1%)
Suburban	6 (35.3%)
Grade Level	
Pre-Kindergarten	4 (23.5%)
Kindergarten	8 (47.1%)
First Grade	3 (17.6%)
Second Grade	1 (5.9%)
Third Grade	1 (5.9%)
Preservice Intern Ethnicity	
Caucasian/White	14 (82.4%)
Native American	2 (11.8%)
Hispanic/Latino	1 (5.9%)
Preservice Intern Gender	
Female	17 (100%)
Male	0 (0%)
Child Gender	
Female	16 (47.1%)
Male	18 (52.9%)

The conflict subscale is composed of 8 items determining the amount of negativity and conflict the teacher perceives is present in his or her relationship with a particular student. The conflict subscale scores items relating to power struggle with student, feelings of student being unpredictable or angry, and feelings of being ineffective to reaching the student. The closeness subscale includes 7 items relating to teachers perceptions of warmth, affection, and

communication. A higher closeness score indicates that the teacher senses that the student feels supported and comforted by the teacher. Cronbach alpha will be used to measure the internal consistency of the scale ($\alpha = 0.5$). For this study, the scale was administered, by instructors, to groups of PSI's. In addition to the pre- and post-STRS, the PSI's wrote an open-ended reflection essay regarding what was learned overall about each child.

Data Analysis

Once permission from the PSI was confirmed to include the reflective essays and pre- and post-STRS's, data were de-identified and assigned numerical designation for data analysis. All identifiable information about the students was redacted and replaced by pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality of each child. Descriptive statistics were used to organize and describe the data from the demographic information. The data from the reflections were transferred to a spreadsheet. The reflective essays were condensed into a descriptive spreadsheet which described what the PSI's learned about the children over the course of the ten conversations. Grounded theory was used to analyze the reflection data. Grounded theory is a way of exploring data so that themes, concepts, and theories emerge from the data itself rather than from a preconceived notion of what may possibly emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In this form of qualitative research, the themes and theories are ground in and emerge from the data itself, as opposed to other forms of research in which the researcher develops a hypothesis beforehand and seeks to determine if the findings represent the hypothesis (Saldaña, 2016). Properly implemented, grounded theory ensures the findings of the research are authentic because the patterns emerge directly from the data itself (Crotty, 1998). The researcher used content analysis on the reflective essays to develop categories and frequency counts. Each reflection was read multiple times to identify emergent patterns and themes (Saldaña, 2016).

Content analysis refers to the reduction and sense-making process whereby the researcher takes qualitative data and attempts to identify consistencies and interpret meanings of the data (Patton, 2002). The researcher used inductive analysis to develop the concepts, then deductive analysis was used to theorize possible relationships between the themes.

To analyze the STRS short form, means, standard deviations, and standard error means for all study variables were computed. The Two-by-Ten strategy was used as an intervention with the goal of improving the relationship between the PSI and children; therefore, the Two-by-Ten strategy was the independent variable. The dependent variable was the overall teacher-student relationship quality, specifically, closeness and conflict.

The first research question states: Using the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) short form, is there a change in closeness between the preservice intern and the focus children after the Two-by-Ten strategy has been implemented? A paired samples T-test was conducted to determine the size and significance of the changes in scores from pre- to post-STRS. The Two-by-Ten strategy – the ten conversations – was the intervention. The dependent variable was PSI-report of closeness from the post-STRS's taken after the intervention was implemented.

The second research question was: Using the STRS short form, is there a change in the conflict between the preservice intern and focus children after the Two-by-Ten strategy has been implemented? A paired samples T-test was conducted to determine the size of the difference and significance in the scores from pre- to post-STRS. The Two-by-Ten strategy – the ten conversations – was the intervention. The dependent variable was PSI-reported conflict from the post-STRS's taken after the intervention was implemented.

The third research question asked: What themes emerge from the PSI's reflections over their experiences with the Two-by-Ten strategy? Inductive and deductive content analysis was

used to interpret and code the data to make replicable and valid inferences about the intervention strategy. Content analysis of the data occurred, including reading, consolidating, and interpreting the qualitative data in order to classify or categorize patterns and interpret the implications of the data (Patton, 2002). The inductive analysis approach was used to categorize, organize, and identify emergent themes from the collected qualitative data (Patton, 2002). The deductive analysis tested and ensured the themes which emerged during the inductive analysis stage were valid (Patton, 2002).

Researcher Identity

Due to the researcher's background in relationship building and early childhood education, it was impossible to conduct the research without the input of the researcher's personal worldviews, biases, assumptions, and own characteristics (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher knows, from firsthand experience, that the Two-by-Ten strategy is effective in increasing closeness between PSI or teacher and child and reducing conflict. Through my own experience with the Two-by-Ten strategy, I was able to learn deep and personal aspects of the lives of my students. I built strong relationships with them and had several come out of their shells, not only with me but with their classroom teachers and peers. One student with whom I conducted the Two-by-Ten project refused to speak to me in the very beginning and rarely spoke to anyone at all during the day. I continued persevering with this student, initiating conversations with her. Eventually, she came opened up to me and grew attached to me. She began to open up to her peers and classroom teacher, as well. Throughout the process, she appeared to start to enjoy school and actually began to answer questions in front of the whole class. In the previous study, I was only able to assist with the collection of qualitative data when I did the Two-by-Ten

project myself, however, this study was able to expand the research to provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of this strategy.

Due to the fact that the researcher has personally been a participant of a previous study of similar nature, the researcher began the study with a bias that the utilization of the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy would be effective in building or initiating some type of relationship between the PSI and student. For this reason, the researcher designed the study to minimize the influence of these factors (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). The researcher utilized grounded theory, which has some built-in checks and balances to help control for individual factors, however, they do not completely eliminate the intrusion of biases. Biases and assumptions cannot be completely eliminated in any type of qualitative study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). However, the researcher used an open-ended research question for the qualitative data to ensure all possible themes emerged directly from the data rather than from a pre-conceived idea. The researcher maintained an open mind when approaching coding of each participant's reflection.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to examine the development of preservice Early Childhood Education (ECE) interns' relationships with children in their field experiences using the guidance strategy "Two-by-Ten" in a mixed methods research study design. Specifically, the researcher examined the change in both intern perceived closeness and conflict between the PSI and the child before the Two-by-Ten strategy was implemented to after the strategy was implemented. Lastly, possible themes emerging from the PSI's reflections over their experiences with the Two-by-Ten strategy were explored. This chapter discusses the findings of the analyses used to test the relationships among these variables.

PSI-Child Closeness

The participants rated the level of application with the 7 items related to closeness on the STRS short form by selecting '1' "definitely does not apply," '2' "not really," '3' "neutral or not sure," '4' "applies somewhat," or '5' "definitely applies". A paired samples T-test was conducted to examine changes in PSI-reported closeness before to after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy. As shown in Table 2, the results indicated that PSI-reported closeness was significantly higher after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy than it was before the implementation of the strategy, $t(1, 33) = -7.46; p = .000$.

PSI-Child Closeness by Gender

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in PSI-child closeness by gender. The ANOVA was used for the pre-

assessment and the post-assessment; Dunnett's *T3* was used to account for unequal cell sizes and assumed unequal variance. The ANOVA for the pre-assessment and post-assessment did not show any significant difference in closeness between male and female children as seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 2

Paired Samples T-Test for PSI-Child Closeness from Pre-Assessment to Post-Assessment (N=34)

	<u>Pre-Assessment</u>		<u>Post-Assessment</u>		t
	Mean	±SD	Mean	±SD	
STRS total	21.29	5.36	28.82	5.18	-7.46***

***p<.01

Table 3

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Closeness by Child Gender at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1	16.18	16.18	.56	.46
Within Groups	32	930.88	29.09		
Total	33	947.06			

Table 4

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Closeness by Child Gender at Post-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1	.39	.39	.01	.91
Within Groups	32	886.55	27.71		
Total	33	886.94			

PSI-Child Closeness by Placement

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in PSI-child closeness by placement. The ANOVA was used for the pre-assessment and the post-assessment; Dunnett's T3 was used to account for unequal cell sizes and assumed unequal variance. The ANOVA for the pre-assessment approached significance, $p=.068$ (see Table 5). The analysis indicated that PSI's in Urban placements reported lower scores on the STRS than PSI's in Rural placements. Means, standard deviations, and ranges are presented in Table 6. The ANOVA for the post-assessment was not significant (see Table 7).

Table 5

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Closeness by Placement at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	151.06	75.53	2.94	.068
Within Groups	31	796.00	25.68		
Total	33	947.06			

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Placements at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Sample	Mean	\pm SD	Range*
Total Sample	21.29	5.36	19.42-23.16
Rural	25.33	6.09	18.94-31.72
Urban	19.50	4.68	17.01-21.99
Suburban	21.67	5.07	18.45-24.89

*1=definitely does not apply; 2=not really; 3=neutral or not sure; 4=applies somewhat; 5=definitely applies

Table 7

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Closeness by Placement at Post-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	45.92	22.96	.85	.44
Within Groups	31	841.02	27.13		
Total	33	886.94			

PSI-Child Conflict

In order to examine the PSI-reported conflict, the participants rated the level of application with the 8 items related to conflict on the STRS short form by selecting ‘1’ “definitely does not apply,” ‘2’ “not really,” ‘3’ “neutral or not sure,” ‘4’ “applies somewhat,” or ‘5’ “definitely applies”. The paired samples T-test for the second research question revealed PSI reported conflict to be significantly lower ($p=.002$) after completing the ten, two minute interactions than before the strategy was implemented. A paired samples T-test was conducted to examine changes in PSI-reported conflict before to after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy. Table 8 shows the results which indicated that PSI-reported conflict was significantly lower after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy than it was before the implementation of the strategy, $t(1, 33) = 3.28; p = .002$.

Table 8

Paired Samples T-Test for PSI-Child Conflict from Pre-Assessment to Post-Assessment (N=34)

	<u>Pre-Assessment</u>		<u>Post-Assessment</u>		
	Mean	±SD	Mean	±SD	t
STRS total	18.41	7.18	15.53	7.22	3.28***

*** $p<.01$

PSI-Child Conflict by Gender

A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in PSI-child conflict by gender. The ANOVA was used for the pre-assessment and the post-assessment; Dunnett's *T3* was used to account for unequal cell sizes and assumed unequal variance. The ANOVA for the pre-assessment was significant, $p=.018$ (see Table 9). The post-assessment also indicated a significant difference in conflict between male and female children, $p=.053$ (see Tables 10). At the pre-assessment and post-assessment results indicated that conflict with male students was higher on average than with female students. Means, standard deviations, and ranges are presented in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 9

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Conflict by Gender at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1	278.71	278.71	6.27	.02
Within Groups	32	1423.53	44.49		
Total	33	1702.24			

Table 10

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Conflict by Gender at Post-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1	193.36	193.36	4.05	.05
Within Groups	32	1527.11	47.72		
Total	33	1720.47			

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for PSI-Child Conflict by Gender at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Sample	Mean	±SD	Range*
Total Sample	18.41	7.18	15.91 – 20.92
Male	21.11	7.28	17.49 – 24.73
Female	15.38	5.91	12.23 – 18.52

*1=definitely does not apply; 2=not really; 3=neutral or not sure; 4=applies somewhat; 5=definitely applies

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for PSI-Child Conflict by Gender at Post-Assessment (N=34)

Sample	Mean	±SD	Range*
Total Sample	15.53	7.22	13.01 – 18.05
Male	17.78	7.83	13.88 – 21.67
Female	13.00	5.68	9.97 – 16.03

*1=definitely does not apply; 2=not really; 3=neutral or not sure; 4=applies somewhat; 5=definitely applies

PSI-Child Conflict by Placement

A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in PSI-child conflict by placement. The ANOVA was used for the pre-assessment and the post-assessment; Dunnett's *T3* was used to account for unequal cell sizes and assumed unequal variance. The ANOVA for the pre-assessment and post-assessment revealed no significant differences in PSI-reported conflict by placement. The results of the ANOVA for the pre-assessment and post-assessment are shown in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Conflict by Placement at Pre-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	72.21	36.11	.687	.51
Within Groups	31	1630.02	52.58		
Total	33	1702.24			

Table 14

One-way ANOVA of PSI-Child Conflict by Placement at Post-Assessment (N=34)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	1.39	.69	.013	.99
Within Groups	31	1719.08	55.45		
Total	33	1720.47			

Emergent Reflection Themes

The researcher used content analysis on the reflective essays to develop categories and frequency counts. Each reflection was read multiple times to identify emergent patterns and themes. The inductive analysis approach was used to categorize, organize, and identify emergent themes from the collected qualitative data (Patton, 2002). The deductive analysis tested and ensured the themes which emerged during the inductive analysis stage are valid (Patton, 2002). The themes identified from reading the reflections were derived from meaningful, emergent patterns and appeared frequently throughout the reflections. The emergent patterns formed the following themes: Learned; Built relationships/formed connections/grew attached; Make/spend

time; Students opened up; and Surprised by efforts to communicate. The descriptions within the themes include: the PSI learning a great deal about the student; the formation of a relationship or a connection between the student and PSI; and the importance of making and spending one-on-one time with students. Several codes important to also note that did not emerge frequently in the data include concepts such as respect, trust, and communication. The categories, descriptions of the categories, frequency count, and additional noted concepts can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Categories, Descriptions, and Frequency Counts

Themes	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Learned	The PSI stated they learned a lot about the student	13	76%
Built relationships and trust/formed connections/grew attached	The PSI noted that they built a relationship, formed a meaningful connection, or grew attached with the student	9	53%
Make/spend time	The PSI identified the importance of making time or spending one-on-one time talking with and getting to know their students	8	47%
Students opened up	The PSI stated the students opened up to the PSI over the course of the ten, two minute conversations	4	24%
Surprised by efforts to communicate	The PSI noticed the student was surprised or did not know how to respond to the PSI's efforts to interact	3	18%
Others:			
• Respect		1	6%
• Communication		2	12%
• Persevere even when child is not responding		2	12%
• Be encouraging		1	6%

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Change in Closeness

The first research question examined how the PSI-reported closeness between PSI and children changed from before to after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy. The researcher hypothesized PSI-reported closeness with children would increase. The researcher also examined the difference in closeness based on child gender and placement. The hypothesis that closeness would increase from before to after the intervention was supported.

This finding indicated that PSI-reported closeness significantly increased after employing the Two-by-Ten relationship building strategy. The results are consistent with previous research conducted that recognizes that time spent with children contributes to the formation of a close personal relationship between students and their teachers (Espinoza, 2012; Newberry, 2010; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2015). As stated previously, spending time having one-on-one conversations with students about their personal and home lives can initiate a positive relationship between adult and child (Smith & Lambert, 2008). Quan-McGimpsey et al. (2011) found a reoccurring pattern that teachers attributed closeness to the long-term time frame of the relationships formed with students. After PSI's spent two minutes with students on ten separate occasions, they felt they had become closer with the child, similar to the results Quan-McGimpsey et al. (2011) found relating to duration.

Additionally, the findings indicated that prior to conducting the Two-by-Tens, PSI's in urban placements felt less closeness between the child and themselves when compared to PSI's

in rural settings. However, the difference in PSI-reported closeness after the intervention did not differ significantly between the urban and rural groups. This finding is consistent with research previously referenced which found that the teacher-student relationship has the potential to have a stronger and longer enduring effect on a vulnerable child because the relationship is necessary to their survival and efforts to thrive (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). This may be because urban schools are typically in lower income areas with a potentially higher population of vulnerable children and fewer school resources. Children in urban schools may also be more likely to respond to adults seeking interaction than in rural schools where, because of the smaller population size of school, they may get more opportunities to interact with other adults.

Change in Conflict

The goal of the second research question was to examine the change in PSI-reported conflict before to after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy. The researcher hypothesized that PSI-reported conflict would decrease. The researcher also examined the difference in conflict based on the gender of the child and the type of placement. The hypothesis that conflict would decrease from before to after the intervention was supported.

This finding indicated that PSI-reported conflict significantly decreased after employing the Two-by-Ten relationship building strategy. The results are consistent with previous research conducted that recognizes that spending positive one-on-one time with students can reduce the amount of externalizing behaviors exhibited by the child. The two minute, personal interaction allow the student and child to form a connection and gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of one another (McKibben, 2014). The results of the conflict subscale make it necessary to highlight a narrative from study previously mentioned (Newberry, 2010) where a teacher who had taken the time to build a meaningful relationships with a student who

demonstrated problematic behaviors and subsequently decreased the amount of externalizing behaviors exhibited by that child when that teacher was present.

In addition to this finding, the results of the analysis showed that PSI's had significantly more conflict with boys than they did with girls both before and after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy. This finding may be attributed to the fact boys, on average, exhibit more externalizing behaviors than girls (Maguire et al., 2016). Maguire et al. (2016) found a slight increase in conduct problems for boys and that girls had higher levels of emotional regulation and emotional expression than boys.

Emergent Themes

The content analysis of the PSI reflections revealed several emergent themes. The reflections also revealed some ideals that were not identified as emergent themes but were important to note. Themes were analyzed using a grounded theory lens. Grounded theory was developed in order to compose theory that emerges explicitly from the data, or is grounded in the data. Concepts emerged from the data that was collected during the research and was not intended to be chosen prior to the collection of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For this reason, the researcher intended for the third research question (What themes emerge from the preservice interns' reflections over their experiences with the Two-by-Ten strategy?) to have no predetermined ideas and remain open in order to identify the concepts emerging from the themes instead of searching the data for preconceived themes. This allowed the researcher to identify general concepts, develop theoretical explanations, and discover new insights into a variety of experiences. The data collected using grounded theory can be any type of written, observed, or recorded material (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For the current study, the data collected and

analyzed was in the form of written reflections from the perspective of the PSI's. The themes that emerged from the written reflections are discussed in detail below.

Learned. A large portion of the PSI reflections (76%) discussed that the PSI's learned a lot about their student(s) throughout the course of the ten interactions. Many of the PSI's were able to recall the students' likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, and even details about their families. Espinoza (2012) discusses the importance of this and suggests talking with students about their individual and family lives in order to get to know them on a more personal level. One PSI detailed what she learned about one of her students.

“I learned that child one needs movement but does not know how to get it. I also learned that his dad's girlfriend tries to be involved with him and I think that is extremely important especially since it seems to be a long term relationship.”

In these two sentences, the PSI explained that she learned what type of learner her student might be. If he needs movement, he might be a kinesthetic or tactile learner and the teacher would be able to reach him better if she taught to the child's needs. The PSI also expressed that she was able to learn a little about the students family during the one-on-one conversations. The PSI was able to provide a safe environment to discuss family matters where the student felt as though he would be heard, which is an important aspect of any teacher-child relationship (Espinoza, 2012).

Another PSI verbalized what she learned about one of her students:

“He spends a lot of his time playing aggressive video games with his dad. He loves his mom and little sister. He has gotten less attention at home because of the arrival of his new baby sister. He is excited about being a big brother but isn't too happy about having to share his mom and dad.”

The arrival of a new baby sister or the interactions with aggressive video games could have been the reason why this student was exhibiting externalizing behaviors at school. He was getting less attention at home and therefore needed to find a way to interact with someone on one-on-one basis. In addition to stating what she learned about the boy she had chosen for this project, she stated this about the girl she has chosen:

“I learned that she is very close to her family and they honor education as being very important. She spends a lot of time in her home and at school. She does not spend much time outside of the house but she has made connections to some of her peers.”

By intentionally setting two minutes out of her day to speak with each of these students, the PSI was able to learn about the children and their home lives. She got to know the students as individuals rather than just students that were in her field placement. By setting out a small amount of time each day, PSI's and teachers can learn a lot of each of the students in their classroom.

Make/Spend time. The next most prominent theme among the PSI reflections was that they felt it was important to make time to have these one-on-one conversations with students and the importance of spending that time with them. Nearly half (47%) of the PSI's mentioned the importance of spending that time with students. By intentionally setting aside time to spend with a student conversing about their interests, dreams, and lives, teachers can begin to form the foundation of a lasting, positive relationship between teacher and child (Newberry, 2010; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). One PSI noted that through this experience she was able to learn about “the impact that occurs when you spend positive, intentional time with students. By taking time to truly get to know your students, you will make them feel loved, cared for, and ready to learn at school.” This statement reiterates research previously mentioned that found that when students

feel valued and supported in their environment due to love, warmth, affection, and approval given by their teachers, they exhibit fewer feelings of judgement and discomfort and are more engaged in the classroom (Reeve, 2006). Another PSI mentioned that she was having a difficult time with the students she chose for the Two-by-Ten strategy and how the intentional time changed the nature of their relationship. She stated:

“I found myself getting frustrated and raising my voice or punishing the behaviors. I knew this wasn’t working and that I needed to find a different way to handle them but it took me taking intentional time out to listen to their stories to understand where they are coming from and meet them where they are.”

The PSI recognized the conflict between the two students and herself and made it her goal to intentionally set aside time to work on her relationship with these students. She knew that if she did not understand her students, she could not help them. However, this may not come easy. One PSI discussed this in her reflection. “I learned that developing relationships take time and that you have to be aware and alert to what it is the children like.” She discovered, not only does it take time to build a relationship such as this one, but that you have to be an active listener in the conversation as well.

Building Relationships/Making Connections/Attachment. Next, the PSI’s frequently (53%) discussed how they were able to build a relationship or form a connection with the child(ren). One PSI stated that she learned:

“forming meaningful relationships with each student created a sense of respect from both them and myself, and they knew that and were therefore more responsive and interested in what I had to say since they knew that I truly cared about them.”

Intently listening and being interested in what a child has to say will convey to that child that they are a valued part of the classroom and make them feel cared for and accepted. Previously referenced, Hughes et al. (2014) express that children who have positive relationships with their teacher exhibit less aggression and anxiety and exhibit more prosocial behavior because they feel valued and accepted. Teachers must take the time to build these relationships with students in order to be an effective classroom teacher and be able to reach all of the students in a classroom. In support for this claim, one PSI stated she learned:

“the true importance of building relationships with your students. Once your students feel as though they can trust you so many limitations on their learning and success are removed. Not only do you learn a lot about your students and how they learn, but you establish strong connections.”

The aspect of trust is a huge part of the teacher-child relationship (See Table 9, p. 44). The aspect of trust in teacher-child relationships was also highlighted in a study conducted by in which a teacher reported the importance of “Trusting between each other because if they don’t have that, they’re not going to respond to you whatever you do” (Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011, p. 238). In addition to trust, one PSI talked about respect.

“The stronger connection that you make with a child, the more likely they will be to have common respect with you. Both of the students that I spent time with will listen and confide in me because they feel as if they have a strong, personal bond with me.”

One article previously referenced talks about the importance and the hand-in-hand nature of trust and respect. Smith and Lambert (2008) note that when a positive relationship is formed based on trust and respect, a partnership can be formed. This trusting collaboration between

students and teachers forms a mutual respect and may have a positive influence of student behavior.

Student opened up. The last important emergent theme to discuss is the topic of students opening up after or throughout the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy (24%). Berk (2012) discussed the importance of children opening up to their caregiver or teacher even in infancy. Berk (2012) stated that once a child has learned to open up to their caregiver, they begin to open up more to their caregiver. One PSI said that after she has implemented this strategy and built trust with her student, she “felt in the end the student had opened up so much more with me and started directing the conversations without me having to ask my own questions.” Once the student felt more comfortable with the PSI, the student was able to let down a wall and open up to the PSI. Another PSI described her feelings about breaking down the barrier with her students and stated:

“After some time the students started approaching me more in the classroom compared to when I first started in the classroom. So I think with our small talks they were able to come out of their shell just a little bit more.”

This does not always come easy in the beginning however. Sometimes it takes time and effort to form a connection with a child so that they feel comfortable enough to drive the conversation and disclose information about themselves. One PSI stated her belief about this matter. She learned, “That it is important to keep talking to the child even if they are not talking back because eventually they will open up and begin to build that relationships with you. It is important to keep trying.” Building relationships with students is not always easy, especially with children who are more introverted than extroverted.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths. This study had several strengths related to data collection. First, the research had a mixed-methods design. Mixed method studies are those that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches of research into a single study (Clark & Creswell, 2008). The quantitative data allowed the researcher to provide statistical evidence of the changes in closeness and conflict from before to after the implementation of the strategy. The qualitative data gave a description of not only the effectiveness of the strategy but of actual experiences gained by the PSI that can be taken and used in order to enhance teacher-student relationships in their own classroom upon graduation which is an additional strength to this study. Another strength of this study includes the findings from the assignment and the understanding the PSI's gained from experiencing the effectiveness of the Two-by-Ten strategy. Guidance strategies cannot be taught solely in a classroom with no link to the field, as previous research also indicated.

An additional strength of this study was the percentage of PSI's who chose to participate in this study. Of the PSI's, 94% wanted and consented to their data being a part of this study. When I was a part of the previous study, I consented to allow my data to be used because I felt it was important and meaningful. I can only theorize that the Block 2 PSI's held similar regards about their data and thought it may be a meaningful contribution to the current study.

Limitations. One of the limitations to this study was the small number of total participants. Sufficient data was collected from this study to provide quality results, however, more participants would have yielded more data to explore. Another limitation related to the participants would be the lack of diversity. The group of participants were predominantly Caucasian females. If the participant group would have included males and participants from

more diverse ethnic or racial backgrounds, differences based on PSI gender and ethnic or racial backgrounds could have been explored.

Second, the current study did not have a true experimental design. This study did not have a control group which makes attributing the changes in closeness and conflict solely to the Two-by-Ten strategy impossible. Research suggests there could be other variables contributing to the change in closeness and conflict. One variable of the change in closeness and conflict could be the time children spend in the classroom which allows them to adjust to the situation or get used to the PSI being in the classroom on certain days of the week. The change could also be attributed to children becoming more comfortable with the classroom environment, teacher, and PSI. Over the course of the semester, children typically become more comfortable with the classroom environment and their peers. They will also become more comfortable with the teacher and PSI as long as they are both consistent in their teacher and demeanor. This may result in the child building self-confidence throughout the semester. Other variables contributing to the change in closeness and conflict could be life experiences in the lives of the PSI's or the children themselves.

Another limitation of this study was that the PSI's were unable to be present at their field site every day. The university ECE program in this study provides opportunities for more field experience hours than most preservice programs. A limitation, however could also be that the PSI's in Block 2 were at their field placements two days a week, which forced the two minute conversations to be spaced out. If the PSI's were at their field sites every day, they would have been able to have these interactions more often and possibly back to back which may have yielded different and perhaps stronger results. PSI's who are in the classroom every day may form a stronger connection with their students easier than what the PSI's from this research were

able to do. This emphasizes the importance of regular classroom teachers utilizing this strategy in their classrooms daily in order to get to know their students and build positive relationships.

Next, it is difficult to interpret exactly what someone means from a reflection only. Written reflections can be vague or limited leaving the researcher to question what exactly a PSI may have meant to express through their written reflection. If the researcher would have been able to interview and listen to a verbal reflection, as well as a written reflection, the information and knowledge gained by the PSI through the process of implementing this strategy may have been clearer. Lastly, the background, assumptions, and biases of the researcher are limitations to this study. While the researcher did what was possible to retain personal biases and assumptions from the study, biases are virtually impossible to completely exclude from any type of qualitative research.

Implications and Future Directions

Implications. An implication of this mixed-methods study is that, after learning about and implementing the Two-by-Ten strategy, PSI-reported closeness increased. In addition to this, PSI-reported conflict decreased after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy. We can assume when other professional, such as teachers, implement this strategy, it is possible they may have similar experiences as those exhibited by the PSI's in the current study.

The implications of this study support the use of the Two-by-Ten strategy and indicate the importance of future research and use of the strategy. Teacher preparation programs across the nation, and potentially the world, can implement the Two-by-Ten strategy assignment to teacher preservice teachers as a relationships building or guidance strategy. We are aware of the need for teacher preparation programs to equip PSI's with the skills and confidence to meet the academic and guidance needs of all students in their classroom. Implementing the Two-by-Ten

strategy as an assignment can help PSI's gain the knowledge and experience they need to be effective in the classroom.

Additionally, in-service teachers and child care providers can use this strategy in their own classrooms to get to know their students. Teachers cannot successfully reach their students if they do not know them on an individual level. Utilizing this strategy in the classroom can help teachers get to know more about their students and get to know each of them on an individual level. The qualitative data also support the Two-by-Ten strategy as an effective way for PSI's and teachers to learn about their students and get to know them more as an individual. There is potential for school districts to utilize this strategy as professional development to teach in-service teachers new methods of guidance and relationship building in the classroom.

Future directions. In the future, the researcher wants to explore the possibility of interviewing the PSI's about their experience and perhaps be able to observe the PSI interacting with the children. From the researcher's experience with this strategy, it is much easier and more fulfilling to be able to verbally express and detail the true nature of implementing the strategy. Future research could also address both of these possible directions by increasing the number of participants and perhaps including PSI's from other certificate areas such as elementary, secondary, or special education. Comparisons could be made between the PSI's in the different certificate areas.

Future research based on this study that was an unforeseen finding by the researcher was the difference in conflict based on child gender. While it is true that boys on average, exhibit more conflictual behaviors than girls (Maguire et al., 2016), the research did not anticipate the evidence of this in the quantitative results. An additional finding of to this study that came as a surprise to the researcher was the difference in level of closeness between PSI's and children in

rural placements and PSI's and children in urban placements. Although this finding was approaching significance, it was an unexpected and an important finding to note. In addition to this, research is needed in order to explore the findings regarding the difference in gender, as well as, the difference between rural and suburban communities.

Conclusion

Research supports the importance and effectiveness of building strong personal relationships between teachers and students (Espinoza, 2012; Pianta & Nimetz, 1991; Quan-McGimpsey et al., 2011). In this way, teachers can learn how to best meet the needs of the students in their classroom, teach to their interests and strengths, and learn how to defuse tension before problems arise in the classroom (Newberry, 2010; Roorda et al., 2014). The Two-by-Ten strategy is an effective technique to allow teachers to get to know their students and to assist teachers in forming strong, positive connections with their students.

The purpose of the current study was to examine if PSI-reported closeness increased and PSI-reported conflict decreased after implementing the Two-by-Ten strategy. The results of the data from the STRS short form survey indicated that, after the implementation of the Two-by-Ten strategy, PSI-reported closeness increased and PSI-reported conflict decreased and both findings were significant. The reflections written by the PSI's indicated that, through the Two-by-Ten project the PSI's learned a great deal about the students they chose for the project, built relationships or grew attached, understood the importance of spending one-on-one time with students, and witnessed shy students open up to a person they had just met.

Not only did this study demonstrated the importance of the Two-by-Ten strategy in providing PSI's an opportunity to get to know and learn about their students, but the importance of the strategy itself. Students look up to their teachers so teachers need to be good role models

for their students. Teachers must be prepared to and systematically take time out of their busy schedules to get to know the wonderful children who have been placed in their care. The researcher hopes this paper will enlighten people on what the importance of building relationships with students and listening to a child who might need someone to talk to. It is also the hope of the researcher that teachers begin to use this strategy in their own classrooms to experience the positive effects of the intervention for themselves. It is my belief that teachers who implement this strategy will have less power struggles with challenging students and develop stronger relationships with their students.

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Appendices

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP SCALE – SHORT FORM

Robert C. Pianta

Child: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with this child. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

Definitely does not apply 1	Not really 2	Neutral, not sure 3	Applies somewhat 4	Definitely applies 5
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1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If upset, this child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. This child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I praise this child, he/she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7. This child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This child easily becomes angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is easy to be in tune with what this child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10. This child remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Dealing with this child drains my energy	1	2	3	4	5
12. When this child is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13. This child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. This child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. This child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

Semester and Year _____

Two-by-Ten Research Demographics

Please check the box next to the correct answer or fill in the blank provided.

1. What Block are you currently enrolled in?
 - _____ Block 2
 - _____ Block 3

2. For your current Field Experience, which designated area is it assigned to?
 - _____ Rural
 - _____ Urban
 - _____ Suburban

3. What grade level is your current Field Experience?
 - _____

4. What is your gender?
 - _____ Female
 - _____ Male

5. How old are you?
 - _____(years)

6. What is your ethnic or racial group?
 - _____ Caucasian/White
 - _____ African American
 - _____ Native American
 - _____ Asian
 - _____ Hispanic or Latino
 - _____ Multiracial
 - _____ Other (specify: _____)

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date Monday, September 11, 2017 Protocol Expires: 9/10/2020

IRB Application No: HE1572

Proposal Title: Examining pre-service teacher perceptions of the two by ten guidance strategy and implications for use in their future classrooms

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as: Continuation

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s)

Gretchen Cole-Lade

Marie Collins

Karen Pirtle

Stillwater, OK 74078

Stillwater, OK 74078

3729 S 71 W Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

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

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

New subject enrollment still in progress. Addition of approx 45 subjects. No new changes. No reportable events, withdrawals, complaints or new/additional funding.

Signature :



Hugh Crethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Monday, September 11, 2017
Date

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, September 11, 2017 Protocol Expires: 11/22/2018
IRB Application No: HE1572
Proposal Title: Examining pre-service teacher perceptions of the two by ten guidance strategy and implications for use in their future classrooms
Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as: **Modification**

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s):

Gretchen Cole-Lade
Stillwater, OK 74078

Marie Collins
Stillwater, OK 74078

Karen Pirtle
3729 S 71 W Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

Mod to 1) collect additional demographic information, 2) contact former participants to gather the new demographic information who will be consented again.

Signature :



Hugh Crethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Monday, September 11, 2017
Date

**CONSENT FORM
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Project Title: Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions of the Two by Ten Guidance Strategy and Implications for Future Pre-Service Teachers

Investigators: Gretchen Cole-Lade, PhD
Marie Collins, MAT
E. Karen Pirtle, Undergraduate Student

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to examine pre-service teachers' perceptions of how implementing the Two-by-Ten guidance strategy within their field experiences impacted their approach to overall guidance in the classroom and explore possible future implications of using the Two by Ten guidance strategy in their future classrooms. Pre-service ECE teachers are being asked to participate while completing their assigned field experiences. Quantitative data from a pre and post survey and reflections based on the Two by Ten will be analyzed to determine how the strategy impacts their current and future classrooms.

Procedures: Students admitted to the Early Childhood Education program will be asked to allow their Two by Ten reflective assignments be used in this research. There are no identifiable discomforts or inconveniences with this assignment. Students in Block II and III will be asked to complete a pre and post survey, the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale- Short Form (STRS-see attached) as part of the Two-by-Ten assignment. The pre survey will be conducted at the end of their first week in their field experience and the post survey will be conducted at the end of the fourteenth week of their field experience. The survey that the pre-service ECE students complete will be assigned a number, used for both the pre and post survey so that a comparison of growth in the student-teacher relationship can be measured. The list of assigned student names and numbers will be maintained in a locked cabinet in the ECE suite, 328 Human Sciences. The expected duration of the ECE student's participation will be at the end of each semester when they submit the assignment.

Risks of Participation: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: The potential benefits which may accrue as a result of their participation in this research include expanding the body of knowledge regarding the impact of using the Two by Ten guidance strategy on pre-service teachers' attitudes. Individual participants may benefit by reflecting on and providing information helpful in determining the effectiveness of the Two by Ten guidance strategy.

Confidentiality: All data will be stored in locked cabinets in 328 Human Sciences. Only the PI,

Co-PI and Graduate Research Assistant will have access to the data. The data will be kept until December 2018. The data will be reported to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Journal- Young Children. All data analyzed will be de-identified, removing any information which would connect with the student. Each assignment used in the research will be assigned a numeric value which will not identify the author in anyway.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely in 328 Human Sciences and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

Compensation: No compensation or extra credit will be offered for participation.

Contacts: If you have questions about the research or the subject's rights, please contact Dr. Gretchen Cole-Lade at 328A Human Sciences, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-2099, Marie Collins, MAT, 328E Human Sciences, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-6376, or E. Karen Pirtle, 233 Human Sciences, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-6282. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights: Participation is voluntary and subjects can discontinue the research activity at any time without reprisal or penalty. There are no risks to subjects sue to withdrawal.

Signatures: I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the prospective participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

VITA

Emily Karen Pirtle

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: “FORMING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH CHILD”: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF THE TWO-BY-TEN GUIDANCE STRATEGY ON PRESERVICE INTERNS

Major Field: Human Development and Family Science

Biographical:

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Phone: 918.619.3698

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Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK in 2017

Completed the requirement for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK in 2016

Experience:

Dates

December 2016 – Present

Position and Location

Teacher Assistant Preschool I
Child Development Laboratory
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK

August 2016 – December
2016

Student Teaching Internship

Robertson Elementary School
Tulsa Public Schools
Tulsa, OK