UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESERVICE TEACHERS' AUTONOMY

IN CONSTRUCTING PERSONAL PRACTICAL THEORIES OF

TEACHING AND LEARNING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2006

UMI Number: 3239543

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESERVICE TEACHERS' AUTONOMY
IN CONSTRUCTING PEROSNAL PRACTICAL THEORIES OF
TEACHING AND LEARNING

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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DEDICATION

My family

Father, mother, sister, Yoon-Kyung and brother, Se-Hyun

And

Dr. Deborah Rodgers

Who always encourages me to define my own autonomy in my educational journey.

I would also like to acknowledge all my former academic advisors in Korea who helped me develop the foundation of my studies in Early Childhood: Dr. Jumsook, Rue, Dr. Hyeryung Rue, Dr. Injeon Park, and Dr. Hyunjin Lee of Yeungnam University; Dr. Kyungja Park of Yonsei University; and Dr. Junghee Jung of Kyungpook National University. They were my first mentors who provided me with the knowledge to define my vision and goals. It was their unconditional support through the years that gave me the strength to aspire to my dreams of where I am today.

And to my friends...I do not know what I would have done without all your friendships. Thank you for always being there for me when I needed the emotional support and words of encouragement to help me get through some of my more challenging times in America. You were always there to share my sorrows and multiply my happiness. I will always cherish all the memories we have created and look forward to making much more! My best friends at the University of Oklahoma: Hyunwook, Minsook, Misuk, and Sookyung; my best friends in Korea: Jungmi, Miseung, Sina, and Sunjung. I love you all!

Last, but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, my sister Yoonkyung, and brother Sehyun for their unconditional love and support through all these years. Thank you for believing in me and instilling in me the importance of learning to be able to achieve whatever I set out to do.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study analyzed the four early childhood preservice teachers' autonomy in constructing personal practical theories in teaching and learning. The research questions of this study are: 1) What are the preservice teachers' personal practical theories about teaching and learning? 2) How have preservice teachers developed their personal practical theories in the context of early experience, teacher education program, and intern teaching? 3) What are the factors influencing the preservice teachers' development of autonomy in constructing their personal practical theories of teaching and learning?

In the findings, the differences of four early childhood preservice teachers in the match or mismatch between their philosophy and personal practical theory related to the how preservice teachers have developed their personal practical theories in context. The differences also are an indicator of each student's personal autonomy. How each four preservice teachers interpreted the dilemmas and issues related to their teaching practice and solved them was different. Each of four preservice teachers developed their own definition of autonomy and acted differently in terms of being autonomous. The early childhood preservice teachers believed that the classes in the teacher education program that critically challenged them to examine their pre-existing theories of teaching and learning promoted their autonomy. The possibility of open communication between intern teacher and cooperating teacher may be an important contextual factor in promoting the preservice teachers' critical reflection and autonomous theory-building process. These findings provided many important implications on the teacher education program.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In any country, the quality of teacher education programs is a critical factor

for successful education. When teacher education programs prepare future teachers

who respond to the development of learners, these teachers can be "change agents for

the society" (Rajput & Walia, 2002, p.42). Facing the educational and social

movements of accountability in education around the world, teachers, especially

preservice teachers, need to be autonomous individuals who can critically reflect on

their beliefs about the educational reforms and question unreasonable demands of the

accountability movement. Presently, since educational reforms, that emphasize

accountability, are predominant in any education system in our world, the need for

autonomous teachers is more significant than at any other time. If teachers have not

learned to be autonomous in all aspects of their lives, they cannot make decisions

about why they do what they do for children. By unconditionally following the

external authority, they are not the owners of their own teaching and learning. Thus,

the teacher educators need to support teachers' ownership in their learning process.

Early childhood teacher education confronts many practical issues seeking to prepare preservice teachers for the educational settings that require many mandates of accountability. Teacher educators are required to educate preservice teachers to meet increasing national, state, and professional standards and to manage the classroom environment to meet these guidelines. Thus, the focus on learning in the classroom makes it compelling for teachers to know how to teach children to get higher scores on many tests and assessments. Thence, teacher educators feel forced to prepare their students to be professional teachers who can teach children to be more competent on many kinds of mandatory achievement tests. Ginsberg (1998) states that in the context of teacher education programs, preservice teachers believe that their role as teachers is to deliver curriculum that others have conceived, rather them developing their own philosophy and practices for teaching students.

Essentially, the claim is made that the hidden curriculum in teacher preparation programs serves to "deskill" preservice teachers' professional role (Ginsberg, 1998; Sullivan, 2005). Popkewitz (1987) states that "the form and content of schooling are interrelated; they are not only channels of thought and action but reinforce and legitimate social values about authority and control" (p.4). Ginsberg

(1988) examined a competency based and a field based teacher preparation program

using ethnographic research methods to analyze the messages in the formal and

hidden curriculum that described contradictions in preservice teachers' conceptions

of the curriculum. In his research, he concluded that preservice teacher education

reinforced the fact that students considered the curriculum as an ideal, unproblematic

guide for teaching children, and they believed that instructing children following

these curricular guidelines would be "appropriate" for students. Thus, the practice of

preservice teachers' personal practical theory of teaching developed under the

influence of the hidden curriculum of the teacher education program.

Through understanding constructivism, teacher educators have begun to

question the existence of objective truths and the possibility of teaching them.

Constructivists study how children learn and develop, recognizing that learning is an

active process based on what makes sense to children given their understanding of

their experiences. This raises questions about the form and content of teacher

education. Teacher educators are beginning to emphasize the view that knowledge

can be formulated based upon the individual's experiences as they explore the

environment around them. So, constructivist teacher educators have made efforts to

educate preservice teachers based on the beliefs that knowledge is not transmitted but is actively built by each person, and thus learning for preservice teachers is also recognized as an active, interpretive process.

However, accepting constructivism as their philosophy, teacher educators and preservice teachers believe a teacher's role is to facilitate the students' self-learning; yet, their teaching practices in classrooms are not easily changed. Regardless of teacher educators' efforts to build a constructivist framework in teaching preservice teachers, few preservice teachers perceive themselves as active learners (Edwards, 1996; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Even when the environment within the teacher education program is one in which preservice teachers' active meaning-making process is valued to some degree, if teacher educators teach preservice teachers in a manner that does not support autonomy, preservice teachers' efforts to be autonomous learners will be inhibited. Through many years of experience in the schools, most preservice teachers believe that knowledge exists outside of them. They tend to uncritically follow the knowledge which was provided by their teachers. In fact, "most preservice teachers have not experienced classrooms where they were encouraged to solve their own problems, develop their own

questions and search for answers, or use critical analysis and reflection to develop their own ideas about issues" (Rodgers & Chaille, 1998, p. 2).

Thus, teacher educators need to realize that unless preservice teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on their personal practical theory of teaching and learning and the nature of their learning in the teacher education programs, their autonomy will be inhibited. While preservice teachers are learning the academic content of their profession, they are also learning the acceptable forms in which to present their content knowledge (Sullivan, 2005). All of these interactions occur within the culture of teacher education programs, and educators and society are inter-connected and influence each other reciprocally. For example, societal pressures, such as the accountability movement force teachers to learn a standardization of the curriculum and follow these standards uncritically. In response to these pressures teacher educators teach preservice teachers to be ready for this accountability movement in school, so preservice teachers might have difficulties in having the chance to practice autonomy in their learning experiences. In turn, when preservice teacher autonomy is limited, the effects of societal pressure are heightened or deepened and the teacher's autonomy is limited even further (Thompson, 2004).

To support the preservice teachers as autonomous learners, teacher educators need to support teachers' ownership of their learning processes. This can be conceived as the effort to understand the significance of critical reflection on accumulated beliefs about learning and teaching. Furthermore, teachers as autonomous learners must try to find the best way for implementing their personal beliefs spontaneously to actively confront various difficulties and forms of resistance from internal and social forces. This idea is consistent with the way Rodgers & Long (2002) understand autonomy: "the essence of autonomy involves using one's own understanding in relation to one's beliefs and values to search for an appropriate course of action" (p. 301).

For the purpose of this study, autonomy is defined as a willingly self-regulated effort to understand a problem, to investigate meaningful solutions through the consideration of multiple perspectives, to make a decision based on one's theoretical rationale, and to act spontaneously while taking full responsibility for one's actions. In particular, to act autonomously people need to ask important and worthwhile questions which can guide them through a critical evaluation of complex situations. For this, one needs to develop their own decisions and actions through

careful observation and critical analysis, not taking anything for granted. This purposeful and reflective exploration cannot be inspired or progress successfully if individuals are not self-motivated.

Individuals who aspire to autonomous learning need to make careful and critical observations, gathering valid information for the proposed questions, never shying from cooperative enterprise. The sharing of ideas allows people to feel support and respect and to express their ideas safely while exploring other ideas in depth. Additionally, people need to analyze gathered information critically, and then draw inferences to form a theoretical rationale that will guide their decisions and actions. One's theoretical rationale can provide understanding and criteria for "worthwhile" decisions or actions; actions and decisions that are also relevant to their society. One's theoretical rationale must be developed logically, because a theory based on experience must be supported by valid premises. Also, in order to be personally meaningful, one's theoretical rationale must be developed through self-regulated thinking, not just by adopting or following authoritarian ideas. Thus, to act autonomously, people need to be conscious of the uniqueness of their thought processes and abilities, so as to better grasp what is right and wrong or appropriate

and inappropriate for themselves, for their society, and for their world.

The theory of self-determination provides the theoretical framework for how teacher educators' practices affect preservice teachers' autonomy in constructing their practical theory. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002), preservice teachers' motivation style, i.e., intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, in constructing their personal practical theory can be explained within the continuum of one's motivation style that ranges from somewhat highly controlled, or not self-regulated, ways of being motivated, through somewhat highly self-regulated, or autonomous ways of being motivated. In this theory, autonomy represents an inner intention of one's actions. In other words, one's actions emanate from oneself and one's intrinsically motivated decision (Deci & Ryan, 1987). The preservice teachers' autonomous development can be influenced by interpersonal factors, in the sense that the characteristics of preservice teachers' inner motivation depends, in part, on the characteristics of their relationships with other people, such as professors, supervisors or cooperating teachers (Eccles & Midgely, 1989; Furrer & Skinner, 2003, Reeve & Jang, 2006).

To understand how the quality of a student's interpersonal relationship

influences their autonomy, researchers have investigated the interpersonal process

that teachers provide to support their students (Reeve & Jang, 2006). These studies

have shown that teachers who support autonomy relate differently to children than do

controlling teachers. To investigate how teacher educators foster or hinder preservice

teachers' autonomous development, it is necessary to review the teacher educators'

style of interacting with their students, to understand how their students perceive the

teacher educators' way of teaching and interacting with them influences their

autonomy. More specifically what do teachers say and do when they support

preservice teachers' autonomy and how and what they do to hinder it (Reeve & Jang,

2006).

Building on my own experiences as an early childhood preservice teacher

seeking autonomy, an in-service teacher, and a teacher educator combined with the

insights I have gained from the research, I argue that the goal of teacher educators is

to support the preservice teachers in constructing their personal practical theories

autonomously. This means that preservice teachers must trust their own abilities and

develop the confidence that they can construct their knowledge independently

through critical reflection. One way to support preservice teachers as autonomous

learners is to critically examine the preservice teachers' personal theory building

process. Teachers need to explore a number of possible factors that influence the

process. This information may help teacher educators support preservice teachers'

reflection on their learning, teaching, and autonomy development through their

teacher education program (Hollingsworth, 1989; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). It is

therefore important to study how preservice teachers develop their personal practical

theories, and what factors support or hinder the preservice teachers' autonomous

theory building. The purpose of this study is to investigate precisely that

development.

Since teaching and learning are complex processes and context-relative,

practical knowledge of a particular context is needed in order to understand the

preservice teachers' learning process so as to inform teacher education. One of the

most important roles of teacher educators is to support preservice teachers in

recognizing the sources of their personal practical theories of teaching and learning

and to critically re-examine what they have considered true and false about teaching

and learning. Personal practical theories of teaching and learning are formulated by

the convergence of personal and practical experiences in the classroom that influence

beliefs about effective teaching. Since the personal practical theories have been

influenced by every single day of the preservice teacher's life, it can be said that the

personal practical theories are in a state of continuous evolution and analysis of them

is a life long process (Hair, 2002).

Thus, an understanding of practical knowledge is essential for investigating

the knowledge-building process, because preservice teachers' practical knowledge

"contributes in critical ways to the ability of learners to understand, frame, and solve

problems and to adapt the application of theory in novel ways to ever-changing

circumstances." (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997, p.62). Applied to teacher education,

conducting research with an aim at deriving a theoretical framework can play an

important role in helping preservice teachers make sense of their learning, rendering

them more effective within a complex and ever-changing learning environment.

Because this type of knowledge is essential for professional growth, it is important

for teacher educators to focus on the development of preservice teachers' practical

theories as they progress through various teacher education programs (Winitzky &

Kauchak, 1997). Even though there are many theories about how children learn and

how to teach children appropriately, and those theories may guide pedagogical

practices, the teachers' personal practical theories more often influence teaching

practices. Preservice teachers continually develop personal practical theories of

teaching and learning, and after they enter a teacher education program they actively

revise those theories. And yet, because these theories are intimately tied to their

worldviews, it is not easy for preservice teachers to perceive what such personal

practical theories of teaching and learning are or how they influence their learning

processes and teaching practices.

Constructivism provides a particularly strong theoretical framework for

understanding how preservice teachers construct their practical theories of teaching

and learning. Theory-building, from a constructivist perspective, is a process of

reconstructing existing ideas with new information to achieve equilibrium, rather

than perceiving theory-building as a mere collection of individual facts (Piaget,

1967). In this constructivist framework, knowledge is about discovering for oneself

how one's world works, or how it makes pragmatic sense. Real knowing may not be

deposited through facts and formulas (Harrington, 1994; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997).

Through the process of knowing, new information, which is inconsistent with one's

formal knowledge, causes an internal disequilibrium and motivates people to adapt

by developing new knowledge (Piaget, 1967; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Thus, the theory building process can be understood as the internal process of reconstructing knowledge to make sense of the surrounding environment (Forman & Kuschner, 1983; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Given the constructivist perspective, building a personal theory of learning and teaching can be construed as a reconstruction of one's own thinking through personal experiences and interactions with an environment (Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). For constructivists, the meaning-making process is the core of any learning experience. Teachers guide their students through active engagement in reconstructing their existing beliefs within an educational environment in which a significant amount of cognitive disequilibration might lead to a reorganization of preexisting cognitive maps (Richards, 1997). To support students' knowledge construction, teachers need to provide tasks and questions that initiate cognitive disequilibrium, thereby motivating students to take the initiative in solving dilemmas.

Most preservice teachers have been successful in school systems that practice traditional methods of education (O'Loughlin, 1990) and have a practical theory of teaching and learning based on these early school experiences. In particular,

they have developed their own beliefs about teaching and learning from a very young

age, learned in many educational environments, and interacted with family, teachers,

peers, and other significant persons around them. Kessler and Korthagen (1996)

emphasize the importance of understanding preservice teachers' practical knowledge

about teaching. Kessler and Korthagen (1996) define universal knowledge as "a set

of assertions that can be explained, investigated, transmitted, and that are of a general

nature that apply to many different situations and problems." (p. 18). They argue that

prior studies about preservice teacher theories have relied on such assumptions of

universal knowledge but that this type of theorizing cannot adequately explain how

the teachers' personal practical knowledge influences and applies to the complex

everyday practice of teaching and learning.

Research on teachers' personal beliefs, i.e., their worldviews, commonly

indicates that such beliefs significantly influence the teaching practice (Peterson,

1988); additionally, teachers make decisions regarding classroom teaching practices

based on personal experiences (Hair, 2002). According to Carter and Doyle (1996),

preservice teachers construct their theories of teaching and learning primarily from

their experiences as students, and these practical theories influence the decisions they

make in their capacity as educators. As preservice teachers practice teaching in the classroom, many come to view their own experiences, their personal narratives, as both relevant and useful. The more useful they perceive these personal experiences to be, the less likely they are to change the beliefs bound up in those experiences (Gill, 2005). Rodgers and Dunn (1997) reported that a preservice teacher found some of her ideas changed by challenges raised in a constructivist centered education program, although those changes involved her perceptions of herself as practitioner rather than her core beliefs about learning.

Teacher educators have a unique opportunity to develop an understanding about the relationships among the psychological, sociological, epistemological, philosophical, and ethical factors that influence the development of new teachers' pedagogies. Personal histories, i.e., experiences of family, of learning, and of being in school, have played an important and powerful role in our pedagogical thinking. By their narrative nature, personal histories evidence accumulation, integration, editing, and synthesis across the actors, actions, and consequences of multiple experiences to form a cohesive and coherent belief system. Preservice teachers' belief systems provide an initial perspective against which they can begin to make

purposeful choices about how they will behave as teachers. While personal histories

are not irrevocably determinant factors for predicting future teaching practices, they

do interact potently with preservice teachers' efforts to frame classroom events, to

identify social and political factors that affect students, classrooms, and policies, and

to adopt more principled ways of thinking about practice in general.

The beliefs about "good teaching" that preservice teachers develop out of

their personal histories, while highly individualized, are not idiosyncratic. By

looking carefully at the contents of the belief systems preservice teachers have built

out of their personal histories and at the processes they have used to build those

systems, teacher educators can begin to understand, and thus more directly influence,

how personal histories help to shape the conclusions that preservice teachers reach as

they participate in the formal study of teaching. In order to address these beliefs in

pedagogical theories, teacher educators have turned to the exploration of personal

experiences of preservice teachers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate precisely that development. In

particular, this study focuses on early childhood preservice teachers who are

graduating from a teacher education program and progress through their student

teaching internship. I focused on understanding the theory building process of these preservice teachers' personal practical theories in the context of teacher education and student teaching practices. In the last semester of the teacher education program, students have the opportunity to critically analyze and integrate their practical theory of teaching and learning constructed in a sequence of teacher education courses. Also, in their internship experience they encounter their first full-time teaching experience and may find more opportunities to construct their practical theories while implementing them in the classroom. Dangel & Guyton, (2003) insist that intern teaching is critical to the scaffolding that preservice teachers need as they develop their practical theory of teaching and learning.

The rationale of researching preservice teachers' development of autonomy during their intern teaching grows out of the notion of autonomy. As stated earlier, in this study, autonomy means one's willingly self-regulated effort to understand a problem, investigate meaningful solutions through a consideration of multiple perspectives, make a decision based on one's theoretical rationale, and act spontaneously while taking full responsibility for one's actions. It would be impossible to know the degree to which particular actions were autonomous in the

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construction of preservice teachers' theories of teaching and learning without

understanding how their perspectives change through real teaching experience.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of culturally diverse

students and this increase brings up an important issue related to the international

students' post-secondary learning experiences (Morey & Kitano, 1997). Research

(Byram & Risager, 1999; Chelho, 1998; Cortazzi & Jin, 1998; 1999; Kramsch, 1993;

1998; Scollon, 1999) has shown that international students had difficulty learning if

they and their teachers merely focus their learning the content without being aware

of the learners' culture. So, meaningful learning cannot be achieved without

considering the given culture of each student. From this aspect, researchers

emphasize the importance of a learner's culture in learning.

Since there are many students from different cultures in teacher education

programs, it is very important that teacher educators understand about foreign

students' culture of learning and how their cultures of learning affect the students'

theory building. Moreover, understanding the influence of cultures on the learning

process is particularly significant for teacher educators who are charged with

preparing future teachers for an increasingly diverse population of learners (Fuller,

1994). Fuller (1994) argued that "little evidence of change in teacher preparation or

teachers' classroom strategies exists" (p. 264), despite these marked demographic

changes and "teacher education faculty must recognize the new demographics and

identify and respond to their educational implications. They cannot assess the

effectiveness of their professional practices without considering the needs of

contemporary classrooms and teachers" (p. 269).

A number of studies reported that teachers' personal experiences,

specifically formal educational backgrounds, are emphasized as important aspects in

forming beliefs and images about themselves as teachers (Connelly & Clandinin,

1986b; Nettle, 1998; Powell, 1996). Since the education system has been influenced

by specific culture that is characterized by values, beliefs, and attitudes, preservice

teachers' formal educational backgrounds finally will affect preservice teachers'

theory building. Research (Morey & Kitano, 1997: Pun, 1990; Richardson, 1997)

reported that a person's formulated beliefs and philosophy about learning and

teaching influenced by certain dominant cultures is very resistant to change. Thus,

for teacher educators, without supporting students from different cultures to

challenge their personal biographies and learning experiences of students

(Richardson, 1997), it can be expected that those students will have resistance to change as they are inducted into old paradigms of teaching and learning. Increasingly, "Adult education must be responsive to the forces prevalent in the socio-cultural context" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p.23). Therefore, I argue that it is very important for teacher educators to investigate how culture is a crucial factor in preservice teachers' learning and teaching, and how it might affect preservice teachers' personal practical theory building and autonomy.

From the outset of this study, I intended to include one Korean early childhood preservice teacher. Because my goal is to be a teacher educator for early childhood preservice teachers in Korea, it is essential for me to know how the Korean student develops through the teacher education program. My assumption is that Korean early childhood preservice teachers construct their personal practical theories differently than Americans, due to different cultural beliefs and, therefore, need to be interpreted differently than American students' processes. Since preservice teachers are adult learners who have been influenced by their culture for a long time, i.e., they have well-developed beliefs which are very tightly connected with their dominant cultures, I felt that the role of learner's dominant culture is too important to

be ignored (Byram & Morgan, 1994). If the researcher is analyzing changes in the

beliefs of preservice teachers coming from different cultural backgrounds but does

not consider the underlying values and beliefs that the preservice teacher holds about

the teaching and learning, the analysis of the data will be distorted. Even though

cultural factors are not directly addressed by my research questions, I reviewed the

literature on the influence of culture to help readers reach an appropriate

interpretation of this Korean early childhood preservice teacher's way of building her

personal practical theory.

Understanding the ways in which preservice teachers build a personal theory,

their thought process and the effects of influencing factors may provide significant

implications to the way teacher educators think about their students' learning. Finally,

teacher educators can develop programs which can support preservice teachers'

meaningful learning processes and encourage the preservice teachers to be able to

trust their ability to be decision-makers in their learning and teaching. Thus, it is

necessary to investigate how the preservice teachers develop their personal practical

theories about teaching and learning and what factors influenced this theory building

process. As teacher educators thoughtfully and conscientiously apply the findings of

this investigation I hope to uncover increasingly meaningful agendas and a

purposeful pedagogy for encouraging preservice teachers' autonomy. Also, based on

the theoretical importance of understanding how the culture influences the learners'

theory building process, this study could provide useful insights for the development

of the preservice students from different cultures and education for them as well as

other preservice students, in other aspects, such as cross-cultural adjustment inside or

outside the classroom. So, the findings of this study will be useful for preservice

teacher education in multicultural learning and teaching contexts, as well as for

teacher education in general.

Overall, the research questions of this study are: 1) What are the preservice

teachers' personal practical theories about teaching and learning? 2) How have

preservice teachers developed their personal practical theories in the context of early

experience, teacher education program, and intern teaching? 3) What are the factors

influencing the preservice teachers' development of autonomy in constructing their

personal practical theories of teaching and learning?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Rethinking Preservice Teachers' Autonomy

That education is clearly in the center of an effort to achieve accountability

and that the force of accountability may eventually pose a potential challenge to the

practice of teacher education is evident. The force of accountability in education is

very dangerous because accountability can make people believe that the reform of

education is simple and only the outcome of education is important. However, on the

basis of outcomes alone, there is no need to be concerned with how the students

learned and how the outcomes are produced. When assessment-based effectiveness

became the center of the purpose of education, rather than democracy and autonomy,

the accountability took the form of standardization. On the other hand, if

accountability were placed in the hands of the local community and characterized by

student, teacher, school, district, and state autonomy, accountability would likely be

characterized by flexibility and individualization (Thompson, 2004).

The growing educational and social movements of accountability in

education can hinder the professional autonomy of educators. Forced by the greater

expectation of accountability, teachers are more likely to uncritically follow

increasing national, state, and professional standards for education. This pressure of

accountability encourage the teachers to focus mostly on how to teach children to get

higher scores on tests and assessments, rather than support for children's self-

regulated construction of knowledge. If teachers, especially preservice teachers, are

accustomed to following the external authority, they may be alarmed that they are not

the owners of their own teaching and learning. Thus, one of most urgent tasks for

teacher education is to support the development of teachers' professional autonomy

in their learning and in their teaching.

As accountability became the major aim of education in society, teacher

educators also struggled to understand their roles in a changing social context (Malen

& Knapp, 1997; Boote, 2000). With one teacher responsible for a whole group of

students in the class, teachers must consider and make decisions about an ever-

changing number of issues of teaching practice. The question of how preservice

teachers understand the requirements of education in this extremely flux and

contingency based society has become a central question (Boote, 2000). Many

teacher educators and teacher education programs have tried to support preservice

teachers questioning of their assumptions about teaching, yet as research on

preservice teachers' beliefs indicated, most preservice teachers' beliefs have not

changed significantly (Michalec, 1998; Travers, 2000).

As there is an increase of pressure for the test-based effectiveness of

education, the professional autonomy of preservice teachers, who will be in charge of

future education and who will have the power to change society through education, is

more important. If these teachers cannot develop their autonomy and cannot learn to

be autonomous in all aspects of their lives, they cannot make decisions about why

they do what they do for children in education. With the ownership of their learning

process, teachers, especially preservice teachers who are starting to develop their

own theories of teaching and learning can critically reflect on their beliefs or

philosophies regarding educational reforms and can question unreasonable demands

of the accountability movement. Thus, the professional autonomy of teachers ought

to be the aim of teacher education.

Teachers' professional autonomy is also important because it can support the

achievement of the goal of children's autonomy. Kamii and Kamii (1990) explain,

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"If we want adults to become autonomous citizens in a democratic society, we must raise them from the beginning to be critical thinkers who can make their own decisions by weighing relevant factors" (p. 25). Every day, young children learn to be the kind of adults they will become. To encourage children to be autonomous learners, teachers need to support children's autonomy by encouraging them to value autonomy in their lives. The development of the autonomy of learners must begin with young children and continue into adulthood.

From a constructivist perspective, some educators emphasize autonomy as the aim of children's education. These educators claim that society has changed rapidly and that there is more emphasis on educating children to be autonomous people who are able to critically pose their own problems from their experiences, actively investing the possible solutions for the problems while acting spontaneously based on their decisions (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Kamii & Housman, 2000). Also, they explain that teachers, who have a better understanding of how children learn and how autonomy plays an important role in their learning, will appreciate children's understanding. Thus, when one appreciates children's understanding, one will be better able to help children and support children's learning by providing autonomy

supportive environments.

While teachers' autonomy can be a premise for the development of

children's autonomy in the classroom, other educators also claim the importance of

supporting pre-service teachers' autonomy in teacher education programs (DeVries &

Zan, 1994; Fosnot, 1996; Kamii, 1985; Burk & Dunn, 1996). To support children's

autonomy, teachers need to make their decisions about teaching and learning based on

scientific research about how children learn. Autonomous teachers learn to make

better decisions by doing their own thinking, by setting their own goals, and by doing

their own plans (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Kamii, 1985).

Understanding Autonomy: Definition and Development of Autonomy

In literature, the word autonomy has many meanings. The psychological and

educational literature and research on human motivation extensively addresses the

constructs of autonomy. The literature describes "autonomy" as similar to the

concepts of competence, volition, self-empowerment, and/or self-determination

(Deck & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & LaGuardia, 1999; Wilson, 1993;

Wilson & Coolican, 1996; Paige, 2003). Additionally, "autonomy" is defined as an

autonomous individual who approaches tasks with an internal perceived locus of

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causality, rather than an external locus of causality (deCharms, 1968; Paige, 2003).

In other words, autonomous individuals act in accordance with their own decisions,

which are self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000). So, the most common conception of

autonomy includes self-governance, self-direction, and independence.

From a psychological view, Deci and Ryan (1985), based on the work of

deCharms (1968) and their own research in human motivation theory, developed a

self-determined theory (SDT) and explained autonomy based on human motivation.

These individuals theorize that every person has the basic need to experience

autonomy, competence, and relatedness and they are internally energized in

organizing and enacting their own behaviors, as well as in feeling volitional and

involved (Ryan & LaGuardia, 1999; Paige, 2003). In this theory, regulation through

choice is characterized by the absence of external pressure. Deci and Ryan's (1987)

explanation of autonomy clarifies the fact that the determination of whether or not an

action is autonomous is the motivation behind the action and not the action itself.

Deci and Ryan have developed a theory concerning personal motivation and insist

that being aware of one's self is a very important aspect of autonomy orientation.

This awareness needs to be non-pressured and needs to lack anxiety (Deci & Ryan,

1985). Thus, Deci and Ryan (1985) explain that the characteristic of autonomy is an

individual's realization of their own systematic and integrated needs, feelings, and

beliefs.

The theoretical work of Deci and Ryan (1985) is consistent with Nyberg's

definition of autonomy. Nyberg more precisely (1981) defines autonomy in the

following statement: "Autonomy, though, does not mean being free to do anything. It

means self-governing...but not free of the larger whole that sustains it" (p.129). He

insists that "autonomy signifies that a person's wants and purposes are related to

each other in a hierarchy ordered on the basis of held values and commitments, that

the person is internally organized, has reasons, and chooses accordingly." (p.129). He

also emphasizes that all elements, which consist of autonomy, are interrelated and

have a dynamic relationship.

Paige (2003) summarizes the definition of autonomy from the

psychological view as follows: An autonomous person approaches tasks with an

internal perceived locus of causality (deCharms, 1968) and sees their actions as self-

empowered. Autonomous individuals (a) are energized when they organize and enact

their own behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985), (b) are intrinsically motivated to continue

the behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985), (c) perceive their behavior as volitional (Ryan& Deci, 2000), (d) persist in intrinsically motivated activities (Ryan & LaGuardia, 1999), and (e) self-govern within the context that sustains them (Nyberg, 1981).

From the view of constructivism, autonomy means the ability of self-activity or self-regulation, and an autonomous individual is one who is able to make their own decisions (Devries & Zan, 1994). This view of autonomy emphasizes the importance of the ability to understand a problem, consider multiple perspectives, and investigate meaningful solutions based on one's decisions that are not influenced by an external authority. Piaget (1965) insists there are two kinds of autonomy, intellectual autonomy and moral autonomy, and he distinguishes between the two. He explains that intellectual autonomy refers to an ability to distinguish between what is true and untrue. On the other hand, moral autonomy refers to an ability to distinguish between what is morally right and wrong (Piaget, 1965).

Piaget insists that an autonomous person is intellectually autonomous and also morally autonomous. More precisely, the intellectual point of view of autonomy emphasizes the character of freely thinking and taking action based on personal beliefs and not following external authority (Piaget, 1965; Youniss & Damon, 1992).

The moral point of view on autonomy replaces the authoritative norms of rules and values that have been imposed on individuals (Devries & Kohlberg, 1987). Based on Piaget's definition of autonomy, Kamii (1994c) defines autonomy as "the ability to make decisions for oneself, about right and wrong in the moral realm and about truth and untruth in the intellectual realm by taking all relevant factors into account, independently of rewards or punishments" (p .4). And Rodgers and Long (2002) define autonomy as the act that an individual determines an appropriate course of action in light of their beliefs and values. Relatively, Haworth, (1986) insists that an autonomous person is one who is in charge of their professional life and one who is able to act appropriately according to the context.

Overall, one can understand autonomy as the ability to make intellectual and moral decisions by considering various perspectives and by making decisions about what is good for one's self and others based on an understanding of various perspectives. This ability enables teachers to critically think about why they do what they do for children. One can infer that a teacher who perceives themselves as autonomous will be able to make decisions regarding teaching practices based on their beliefs and their knowledge of how children learn and what children need to

learn. These decisions will be made by critically examining others' perspectives and making informed decisions.

Autonomy as an aim of early childhood teacher education programs is even more critical than in teacher education in general because early childhood is the critical developmental stage for developing autonomy. Therefore, the early childhood teachers' dispositions impact the development of young children. For example, if young children are educated under an authoritarian teacher who insists on compliance and conformity to external authority, they will not be able to develop their own thinking while being forced to follow the rules of the teacher (Kamii & Housman, 2000). In a similar manner, preservice teachers who have not had a chance to develop autonomy in their teacher education programs are not likely to promote autonomy in young children. Since teachers who are not autonomous make decisions about teaching children depending on others' opinions of what to do, teacher education programs must encourage the development of preservice teachers' autonomy. Thus, these autonomous teachers can support children's autonomy in their classrooms. For teacher educators to question how early childhood teacher education programs support preservice teachers' autonomy is important.

With the understanding of why autonomy is important for early childhood,

for teacher education programs to think about how teacher education programs

support the preservice teachers' autonomy is possible. To teach preservice teachers to

recognize how children construct knowledge and support children in autonomy

supportive ways, programs need to encourage preservice teachers to understand

children's learning processes and the importance of autonomy in learning. And, these

programs need to critique their practices and other policies in schools, rather than

merely forcing educators to memorize specific knowledge for teaching. Thus,

promoting preservice teachers' autonomy through teacher education programs can

help preservice teachers appreciate the importance of autonomy in learning and in

teaching. Therefore, preservice teachers will be able to promote autonomy in

children, as well as in themselves (Burk & Dunn, 1996).

As a result, the teacher education programs that emphasize and support

autonomous teachers will equip preservice teachers with the resources to become

more autonomous educators. These autonomous preservice teachers will make the

effort to accomplish education for children based on their beliefs, rather than on

merely following state and national mandated curriculum guidelines and will manage

the classroom environment to meet the guidelines without questioning their

relevance to children's autonomous learning. Moreover, these autonomous teachers

can co-create curriculum and activities with children and can become curriculum or

educational policy creators, not just curriculum enactors.

Most importantly, to support the autonomy of preservice teachers, teacher

educators need to support teachers' ownership of their learning processes. The

ownership of their learning can be understood as the ability to recognize the sources

of their personal practical theories of teaching and learning and to critically re-

examine what they have considered true and false about teaching and learning. This

aptitude means that preservice teachers trust their abilities and develop the

confidence to construct their knowledge independently through critical reflection.

This idea is consistent with the way Rodgers & Long (2002) understand autonomy:

"the essence of autonomy involves using one's own understanding in relation to

one's beliefs and values to search for an appropriate course of action" (p. 301).

Briefly, autonomy can be perceived as the effort to understand the significance of

critical reflection on accumulated beliefs about learning and teaching. In order to be

an autonomous learner, people need to find the best way to implement their personal

beliefs spontaneously in order to actively confront various difficulties and forms of resistance from internal and social forces.

In spite of recognizing the importance of supporting preservice teachers' development of autonomy in teacher education and in spite of understanding how teacher educators facilitate their autonomy, many teacher educators still struggle with promoting autonomy. Ideally, teacher education programs try to ensure that preservice teachers gain the capacity to be autonomous learners and teachers. Yet, students often cannot acquire the competence to be autonomous, to appreciate the self-control, to have self-governed action, and to realize the independence that they can bring (Boote, 2000).

This perspective has been convincingly demonstrated by Holt-Reynolds (1992, 1994). She observed the preservice classes and then asked educators what they understood about those classes. The professor she observed emphasized the importance of using active teaching methods, stressing that the student passivity inherent in the lecture method was not conducive to learning. The preservice teachers readily agree that active teaching is important and that student passivity negatively impacts learning. Unfortunately, through observation and interviews with the

educators, she found that, in their learning process, preservice teachers redefine passivity, maintaining that motivated students are actually actively listening during a lecture (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

The most significant obstacle for this thinking might be that individual students already have their own beliefs about teaching and learning and, as adult learners, they bring their diverse autobiographies with them as they enter college. Since most preservice students have been successful in school systems that practice traditional methods of education (O'Loughlin, 1990), for preservice teachers to advocate the importance of autonomy is difficult. This idea suggests that "understanding teachers' individual theories and how they influence their learning [informs] and hopefully [strengthens] the teacher education practice" (Whitbeck, 2000, p.129).

Therefore, teacher educators' understanding of their students' personal and internal processes of theory-building may provide opportunities for teachers to recognize connections, or the lack of connections, between their philosophies of learning and their actions (Hollingsworth, 1989; Schubert, 1986). In this respect, it is useful to consider how preservice teachers develop their personal theory-building.

The literature reviews on teachers' theory-building processes provides a theoretical

framework for understanding and analyzing the preservice students' development of

autonomy in learning and teaching. From this review, it is possible for one to find

appropriate ways to help preservice teachers become autonomous learners and

teachers.

Personal Practical Theory -Building of Preservice Teachers

The research on preservice teachers' practical theories claims that an

understanding of their practical knowledge is essential for investigating their

knowledge-building process. Preservice teachers' practical knowledge "contributes

in critical ways to the ability of learners to understand, frame, and solve problems

and to adapt the application of theory in novel ways to ever-changing circumstances"

(Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997, p.62). Kesslers and Korthagen (1996) emphasize the

importance of understanding preservice teachers' practical knowledge about teaching,

as they claim the problem of preservice teachers are the universal theories about

teaching and learning. Kessler and Korthagen(1996) define universal knowledge,

which is formulated in abstract terms, as a set of assertions that can be explained,

investigated, and transmitted. And, of a general nature, these assertions apply to

many different situations and problems (p. 18). They argue that prior studies about preservice teacher theory have focused on universal teacher knowledge and this type of theory cannot explain well how the teachers' personal and practical knowledge influence and apply to one's complex and everyday practical teaching and learning. So, for teacher educators to focus on the research of the development of preservice teachers' practical theory as they progress through teacher education programs and clinical teaching in classrooms is important (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

Since teaching and learning are complex processes, context-related actions and practical knowledge of particular contexts need to be researched to understand the preservice teachers' learning process and to improve teacher education for these individuals. Applied to teacher education, investigating and understanding preservice teachers' practical theory by conducting research and by deriving information from a theoretical framework can play an important role in helping preservice teachers make sense of their learning. This information is beneficial in effectively teaching within complex and ever changing learning environments.

As teacher educators try to understand the ways in which preservice teachers build personal theories about learning and teaching, they are able to have insights

about preservice teachers' thought processes, as they continue to develop personal

beliefs of how children best learn and about how they best teach children. Based on

teacher educators' understanding of their students' personal internal processes of

theory building, educators may provide more appropriate opportunities for preservice

teachers to recognize how their personal theory affects their own learning and

teaching practices in classrooms (Hollingsworth, 1989; Schubert, 1986). Thus,

understanding the ways preservice teachers build personal theories and develop their

thought processes, as well as understanding the effects of influencing factors, may

provide significant implications on the way teacher educators think about their

students' learning in teacher education programs. Finally, teacher educators can

develop teacher education programs that support preservice teachers' meaningful

learning processes.

Personal practical theories are the personal and practical educational beliefs

that work for how teachers practice or teach within their classrooms. Research on

teachers' thinking generally indicates that teachers' personal theories and knowledge

are a basis for teaching practices (Hair 2002; Peterson, 1988). The research also

indicates that teachers make decisions in their teaching practices based on the

personal and practical experiences they experience in their lives (Hair, 2002: Gill, 2005). Cole and Knowles (1993) stress, "Teacher practice is idiosyncratic" and express "a way of knowing" that is deeply embedded throughout preservice teachers' lives with experiences from home, school, and community (p. 474).

Regarding the development of personal practical theory, Hair (2002) explains that teachers develop their teaching practices through the convergence of personal experiences and practical experiences. Additionally, Hair states that teachers form their theories of practice, which influence their beliefs about what the students need to learn and what is appropriate, and that these theories affect teaching for them. These findings are because the personal and practical experiences are influenced by every single day of the preservice teachers' life (Cornett. 1990b; Hair, 2002). When the personal and practical experiences are influenced, the experiences then influence a change in the theories of practice. Therefore, personal and practical theories are in a state of continual evolution and the analysis of these theories is an ever-changing and life-long process (Cornett, 1990; Hair, 2002). Furthermore, preservice teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs are attained with an informal and unconscious manner and are strongly held and resistant to change. The changing of beliefs is a

developmental process, taking place over time and continued through many struggles

and successes (Hair, 2002, Gill, 2005).

Through lenses based on prior experiences, preservice teachers interpret

their teaching practices and shape their perceptions of teaching and learning (Carter

and Doyle, 1996; Howson, 1998; Gill, 2005). According to Carter and Doyle (1996),

preservice teachers begin to construct their personal and practical theories of

teaching and learning based on their own experiences as students. In other words,

how their teachers taught them and how they learned from their school life,

significantly influences the decisions they make during their own teaching practices.

Preservice teachers' personal narratives can be truthful and relevant to their practical

theories of teaching and learning (Gill, 2005). Other research (Connelly & Clandinin,

1986b; Nettle, 1998; Powell, 1996) emphasizes teachers' personal biographical

experiences. Specifically, formal educational backgrounds emphasize an important

aspect in forming beliefs and images about themselves as teachers. Nettle (1998)

researched the student teachers' beliefs about teaching that these students have upon

entering teacher education programs. From identifying the changes, if any, in the

students' belief about teaching before and after a three-week practicum, Nettle

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reports that student beliefs at the completion of their practicums are closely associated to the beliefs about teaching held by their supervising teachers. Nettle explains this result as a transformation of beliefs through modeling and communication.

Calderhead (1991) and Howosn (1998) summarize the general findings in the research on the preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes. These are: (1) Preservice teachers have a wealth of initial knowledge about teaching (2) Preservice teachers' knowledge may not be well adapted to their teaching practice in the classroom (3) Links between thought and practice are problematic (4) Learning to teach is different from other forms of learning in academic life (5) Every preservice teacher appears to differ in how they conceptualize learning to teach (6) Various areas of knowledge growth occur in the processes of learning to teach.

Winitzky and Kauchak researched preservice teachers' knowledge and they summarized their findings from that research. Winitzky & Kauchak (1997) reviewed the major findings derived from research on preservice teachers' knowledge and explain that several themes emerge from the research on teachers' knowledge growth. Winitzky & Kauchak (1997) explain that, first, preservice teachers' initial knowledge

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at the beginning of a teacher education program is fragmentary and unstable. They

also explain that in the inspection of early-teacher education program concept maps,

they find that concepts are very little and are not linked to each other in organized

hierarchies. Rather, the concepts are arranged haphazardly (Winitzky, 1992; Winitzky,

Kauchak and Kelly, 1994; 1995; Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

Second, as preservice teachers study in teacher education programs, their

structural knowledge of learning and teaching increases over the course of the

teacher education programs, continuing to increase with their teaching experience.

But, the process of preservice teachers' constructing knowledge in teacher education

programs is uneven and idiosyncratic. Winitzky & Kauchak, (1997) explain that

preservice teachers' concept maps about learning and teaching reveal substantive

differences between them, even over time and in the same preservice teachers. Even

though they are all elaborate, well-organized, and coherent maps, the maps are all

very different from one another. These findings support the constructivist view that

learners create meaning in unique ways (Winitzky, 1992;, Winitzky, Kauchak and

Kelly, 1994; 1995; Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

Lastly, according to the Winitzky & Kauchak (1997), the way preservice

teachers construct knowledge is influenced by a variety of factors and their growth of

knowledge is significantly correlated with their ability to deeply reflect on teaching

(Winitzky, 1992). Winitzky & Kauchak (1997) explain that the maps of preservice

teachers who are struggling in the teacher education programs are much less

elaborate and grow more slowly over time than the maps of more successful

preservice teachers (Winitzky and Kauchak, 1995). Also, while individual

knowledge construction is predominantly idiosyncratic, some patterns are still

discernible (Winitzky & Kauchak; 1997): Over the course of programs, preservice

teachers' use of their concept maps of common professional language increases

dramatically (Winitzky & Kauchak; 1997). Moreover, preservice teachers who are

placed in classroom settings where the philosophy of teaching and learning closely

matches their university coursework experience greater structural growth than those

in more conventional settings (Winitzky, 1992). Taken together, several conclusions

can be drawn from the mentioned research. First, preservice teachers' beliefs, or

knowledge, about teaching are determined by the preservice teachers' prior

knowledge and beliefs, as well as by their present structural and personal influences

(Howson, 1998). And, even though teachers construct personal and practical theories

in unique ways, program experiences in the form of formal instruction and clinical

experiences, as well in the form of teaching experiences, influence what is learned

and how it is learned (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

Research has been conducted on a variety of teacher education programs

involving preservice teachers to determine the influence of teacher education

programs on teachers' development in learning and teaching. Wideen (1993)

reviewed the literature of fifteen studies about the effect of constructivist based

teacher education programs on preservice teachers' development of beliefs about

teaching and learning. They conclude that there is a variation in the results. Some of

the studies report the significant influence of teacher education programs on

preservice teachers' personal practical theories in learning and teaching is in the

changing conceptions about learning and teaching. (Fosnot, 1992; Gunstone, Slattery,

Baird & Northfield, 1993). These studies explain that the effective teacher education

courses are able to challenge the preexisting beliefs of the preservice teachers and

then reflect on and analyze the experiences within the course.

On the other hand, some research has mixed results and some report that there

are no significant influences of teacher education programs on the preservice

teachers' development of practical theories of teaching and learning. The common

theme among the research is that preservice teachers' preexisting personal practical

theories are consistent through teacher education programs and through the difficulty

in changing those beliefs, as teacher educators' attempt to do in their courses

(Wubbles, Korthagen, & Dolk, 1992). These results show that preservice teachers

reconceptualize their beliefs about pedagogical strategies and subject matter through

the slow process of conceptual change (Howson, 1998).

Understanding the Theory-Building Process Based on Constructivism

The purpose of studies about personal theory-building is to gain an

understanding of how teachers think. Yet, many researchers focus on knowing only

what teachers are thinking and how their thinking influences their classroom practice.

This focus is another perspective grounded on the theoretical premise of Piaget's

constructivist theory (Burk, 1996; Burk & Fry, 1996; Kuhn, 1992; Rodgers & Chaille,

1998; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). As stated earlier, Piaget's constructivist theory is not

about the collection of factual knowledge; instead, the theory is about knowing

(Forman & Kuschner, 1983; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997).

Theory-building, from a constructivist perspective, is a process of

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reconstructing existing ideas with new information through equilibration, rather than

through a collection of individual facts (Piaget, 1967). In a constructivist framework,

knowledge is about knowing, which is discovering for oneself how one's world

works and how it makes sense. Knowing might not be transmitted in facts and

formulas (Harrington, 1994; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). In the process of knowing, the

new information, which is not consistent with one's formal knowledge, causes an

internal disequilibration and motivates people to learn to develop new knowledge

(Piaget, 1967; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Thus, the theory-building process can be

understood as the internal process of reconstructing knowledge to make sense of the

surrounding world (Forman & Kuschner, 1983; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). With this

constructivist perspective, a personal theory-building of learning and teaching can be

defined as a reconstruction of one's own thinking through personal experiences and

through interaction with the environment around them (Rodgers & Dunn, 1997).

In a constructivist view, personal theory-building is a process of

reconstructing existing ideas when presented with new information (Piaget, 1967).

Piaget states that, in order to build personal theories, it is necessary for an individual

to think about their own thoughts (Kuhn, 1992; Piaget, 1967). Based on this

constructivist theory, Rodgers and Dunn (1997) attempted to understand how

preservice teachers construct their thinking, as well as what teachers are thinking. In

the case study of one preservice teacher's theory-building process, the preservice

teacher participant was in the final stage of a capstone course, which included a

classroom and laboratory component. According to Rodgers and Dunn (1997), as the

preservice teacher studied and practiced the constructivist approach to learning and

teaching, she was unable to make this information connect to her previously

formulated and long-standing personal practical theory. While the teacher was

introduced to the constructivist perspective, this preservice teachers' personal

practical theory was built on her own experiences with learning. As a result, she did

not question her own personal theory about learning and teaching. In conversations

with the researchers during the course of the study, it looked like her personal

practical theories were changing, but, within the consideration of more broad

contexts around her, the researchers realized the lack of change. From this result,

Rodgers and Dunn (1997), recognize the importance of not separating reasoning and

action: "interactions with colleagues and children would be more representative of

person's practical theory than general statements about beliefs and practices" (p. 10).

Rodgers and Dunn emphasize the need to understand the process involved in how

teachers construct their thinking, rather than on focusing only on what teachers are

thinking.

Kettle and Sellars' (1996) idea is closely related to Rodgers and Dunn's

(1997) assumption that preservice teachers enter the teacher education program with

personal practical theories about teaching and learning, which are subject to

reinvention "particularly as they interact with others" (Rodgers & Dunn, 1997, p.10).

These researchers think that preservice teachers enter the education program with

partially formed practical theories about teaching, which will be "elaborated and

refined throughout the course of their training" (Kettle & Sellars, 1996, p. 20). They

conducted the qualitative case study of two female preservice teachers in an

undergraduate teacher education program using interviews, reflective journals of

participants, and card sorting exercises. The purpose of this study was to investigate

changes in the participants' practical theories of teaching and learning over a one-

year time span. In the results of this study, the participants' practical theories about

teaching did not change over the year. For example, at the beginning stage of the

teacher education program, one participant expresses her idea that the teacher should

have control and hold the "right" answers. But, while she is teaching children, her

teaching practices, such as classroom methods and environmental organizations,

change only slightly. She still holds her practical theory that the teacher should be

in control and that teachers have the correct answers. In understanding how

preservice teachers develop their practical theories, Kettle and Sellars (1996) note the

importance of social interaction with peers as a productive factors in theory-building:

"In this study it [is] clear that interaction with peers encourages students to challenge

existing views and their own views about teaching" (p. 23). This information

supports Piaget's (1967) constructivist theory and Rodgers and Dunn's (1997)

indication that social interaction, which challenges one's viewpoint, is essential in

constructing knowledge.

The important role of social interaction on personal theory-building is

recognized by several researchers. Based on the principal of "equal footing" (Piaget,

1965), Rodgers and Dunn (1999) investigated how preservice teachers develop their

personal practical theories, in particular autonomy, through cooperation with their

teams. Their research was conducted under the idea that "through participation in

cooperative interaction, individuals' active exchange of viewpoint may encourage

those involved to reconsider, and possibly reconstruct, their previous understandings

of the concepts, rather than merely accepting the views of others" (p.272). Their

study concludes that social interaction, especially cooperative interaction, can be a

major factor supporting people's learning process.

Powell (1996) also considered the personal and social interaction element as

an important factor in understanding the transformation of teachers' beliefs about

teaching and the transformation of their content knowledge into classroom practices:

"Studies focusing on this information process may broaden our understanding of the

relationships between prior experiences, existing classroom context, and social

construction of personal practical philosophies" (Powell, 1996, p. 149). Kettle and

Sellars (1996) are also aware of the impact of social interaction on the personal

practical theory building process. In this study, that interaction with peers encourages

students to challenge existing views, as well as their own views about teaching, is

clear (p.23). These findings suggest a need for further study in the area of peer

interaction and on the effect the interaction has on the development of personal

practical theories. Isenberg (1990), in her review of studies investigating a teacher's

thinking and beliefs regarding classroom practices, points out that a majority of the

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research examines the presented beliefs of the teacher, rather than the actual thought process. Thus, future studies about teachers' thinking processes will be requested. Kuhn (1992) also agrees that further research is necessary to understand the thinking process. In other words, through probing what it really means to think about thought, the research has made a contribution and it is in this area that important work remains to be done (p. 205).

By pointing out 'consistencies' or 'inconsistencies' between stated beliefs and classroom practices, the teachers' beliefs can be separated from classroom practice. Some researchers (Kagan, 1992; Fang, 1996) insist that actual classroom activity and practice in teacher education courses may be more related to a person's epistemology (Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Thus, the participants' theories about learning, and hence teaching, can be examined within the framework of the practical experiences in which those theories are formed.

In reviewing the literature for studies related to the development of teachers' personal pedagogical theory-building, researchers faced a challenge. As previously stated, the challenge is in identifying studies, which actually examine the theory-building processes of teaching and learning. In the methods of research, a majority of

studies of preservice teachers' theory building processes have been conducted in the context of practicum and students' clinical teaching experiences. This research focuses mainly on the process of translating a theory of knowing and learning into a theory of teaching practices. However, each context provides a unique opportunity for students to operate in accordance with their own theories (Rodgers & Dunn, 2000b) to understand the developmental processes of students' personal practical theories, as conscientious observation of students in different settings is required. More importantly, understanding students' personal and practical theories requires careful observation in a real learning context. Researchers need to collect data as students operate on their theories as participants in classes, as collaborators with peers, and as teachers of young children in their field placements.

Based on the Piaget's theory that autonomy grows out of cooperation, which can be accomplished on "equal footing" (Piaget, 1965), observation and understanding the preservice teachers' interactions with their cooperating teacher and how the relation and interactions influence the preservice teachers' development of autonomy in their personal practical theory-building is required. From understanding this process, it is possible to more precisely understand how the preservice teachers

cooperate with their cooperating teachers in a way that they can begin to operate as a learning system.

Focusing only on preservice teachers' practical theory-building processes during their practicum, or student teaching, without understanding comprehensively the preservice teachers' development, which has developed and accumulated through their teacher education courses, may not be sufficient to discover how they construct the notions that make up their practical theories and that guide their learning and teaching practices. Since students enter their teaching practicums with existing personal theories developed from coursework in the teacher education program, to study how students' practical theory-building has developed through such coursework in the teacher education program is important. Building on this theoretical base, further study of how student teachers become autonomous learners and how their notions of autonomy and practical theories develop in more comprehensive teacher education programs, including a variety of teacher education courses, class activities, interaction with faculty and their peers, as well as practicum, is needed. Further study includes what factors influence their development and how these factors affect their development. From the understanding of these factors, one

can more precisely understand the student teachers' journey to autonomy.

As explained earlier, from a variety of previous educational experiences, as both a participant and a witness of education for numerous years, "students enter the educational program with a well-developed ideological system, as epistemological orientation, an authority orientation, and implicit and explicit theories about pedagogy" (O'Loughlin, 1990, p. 3). Based on these findings, in a broader context, one can infer that individuals are influenced by the culture in which they live. Reciprocally, the culture consists of individuals who have the ability to change it.

The Influence of Learner's Culture on Their Personal Practical Theory-Building

Many scholars and experts define culture in their studies. For example, Hofstede (1980) views culture as "the collective mental programming of the people in an environment" (p. 43), or "the totality of whatever all persons learn from all other persons" in a society (Segall et al., 1990, p. 26). Another view of culture is "a theory of what his(her) fellows know, believe and mean, of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society in which he was born" (Keesing, 1981, p. 58). There is no single definition of culture in these definitions. The fundamental elements in the definition of culture might be a collective social product, rather than

a characteristic of individuals. Within this perspective, culture will refer to a system

of integrated and socially formulated items, including knowledge, attitudes, customs,

and beliefs that differentiate one group (society) from other groups (Condon, 1973).

Culture is an important element of a person's life (Brown, 2000; Palfreyman

& Smith, 2003). Culture consists of situations and circumstances in which one lives,

works, and communicates with other people in a society, and culture can guide the

behaviors or the beliefs of people in one certain group or community and make them

understand the expectations of other people in the same group and how to act in

accordance with these social expectations (cultures) (Brown, 2000; Byram & Risager,

1999). Byram and Risager (1999) argue that culture, then, is a form of regulation and

organization for people to understand and interpret the behaviors and emotions of

other people.

Olson and Bruner (1996) argue that learning and teaching are linked as "one

special form of sharing or coming to share beliefs, goals, and intentions – in a word,

as a culture" (p. 10). In the context of how culture influences education, in particular

in the understanding of culture reflected at school, many researchers have studied the

relationship between culture and learning. To know the role of culture in people's

learning process, they also investigated the characteristics of different cultures and how these characteristics influence education in each society in different ways. Research (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Byram & Risager, 1999; Chelho, 1998; Cortazzi & Jin, 1998; 1999; Kramsch, 1993; 1998; Scollon, 1999) shows there is a close relationship between cultures and learning and research argues that meaningful learning cannot be achieved without considering the given culture of each student.

From the perspective of learners, those researchers emphasize the importance of a learner's culture in learning. They argue that students have difficulty learning, as they cannot learn the contents comprehensively if learners and teachers merely focus their learning on the contents without being aware of the learners' culture. Byram and Morgan (1994) argue that since learners are essentially connected to their given culture and since learners enter the classroom with their own given cultures, it is important for learners to understand and integrate themselves in these cultures to enhance the learning in different cultural contexts. Also, teachers need to understand the relation between their students' given culture and their learning and apply those ideas to their teaching practices in the classroom.

Similarly, Chelho (1998) explains that one possible reason teachers' lesson

plans sometimes do not work well in multicultural classrooms might be that their

instructional styles do not match the learning styles of the students whose cultures

are different from their own. Also, Chelho (1998) points out that both teachers'

instructional styles and students' learning styles might be influenced by their native

social and cultural environments. As a result, if teacher and students have different

cultural backgrounds and philosophies, the beliefs and values about learning and

teaching between the students and the teachers might not be consonant with each

other. Thus, a misunderstanding of each other's actions in the classroom can create

conflicts or miscommunications between students and teachers in the multicultural

classroom.

Scollon (1999), with an ethnographic approach, analyzed and compared

classroom interactions between students and teachers in one Hong Kong institution

where Western teachers lectured to a class of Chinese students from Asian culture.

She found that the differences between Chinese students' and their Western foreign

teachers' beliefs, expectations, and behaviors relate to learning and teaching and the

differences might result from their different cultural backgrounds and cultural beliefs.

These results indicate that students and teachers are influenced by their own cultures;

their beliefs and philosophies are influenced by their cultural backgrounds. Therefore,

students' and teachers' expectations and beliefs about learning and teaching might be

different due to the different cultural values and expectations.

Consequently, researchers emphasize the significance of the role of a

learner's native culture in the second culture classroom and argue that the role of a

learner's native culture is too important to be ignored (Byram & Morgan, 1994;

Kramsch, 1993). In addition, not only in teacher education courses, but also in

teachers' daily practice, there is rare professional discussion about the identification

of culture among teachers (Byram & Risager, 1999).

To explain the influence of one's cultural background and philosophy on the

learning process, Cortazzi & Jin (1998; 1999) first use "culture of learning" in their

research to refer to one's deep-rooted cultural expectations, attitudes, and beliefs

regarding how to behave, to learn, to teach, and to interpret others' behaviors in the

classroom. More precisely, "culture of learning" indicates students' and teachers'

own culturally based expectation, attitudes, and beliefs about appropriate behavior

and norms regarding learning and teaching in the classroom (Cortazzi & Jin, 1998;

1999). The formulation of one's "culture of learning" is taken under the majority of

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one's formal education and informal learning in one's cultural context (Cortazzi &

Jin, 1998; 1999).

From the literature review of culture, those different cultures provide

different beliefs and values that are acceptable for their members are clear. At this

time, to understand what the kind of distinct cultures, including the specific

characteristics that exist in our world, is important. Cultures can be roughly

dichotomized into two broad categories: Western individualism and Eastern

collectivism. These are categorized in terms of the different priorities placed on goals

in society and on the classifications that distinguish cultural concepts of "self" in

relation to "others" (Hofstede, 1980; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). With similar

criteria, other researchers also classify Western culture and Asian culture as

"idiocentric" vs. "allocentric" tendencies (Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clark, 1985),

"independent and inter-dependent" emphases (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and

"individualism" vs. "social relationships" emphases (Yum, 1988). These kinds of

dimensions "[reflect] the position of the culture on a bipolar continuum" (Hofstede &

Bond, 1984, p. 419). This classification reveals significant differences in the values

of a society between Western and Eastern Cultures.

In Western individualistic cultures, such as the United States and Western European countries, individual rights and personal goals are considered important. Traditionally, individualism has been identified as the "feelings or behaviors of a person who puts his (her) own private interest first: egoism" (Hornby, 1974, p. 441), or "a situation in which people are supposed to look after themselves and their immediate family only" (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 419). On the other hand, in Eastern collective cultures, such as in Korea, Japan, and China, the self is understood in terms of interpersonal roles and duties, rather than as personal goals and self-assertiveness. Collectivism refers to the general pattern that "pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout a person's lifetime continue to protect them in exchanging unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 51). A culture of collectivism involves "the need to maintain group harmony above the partisan interest of subgroups and individuals" (Mann, Radford, & Kanagawa, 1985, p. 1557).

The research and theory about how the notion of self, self-construal, or educational practices might be differentiated between two distinct cultures, Asian culture and Western culture, can provide theoretical background for understanding

how each culture's background influences participants' personal and practical theory-building processes through teacher education courses.

How the self is defined in relation to others is distinct and distinguished by cultures, such as between Western individual and Eastern collective cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayma analyzed many studies regarding cultural differences in defining the self and suggest that there are two very different views of the self: the West and the East, or the *independent self-construal* and the *interdependence self-construal*. In Western individualism, the self is defined in terms of separateness from others. This notion of self places emphasis on one's autonomous awareness, emotions, judgments, and actions. In individualistic cultures, the focus is on the individual and cultural goals are to be independent from others. Within this type of culture, independent self-seeking is importantly promoted (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In contrast, in Eastern individualism, the self is defined in terms of connectedness. Unlike the independent self in Western society, the self is defined by the context, rather than as a distinct and separate whole from its context. In other words, the self is very tightly connected to social relationships. Within social

relationships, one's identity is closely connected to one another. The cultural focus is the interconnection among members in social relations, rather than the individuality. Therefore, the interdependent self-construal is predominant in Eastern cultures. Collectivist societies emphasize the harmony, intimacy, group sacrifice, interdependence, and cooperation. On the other hand, people from individualistic cultures place importance on independence, self-confidence, and the individual's rights, rather than sacrifice for others. Hofstede (1980) suggests that Eastern collectivism cultures socialize people to be group-oriented, cooperative, or harmonious with others, and, in contrast, Western individualism cultures support individualistic or competitive challenges.

Hofstede (1997) argues that these differences in beliefs between individualist and collectivist cultures also influence the characteristics of national curriculum in education. Morris and Marsh (1992) report that the curricula of educational programs in East Asian societies is highly centralized and educational policies are also controlled by top-down authority and strongly emphasize a curriculum component promoting certain national goals. This centralized curriculum affects very strongly the out-of school, as well as the in-school, educational practices. In higher education

systems, Hayhoe (1995) compared constantly hierarchically structured Asian

university systems and the American multiversity systems. She reports that

educational systems in Asia, such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, focus mainly on

making a transition from elite education to mass higher education. She also discusses

the implications of a similar trend developing in other Asian countries.

According to Hofstede (1997), in the collectivist classroom with the virtues

of harmony present, confrontations and conflicts need to be avoided. The students in

collectivist cultures have strong uncertainty and avoidance and expect their teachers

to be the experts who know all the answers and have the authority to decide what is

right or wrong. Moreover, intellectual disagreement in academic matters might be

considered personal disloyalty. So, students from collectivist cultures prefer to stay

quiet and hesitate to speak up in larger groups, waiting, instead, for their teachers to

call upon them to answer or ask questions. On the other hand, students from

individualist cultures are more active in asking questions and participating in class.

In addition, not only in teachers' education courses, but also in teachers'

daily practice, there is rare professional discussion about the identification of culture

among teachers (Byram & Risager, 1999). From the learning and teaching

perspective, many researchers have investigated cross-cultural differences at school.

Since the people from the Eastern collectivist cultures care more about the well-

being, the welfare, and the interests of their groups than themseles (Coelho, 1998),

individuals' behaviors that might threaten the harmony or the benefit of the group are

strictly prohibited at school, and cooperation in their group is considered an

important ethic (Brown, 2000). In contrast, people from the Western individualist

cultures care more about personal goals than the group's goals when their personal

goals might conflict with the groups' goals (Coelho, 1998), and they prefer to use

competitive practices within their groups (Brown, 2000). Therefore, as Hofstede

(1990) argues, these cultural norms and beliefs in both collectivism and

individualism influence the purpose of education, the relationship between teachers

and students, and the relationships among the students. In other words, the cultural

differences can result in different values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about

the appropriate behavior and the norms regarding learning and teaching among

students, their peers, and their teachers (Coelho, 1998; Scollon, 1999).

For example, the purpose of education is perceived differently between the

individualist and the collectivist societies. In the collectivist society, the purpose of

education might be to educate the students who have skills for adapting with group members in society. This is a virtue necessary to be an acceptable group member and to know how to do things in order to participate in groups with harmony. On the other hand, in the individualist society, education tries to support a child's preparation for their place in a society of other individuals. Roland(1988) asserts, "Western society may be culturally defined as [composition] of a collection of individuals who as the ultimate unit of society are equal to each other and are essentially similar in nature" (p.12).

From understanding the differences in the culture of learning, it can be inferred that culture can affect the preservice teachers' theory-building. As mentioned earlier, a number of studies report that teachers' personal experiences, specifically formal educational backgrounds, are emphasized as important aspects in forming beliefs and images about themselves as teachers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986b; Nettle, 1998; Powell, 1996). Since the education system has been influenced by specific cultures that have characterized values, beliefs, and attitudes, preservice teachers' formal educational backgrounds will, finally, affect preservice teachers' theory-building.

Some researchers report that a person's formulated beliefs and philosophies about learning and teaching are influenced by certain dominant cultures and are very resistant to change. For example, Pun (1990) investigated the changes of beliefs of East Asian students from teacher-centered cultures, as they studied in a learner-centered postgraduate diploma course for trainers offered by the University of East Asia. This learner-centered university encourages learners to act on their central roles in the learning process and participants are asked to actively build their own goals and evaluate their own learning experiences. Such processes have become highly valued in Western educational systems. Yet, Pun (1990) reports that there is some resistance from these East Asian learners, who have been educated under the teacher-centered cultures.

As nations around the world place importance on globalization, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students who study abroad. This increased number of culturally diverse students is an attempt to attain post-secondary learning experiences (Morey & Kitano, 1997). Without supporting students from different cultures to challenge their personal biographies and learning experiences (Richardson, 1997), it can be expected that these students will have resistance to

change as they are inducted into the old paradigms of teaching and learning.

Increasingly, "Adult education must be responsive to the forces prevalent in the socio-cultural context" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p.23).

Since many students from different cultures enter and study in teacher education programs, teacher educators' understanding of foreign students' culture, of learning, and of how their cultures of learning affect the students' theory-building in teaching and learning is very urgent. Moreover, understanding the influence of cultures on the learning process is particularly significant for teacher educators who are charged with preparing future teachers for an increasingly diverse population of learners. Fuller (1994) argues that "little evidence of change in teacher preparation or teachers' classroom strategies exists" (p. 264), despite these marked demographic changes and "teacher education faculty must recognize the new demographics and identify and respond to their educational implications. They cannot assess the effectiveness of their professional practices without considering the needs of contemporary classrooms and teachers" (p. 269). Therefore, I argue that investigating how culture is a crucial factor in preservice teachers' learning and teaching and how culture might affect the preservice teachers' personal practical theory-building in

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developing autonomy should be required.

Summary

Recently, forced by accountability in education, teachers are more likely to uncritically accept the standards for educators and focus primarily on the performance-based outcomes of education. In this context, professional autonomy of preservice teachers, who will lead future education, is required. Thus, teacher educators need to find appropriate ways to support autonomy in teacher education programs. Review of research on preservice teachers' theory-building process found that preservice teachers develop personal theory-building. Additionally, the factors that influence this process can provide meaningful implications for the teacher educators who support preservice teachers' autonomy. Also, the research on the influence of culture on people's learning processes shows that culture can significantly affect the way learners develop their practical theories. The results and the theoretical framework of this research provide the rationale for research on how culture is a crucial factor in preservice teachers' learning and teaching, as well as how it might affect preservice teachers' personal practical theory building in developing autonomy.

Thus, in this study, the following research questions are addressed: 1) What are the preservice teachers' personal practical theories about teaching and learning? 2) How have preservice teachers developed their personal practical theories in the context of early experience, teacher education programs, and intern teaching? 3) What are the factors influencing the preservice teachers' development of autonomy in constructing their personal practical theories of teaching and learning?

The hope is that by aiming at the exploration of these aspects, this study will provide useful insights for the development of preservice students from different cultures and educations, as well as for other preservice students with additional contributing factors, such as cross-cultural adjustment inside or outside the classroom. Therefore the findings of this study will be useful for preservice teachers' education in multicultural learning and in teaching contexts, as well as for other academic disciplines.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand how early childhood preservice

teachers' personal practical theories of teaching and learning develop in the context

of their teacher education programs and their intern teaching. This study also focused

on how preservice teachers apply their theory to their teaching practice. In order to

understand the thought processes of preservice teachers, I addressed three questions:

1) What are the preservice teachers' personal practical theories about teaching and

learning? 2) How do the preservice teachers develop their personal practical theories

in the context of early experiences, their teacher education program, and intern

teaching? And 3) What factors influence the preservice teachers' autonomy in

constructing their personal practical theories of teaching and learning?

To understand the developing process of preservice teachers' thoughts, the

research design supported open communication with the participants to understand

their thoughts about their learning and their teaching experiences (Glense & Peshkin,

1992; Merriam, 1998). To do this, becoming familiar with the context in which the

preservice teachers worked with children was important. I wanted to understand the context and observe the preservice teachers' development in context at regular intervals to gain a picture of how they thought about teaching and learning. I also wanted to study the preservice teachers' autonomy development, as they revised their personal practical theories of teaching and learning. To encourage open communication to gain an in-depth understanding of their development, I needed to establish trusting relationships with the participants of the study and I needed to maintain their trust.

A qualitative case study is the appropriate methodology for an in-depth understanding and detailed account of a particular issue within its real context (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995). According to Creswell (1998) and Stake (1995), the bounded system is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied – a program, an event, an activity, or individuals. This study was bounded to the one early childhood teacher education program to capture the preservice teachers' complex development of their autonomy during their experience in that program.

Stake (1995) identified two types of case study: instrumental and intrinsic case study. The purpose of the instrumental case study is to examine a particular

instance to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. On the other hand,

he identifies intrinsic case studies in which the study is undertaken for the purpose of

a better understanding of the particular case bounded to a particular context. Based

on this definition, this research was an intrinsic case study.

<u>Participant Recruitment and Selection</u>

Whereas the goal of this study was to understand the process and

development of preservice teachers' thoughts, rather than a generalization or

confirmation, I selected cases to be studied on the basis of their ability to provide

insight regarding the particular research questions. This selection allowed insight into

the research questions (Merriam, 1988).

To investigate the research questions posed in this study, the participants

were early childhood preservice teachers involved in the teacher education program,

who entered their intern teaching semester while this research was conducted. The

intern teaching semester is key, as during the semester prior to graduation, students

take the capstone course, which allows them greater opportunity to critically analyze

and integrate the knowledge formulated during the sequence of teacher education

courses. And, while preservice teachers conducted intern teaching, which is their first

full-time teaching experience, they were able to carry out their own developed

teaching plan. Thus, preservice teachers had more opportunity to develop autonomy

in the context of implementing their teaching practices. Also, preservice teachers

started to see the long-term consequences of the professional decisions they made.

So, I selected the possible participants from senior students in their final semester

before graduation that would start their intern teaching the following semester.

Participants were selected from a pool of early childhood education

graduates at a large Southwestern university. In October, 2005, when I first started

the data collection in the middle of the final semester of the early childhood teacher

education program, I visited one capstone course of early childhood education.

During my visit, I asked students to participate in my research and I provided these

students with the consent form.

To select the cases to be studied on the basis of their ability to enlighten my

understanding of the research questions, I narrowed down the possible participants

based on specific points. I selected participants who were going to enter internships

the following semester. I intended to select participants with similar demographic

characteristics such as age, or martial status, because the developmental processes of

participants can differ as a result of the participants' age and marital status, as well as because of their cultural backgrounds. Out of this group, four participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. I purposefully selected one Korean early childhood preservice teacher in the teacher education program. As of the fall semester of 2005, only one Korean senior preservice teacher was enrolled in the final semester of the teacher education program. This Korean student, Jenny, became one of the participants.

The participants' ages range from twenty-two to twenty-seven years olds. They each came from different academic, family and cultural backgrounds. The four cases did their intern teaching in two separate placements – one in a preschool or kindergarten and one in first, second, or third grade. So, there were differences in the grade levels and in the schools of their intern teaching placements. As such, I expected that each participant would represent diversity, while also identifying common patterns.

Data Collection

Case study uses multiple data sources for triangulation of data (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). In this case study, a combination of interviews, observations,

participants' autobiographies, reflective journals, and other secondary documents

constituted the foundation of the data collection.

Data collection was conducted between November of 2005 and June of 2006,

over the period of the final semester of the teacher education program and their

intern teaching of one semester. During the data collection, I focused intensively on

how each participant interact with the others, how they understand the feedback

provided by the others, and how they apply that information to reconstructing their

personal practical theory of teaching and learning. From the interpretations of the

each of the four preservice teachers' thinking and decision making processes as they

interact with others, such as university professors, peers, cooperating teachers, and

children, I was able to capture how the four preservice teachers develop their

personal practical theories of teaching and learning.

Interviews

Interviews were the main source of the data collection for the study. I

used an iterative design of interviewing because this form helped to "understand

what the person thinks and grounds the answers in his or her experience to give

nuance, precision, context, and evidence all at the same time"(Rubin & Rubin, 1995,

p. 40). Yin (1995) explained that interviews provide the researcher with in-depth explanations and interpretations through the voices of the specific participants who provided their voices and insights into this particular situation. Essentially, in-depth interviewing can provide the researcher with an understanding of an individual's own interpetations about experiences and the meanings the individual makes of those experiences (Pedro, 2001; Seidman, 1998).

In the initial meeting with each participant, I fully explained the nature and the purpose of my study and I received signed consent forms from the participants, giving each a copy for their records. The initial interview questions were broad and were designed to capture general information about participants and to provide ample opportunities for the partipants to respond freely about what they thought (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). During the interviews, I used a set of questions developed to provide meaningful information about my research questions.

During the interviews, I tried not to distort the set of interview questions as I interviewed each participant, being careful about the wording, the context, and the emphasis of the interview questions (Oppenheim, 1992). Also, I included open-ended questions, so the participants could freely share their spontaneous ideas about the

events around them and their unique way of interpreting their experiences

(Silverman, 1993). Silverman (1993) suggested that the researcher should ask the

questions of each interviewee in the same way and make sure that each participant

understands the question in the same way.

After I finished each interview, I transcribed it and read the transcript. As I

read the data, I realized that I needed further clarification and some additional

information from each participant. So, based on the information from a few initial

interviews, I developed further detailed research questions and follow-up questions.

These additional questions were twofold: for clarification and to capture the

unfolding of the perspectives of the participants' as they implemented teaching

practice and interacted with others in the classroom. Each interview was about thirty

minutes to one hour long, although some of the pre-service teachers took more time.

There were several interviews for all the particpants and the interviews could be via

the face-to-face method, over the telephone, or through email. All interviews were

audiotaped, transcribed, and printed for data analysis.

During their final semester of the teacher education program and before they

started their intern teaching, I had two or three initial interviews to get information

about the participants' families, academic and cultural backgrounds, their overall

school experiences through their early years of life, and their experiences through the

teacher education program, focusing on how their personal practical theories of

teaching and learning were developed. During their student teaching, the preservice

teachers were interviewed approximately once every two weeks at the end of their

teaching day. I met with the four preservice teachers individually and conducted

semi-structured interviews with each of them. In these interviews, the participants

were asked to share their experiences.

In addition, I visited the class of each student teacher to observe their

teaching. As all of this data were collected, as accurately as possible, I tried to record

the lived experiences of the preservice teachers, reflecting their perceptions of

student teaching, their concerns or dilemmas during their student teaching, how they

solve concerns and dilemmas, and how they develop their practical theories of

teaching and learning. .

Observation and Note Taking

Understanding the preservice teachers' building of personal practical

theories requires careful observations (Rodgers & Dunn, 2000a). Rodgers and Dunn

(2000a) claim that, to become more aware of the students' personal practical theories, "we must operate as scientists, collecting data as our students operate on their theories as participants in our classes, as collaborators with peers, and as teachers of young children in their field placements" (p. 279). Thus, continuous observations of students in different settings were required to understand students' personal practical theory-building processes.

I visited the classes of each student teacher to observe their teaching practices approximately three times during their eight week intern teaching in each of the two placements. In total, I had approximately six to seven observations of the participants teaching through the sixteen weeks of their intern teaching. Each time I observed all day. After each observation, I had interviews with participants to get more information about what I collected from the observation. From this interview, I could more precisely understand and clarify the participants' views on teaching, on learning, and on their actions. I asked many questions through my informal interviews with participants after they taught the lesson.

During my observations in their classrooms, I took field notes and recorded the preservice teachers' actions as they taught lessons and interacted with

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children, parents, and cooperating teachers. These field notes were helpful because I

could use them as a means of clarifying information participants give me in the

interviews and in their reflective journals. In particular, I was able to check for

clarification of the participants' responses against the notes that I took about

particular lessons and incidents they reported to me in the interviews.

I also observed the participants in the action research class, which was a

concurrent course with the intern teaching. In the teacher education program,

preservice teachers were required to study action research methodology and conduct

a brief action research project. The preservice teachers developed their action

research question based on a problem, or dilemma, they encountered during their

student teaching. In the action research class, they shared what they learned and felt

from their intern teaching and they discussed openly the concerns or dilemmas they

faced through intern teaching. In this class, as I observed how the participants

interacted with others and, as I listened to them voice their concerns, dilemmas, and

many ideas on their teaching and learning, I was able to more deeply and precisely

understand the participants' views.

For a better understanding of coursework, I observed the capstone course of

the early childhood teacher education program, Curriculum in Early Childhood

Education, and two courses in the early childhood teacher education program once a

week during the six weeks.

Reflective Journals

The review of literature finds that reflective journals can add to the richness

of a thick description of the process in which the participants think about learning

and teaching. In other words, the participants' reflective journals provide meaningful

information about how they understand their interactions with others and their

settings. Strauss (1987) emphasized the importance of using the participants'

reflective journals as a data source because reflective journals can provide more rich

information in the data analysis. Creswell (1998) explained the advantage of

reflective journals as a data source with the reason that lived experiences recorded in

participants' journal entries reflect their interactions with their environment. Thus,

from reading the participants' journals, I expected to gain access to their internalized

theory-building process.

At the beginning of their intern teaching, preservice teachers were required

to write a weekly reflective journal as part of their internship. In these journals they

wrote their reflections on class activities, on teaching practices, and on social and personal matters that were significant to them during their teaching practice. The participants sent this journal to their university supervisor every week and got feedback from the supervisor. I requested the reflective journals at the beginning of their intern teaching. I collected these weekly reflective journals from the four preservice teachers and they were used as part of my data, helping me to understand the views of the preservice teachers. From each participant's reflective journals, I was able to gain a broader picture of their concerns and how they interpreted and solved their concerns during their sixteen weeks of student teaching. This information made it possible to better understand the ways the four preservice teachers developed their personal practical theories of teaching and learning.

Essentially, the journal entries were used to triangulate the data. As I compared the content of journal entries with the interview responses and observations of the four preservice teachers' teaching and learning during their intern teaching, I was able to check the internal validity of the data.

Autobiography

In this study, one data source I used was autobiography. I used

autobiography not only to understand the unique background of each of the four

early childhood preservice teachers, but also to explore how their personal and

professional life experiences reflected culture-specific concerns and values.

> A study of an autobiography of a learner's past and current lived experiences
> may be a deliberate and critical process that aims at making educational sense
> through interpretations of expressed thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and
> experiences, as well as examining and/or interpreting the relationships
> between earlier and later events in the lived experiences of individuals
> (Sherwood, 1997, p.60).

> So, the participants' autobiographical writings were also utilized as a source

of data collection.

Since the primary focus of this research was to investigate the development

of autonomy in the context of the personal practical theories of four unique early

childhood preservice teachers, theories that had formulated every single day of their

lives, the participants' autobiographical writings were a good data source for this

study. Teacher educators and researchers claim that the importance of preservice

teachers' autobiographies is that one's autobiographical narrative does not just recall

past experiences, but signifies that a construction of personal mental process can be

interpreted from shared experiences (Butt, 1990; Smith, 1993). This study, especially

the interpretation of each participant's autobiographical narrative, captured the

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essence and the affect of the perceptions, beliefs, and values to the participants'

personal theory-building process. This data then helped to indicate a distinct pattern

of development of autonomy for each participant.

Supplementary Data Source

In the first phase of this study, I read official documents such as the Early

Childhood Education NCATE Folio. In the stage of developing the research question

for this study, my advisor provided me with the official documents that enabled me

to gain broad ideas about the overall philosophy of the teacher education program.

From this information, I was able to glean information on the historical and

philosophical framework of the teacher education program and on the organization

of coursework, such as course requirements, the content of the courses, and the

completion requirements.

Along with reading this official document, I had informal interviews with

instructors who teaches the coursework in the early childhood teacher education

program of the participants. From the interviews with teachers, I was able to get

general information about the coursework through the views of the instructors. I

asked the teachers about the purpose, the goal, and the class activities of the each

class, as well as about the instructors' rationale for those activities. I also asked questions about the instructors' opinions of the goal of the teacher education program and how the instructor will reach those goals. From the interview with the instructors, I gained a better understanding of the instructors' views on their practices of teacher education and on the context of the teacher education program of the participants of this study.

As well as the official document, the secondary documents, such as course syllabi and the statement of participants' philosophy of teaching and learning, provide useful information. The course syllabi helped me to gain a sense of the content and the philosophy of each course the participants were taking. The participants' assignments showed their beliefs and understanding of learning and teaching; for example, their statements of philosophy about learning and teaching compared to their lesson plans, enabled me to see the consistency of the participants' viewpoints of learning and teaching. Thus, I could have a more integrated understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Confidentiality

During data collection, I gave special attention to confidentiality. In any

process of data collection, I considered the possible risk for the participants. Most

importantly, I designed the research plan to consider the participants' safety, needs

and interests. When I collected multiple data sources from others, such as the

participants' university professors, cooperating teachers, peers, and children, I

respected the participants' opinions and obtained permission for data collection from

the participants, or others, such as peers, professors, or the children's parents. All the

information they provided remains strictly confidential and was used only for

research with their permission. Not only was the credibility of data important for

investigating the participants' internal developmental process, but I thought the

intimacy and trust between myself and each participant was crucial through the data

collection process. Thus, in the process of research, I made an effort to establish a

positive rapport with the participants.

Analysis of the Data

For the analysis of the data, all collected data was reviewed, coded, and

categorized into primary patterns across the multiple sources of data. Formal analysis

began with reading and re-reading transcripts of interviews and field notes that I

collected through observations. This review was critical to become familiar with the

participants' views. I kept re-reading the transcripts to see if there were other ideas

missed in the first readings of the transcripts and to search for patterns in the data,

noting the ideas. I first used the interview transcript for participants as a prototype to

search for patterns that answered the research questions, and I subsequently read the

reflective journals and coded them to match the initial patterns I identified in the

interviews. Comparisons among the emerging patterns dominate themes and

provided the framework for finding themes related to the preservice teachers'

personal practical theory of teaching and learning and their autonomy in constructing

those theories.

The themes transformed as the data was continually and individually

reviewed for each preservice teacher and these themes were then analyzed across the

four preservice teachers for comparison of the themes. In an inductive manner, I

explored the themes for thematic and cross-categorical relationships and patterns. I

looked across the data to find themes that cut across the case and determined that

those themes were prominently and commonly reflected in the all data of the

participants (Pedro, 2001). And, I sought to integrate the data in a way that

exemplified an understanding of the participants and the context in the study. If there

were not enough exemplars for a particular theme across the participants, I varied the

themes to allow for the individuality and uniqueness of each participant (Pedro,

2001).

In this thematic analysis of data, the themes were then categorized under

each research question. The themes that emerged answered the research questions

that illustrated the process, the content, and the context through which the preservice

teachers developed their practical theories of teaching and learning. Also, all the data

was interpreted together under the theme of preservice teachers' autonomy in

constructing their practical theories of teaching and learning. Finally, I reviewed the

data for other important findings that were not directly addressed by the research

questions, but relate to the study.

I developed themes using words and phrases that serve as a label for each

research question. As I analyzed the data, I looked closely at the words used by the

participants to pick out themes that answered the research questions and to discard

themes where there was not enough evidence in the data. And, finally, I incorporated

the written responses of the participants from their reflection journals under the

themes, where applicable, to elaborate, or emphasize, a thematic response of the

participant.

In analyzing the data, especially, in developing the themes, because of my

own background knowledge, values, and views, I was very careful about the

trustworthiness of the themes. This trustworthiness was verified as much as possible

by triangulating the data from diverse sources, from the interviews, from reflective

journals, from observations, and from other documents. I made sure that the themes

were represented in more than one data source to ensure the triangulation of data

from many sources. According to Miles and Huberman, triangulation is achieved

when two sources of data reveal the same results, or when two modes of accessing

data achieve the same results (Lapetina, 2001). To do this, after developing and

identifying the initial themes, I continually revisited the data to develop and support

the themes with events I observed, with participants' statement in the interviews,

with statements in their reflective journals, or with any other data.

In making sense of the findings from the data, I tried to interpret the findings

in terms of the theories, or constructs, I used from the literature (Stake, 1995). I also

shared my perspectives in the analysis of data on the emerging themes, in the

discussion of findings, and in the implications of research to the teacher education

program based on my knowledge of the preservice teachers and their actions.

Since my personal biases might interfere in the interpretation of data, I took great care when I transcribed and interpreted the participants' words. The use of triangulation afforded me some objectivity. In this context, to clearly and objectively describe the voices of the preservice teachers in my writings of the portraits of the participants and in the findings, their views were articulated using their own words extensively.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In the analysis of data, four prominent themes emerged are (a) Influence of

the Teacher Education Program, (b) Issues and Problem Solving, (c) Relationships

with Cooperating Teachers, and (d) Influence of Culture.

Following this introduction, I will present findings of each of the four

preservice teachers based on the four themes. At the conclusion of this chapter, all

themes will be analyzed based on the research questions.

Context

This study is situated within an early childhood teacher education program at

a large Southwestern university. The primary data collection involved working with

four preservice teachers during the final semester of their teacher education program

and their subsequent semester of intern teaching. The contextual information of the

teacher education program from which the participants graduated is described in the

Early Childhood Education Program Folio. The philosophy of the early childhood

program is stated as follows:

The early childhood teacher education program is based on the understanding that individuals of all ages gain information about their world through interactions with their environments, including other people. They make sense of this information by constructing theories about how the world works (The NCATE Early Childhood Education Program Folio of University of Oklahoma, 2000, p. 1).

The goal and the objectives of the early childhood program are described as

follows:

The overarching goal of the program is to prepare highly qualified teachers to work with young children and their families in a variety of settings. Candidates are considered highly qualified by demonstrating their abilities to work with young children through the six roles defined in OU's TE-PLUS program: Teacher as educator, communicator, decision maker, scholar, researcher, and leader (The NCATE Early Childhood Education Program Folio of University of Oklahoma, 2000, p.1).

The contextual information describes the role of teacher educators as

follows:

As teacher educators of early childhood preservice teachers, our goal is to provide an autonomy-supportive program so that as our students re-examine their understandings, they integrate what they have learned about young children's learning into their personal practical theories (The NCATE Early Childhood Education Program Folio of University of Oklahoma, 2000, p.1).

The document describes the internship placement as follows:

In Internship in Education (EDEC 5920), preservice teachers have two eight-week placements: One in PreK-or Kindergarten and other in grades 1-3. They are expected to assume full teaching responsibility for 1-2 weeks in each placement. This internship consists of approximately 640 hours. The university supervisor works with the intern and the cooperating teachers, doing official observations and providing formative feedback (The NCATE Early Childhood Education Program Folio of University of Oklahoma, 2000, p.5).

The participants in this study were started taking courses in professional and specialized education during the Spring of 2004 or the Fall of 2005. The participants completed their student teaching (internship) and took the concurrent graduate level courses in action research in the Spring of 2006.

Judy

Background and Her Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Judy is a white female who is twenty-three years old. Judy grew up in a very small town and lived there until going to college. Her father was a truck driver and died when she was twelve years old. So, Judy's mother ran a home daycare for the family and worked in the home. Judy and her brother did not have to go to daycare, or anything similar, the entire time they were growing up. Through her own work

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experience at the day care center, Judy developed her desire to work with children.

Since entering the teacher education program, Judy felt that her philosophy of learning and teaching developed every step of the way through the program and that her beliefs about learning have completely changed. In the interview, she said that she thought that, as she was growing up in her mother's day care center, she learned how to take care of children and how to handle problems with children by observing her mothers' ways of educating children. In the interview, Judy said that, while studying in the teacher education program, she had the opportunity to extensively reflect on her mother's way of rearing her and her siblings and of educating her children in the daycare center. She said that she learned many ways to teach children in the appropriate manner: how to communicate with them, how to give them the skills they need to develop communication, to develop problem solving, and to develop ways to encourage creative thinking and imagination.

She thought that her understanding of the development of children's cognitive development, especially related to the constructivists Piaget and Vogotsky's theories, affected the change in her beliefs about the learning process. In the interview, Judy reflected that her learning about the cognitive theories made it

possible for her to reflect on her early experience of schooling and even on her

learning in college. Through her many years of experience in schools, even in

college, she thought that learning was memorizing knowledge from books or from

teachers, and, as a result, she thought that getting good grades on a test meant

learning had taken place. In the interview, Judy said that as she learned more about

the theories of teaching and learning and more about the research on how children

learn and on how to teach children, she began to revise her own theory into

something that made sense to her. Judy believed that from the classes in the teacher

education program, she had come to believe that learning can occur through the

effort to construct knowledge, rather than through the acceptance of the knowledge

of others, such as teachers. She has started to consider herself an active learner, who

can construct her own knowledge, rather than a passive recipient of knowledge from

teachers. Becoming aware of constructivism has been vital, because, in gaining an

understanding of constructivism, she has discovered what is most helpful to the

children.

With the belief that knowledge is not transmitted, but actively built by each

person, Judy has begun to appreciate the importance of an environment that allows

children to interact, and to question. So, Judy believes that the responsibility of teachers is to create an environment that is safe and secure for children, where they can learn, communicate, and safely interact with one another. In the interview, she repeatedly stated that a teacher is "the facilitator, the questioner. You're not the source of knowledge"

For Judy, another goal in teaching children is to help children learn social skills, such as how to interact and communicate with one another, how to problem solve, and how to ask for things when they want them. In the interview, Judy said that these abilities are important because children need to learn and develop their abilities to interact with others and to construct their knowledge. Judy believed that children can learn through interaction with others, such as with peers, teachers, parents, and other significant people around them. And she thought that children needed to question and explore meaningful activities, as they interacted with materials and with one another. So, as a teacher, her goal of teaching is to facilitate children's learning through the creation of an environment for children to learn.

Influence of the Teacher Education Program

In her statement of philosophy of teaching and learning, she defined

autonomy as:

> Autonomy is a person's ability to think critically about decisions that they
> have to make, to make those decisions, and to act on them, not basing
> those decisions and actions on someone else.

In the interview, based on this definition, Judy emphasized the

importance of one's confidence for developing autonomy. She explained that,

> If people are not confident about their ability to make a decision, they
> are not going to make decisions based on their own knowledge and
> experiences, or on their beliefs. Rather, these people will bring in the
> view of a person of authority, such as teacher's view, a teacher's opinion,
> or a parent's opinion (Interview, December, 22, 2005).

When I asked Judy about how the teacher education program supported

her autonomy, Judy said that she was clueless to the fact that teachers were

supporting her in her autonomy until she enrolled in one of her first classes in the

early childhood method sequence and started talking about autonomy and gaining

an understanding of autonomy. Once she learned about autonomy in this class, she

could see how the coursework in the teacher education program influenced her

autonomy.

In the interview, Judy also said that, before she took the first class in the

early childhood methods sequence taught by Dr. Beck, she never thought about autonomy. Judy thought that in the teacher education program, Dr. Beck's class was the first and the only class that intensively focused on autonomy. Judy said that from this course, she developed her definition of autonomy and applied it to her teaching philosophy. However, because the class was taught by two instructors and Judy was in the section taught by the other instructor. She thought that her understanding of autonomy could not be developed as deep and as much as she expected.

The first class in the sequence was split into two sections, due to the vast number of students enrolled. One of the sections was taught by Dr. Beck and the other section was taught by a adjunct instructor, who was former principal of an elementary school. Of the four students who participated in this study, only Judy was assigned to go with the new instructor. The other three participants were in Dr. Beck's course. On only three occasions did the two sections join together for a joint class lecture taught by Dr. Beck: the first day of the class and on two days when the other instructor was absent. Because Judy was in the other instructor's course, these three days were her only experiences with Dr. Beck. In the interview, Judy reflected on her experience in this course, thinking that although she only had the opportunity

to hear Dr. Beck lecture on these three occasions, Dr. Beck was helpful in

influencing her autonomy. Judy said that

> I didn't gain the deep understanding of autonomy that I think I could have
> learned. I personally did not learn nearly as much the girls above us did
> and as the girls under us who will have Dr. Beck for both of those courses
> (Interview, December, 22, 2005).

In the interview, Judy often said that she wished she had not been assigned

to the other instructor and felt that, had she been in Dr. Beck's class from the

beginning, she would have learned more and would have had a better foundation of

her autonomy. I asked Judy what made her think that way and Judy explained the

reason to be the following:

> Dr. Beck knows how to create a classroom environment and a classroom
> discussion that makes students think. Even though it can be really, really,
> really hard, by the end of the semester, you're like, yeah, it was really
> hard, but I get it now (Interview, December, 22, 2005).

Judy's response led me and herself to think about what classes and their

specific characteristics, influenced her autonomy in the teacher education program.

So, in the interview, I asked Judy what classes supported her autonomy and how they

supported it. Judy answered that, she came to recognize that the autonomy-

supportive classes were challenged students to re-examine their formal theories about

teaching and learning. These classes challenged students not just to provide answers

or to have the students memorize prescriptive knowledge, but to support their theory-

building process and become more autonomous learners. Also, she thought that only

the classes which gave students the freedom to examine their ideas, to experiment,

and to learn can support her self-governed theory-building process. More specifically,

in the interview via email, Judy reflected on the characteristics of autonomy-

supportive class and wrote them as follows:

- Allows students to be creative in the way they develop certain things
- Let's them voice their ideas and opinions and encourages them in these
  areas
- Allows students to solve problems and come up with solutions that
  work for them,
- Creates a classroom environment and learning environment that is
  student-centered.

Also, more specifically, in the interview, Judy explained that a autonomy-

supportive class provides the freedom to decide what students want to do and how

they want to do. Judy said the freedom in the class is:

If you have a paper...what do you want to write about, how do you want
to present it...you have those freedoms...you have the freedom to discuss
things...to be discrete on things...to evaluate things...just the freedom to
decide on things, the freedom to decide on how you want to do
things...all of things within a classroom...you have a voice, your opinion

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matters, your opinion or your view determines what you're doing (Interview, December, 22, 2005).

In the interview, Judy said that, although she could learn about autonomy through the teacher education program, there were a couple of classes she felt did not contribute much support to the development of her autonomy. These classes, in short, were not very challenging nor meaningful to her. On many days, Judy felt that she was wasting her time in these classes, when she could be independently studying something else more meaningful to her.

In the interview, Judy said that, in her teacher education program, she thought that there were few classes that were "challenging" and that supported her own theory-building in teaching and learning. Still, in these and some additional classes that were good, she developed her autonomy. The reason Judy said these classes were not challenging was that the classes required a great deal of memorization along with observations.

In this sense, she described the classes which supported her critical thinking and self-regulated learning. First, Judy talked about the few weeks she was Dr. Beck's class as a class which truly supported her autonomy. She said during the

three weeks of Dr. Beck's class, she was challenged and learned much. But, after she moved to another class, the second class was good, but not as challenging or as secure in the learning.

In the interview, Judy explained that she felt that Dr. Beck's class supported the construction of her practical theory of teaching and learning critically and autonomously. She thought that Dr. Beck always created a classroom environment and a classroom discussion that made students think. This environment and discussion allowed students to be creative, let students voice their ideas and opinions, encouraged students, and allowed students to solve problems. Judy said the following about Dr. Beck's class in the interview:

> In Dr. Beck's class, there was freedom to decide what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it, what I wanted to write about, and how I wanted to present it in the classroom. All these things provided me the opportunity to think autonomously about what I needed to do, leading to my own decision-making, rather than uncritically following the teachers' guidance (Interview, December, 22, 2005).

However, from Judy's statements during the interview, I question to what extent Dr. Beck's lectures could help define her notion of autonomy. One's philosophy of autonomy was not something that could be developed and completed

in a three week period of time. The development of one's autonomy was a process of development through experience and exposure to life. Three lectures were enough to give one a taste of something, but not enough to make a life changing difference. However, in the first class in the early childhood method sequence, taught by Dr. Beck and another instructor, the contents of the course focused on the autonomy in the early childhood education. The students were required to read many articles about autonomy many of the written by Dr.Beck. So, it could be inferred that Judy's reflection on how Dr. Beck's class influenced her autonomy was intertwined with the following: holistic experiences of her learning experience in that course, the reading of articles related to autonomy, Dr. Beck's reputation, classroom activities, Dr. Beck's teaching style and reading Dr.Beck's articles.

In the sum of these finding, Judy defined autonomy through the development of her confidence. In her statement, Judy believed that people had autonomy of they had confidence in their abilities and have ownership of their thinking, decision making, and actions. This statement implied that Judy' belief of herself as autonomous came from her confidence in what she did successfully so far in her life.

Relationships with Cooperating Teachers

Judy's first placement for intern teaching was a half-day

preschool/kindergarten classroom in a public elementary school in the same city as

the university. Having the university in the same town as the elementary school

brought a wide background of children into the school. Thus, there was a high

mixture of cultural and racial backgrounds. The social economic status (SES) of the

school system was lower to middle income and many of the families are one-parent

families. In the kindergarten class, there were many special needs children,

especially students who had behavioral problems. Her cooperating teacher graduated

from the same early childhood program Judy graduates from and she had been

teaching children for about seven years.

Both the preschool and kindergarten classrooms were based on the

constructivist theory. In the classroom, there were ten centers set up for the children

to choose from. In order for the children to have a sufficient amount of practice with

writing, reading and math, there were workstations that the children did every day.

Every week consisted of an I Spy/See, Top Ten Book, and a Math Game. The

children had to complete one station every day. So, every week they could choose

which they wanted to go to, but they had to do all four work stations.

Judy's second placement was a first grade class and the children were from high SES families. Here, there was a great deal of parent involvement. The teaching and resources of the first grade classroom were based on curriculum provided for everyday lessons. Most classroom activities for the children were based on the teacher's thoughts and worksheets. Judy's cooperating teacher had several years experience teaching first grade.

In many interviews, when she was asked about the relationships with her cooperating teachers, Judy did not openly share about her relationships. Judy claimed that she had a good relationship with the cooperating teacher. This idea comes mostly from Judy's appreciation about the match in their philosophies of teaching. She did not experience difficulties in implementing her philosophy of teaching in the classroom. However, from my observations of her intern teaching and from Judy's reflective journals, I could infer how Judy perceives the relationship with her cooperating teacher and how her ideas on this relationship might affect her autonomy.

During the first eight weeks placement, I observed her on four occasions. Three observations were all-day observations and one was a half-day observation.

During the four observations, Judy's cooperating teacher was primarily absent.

Judy's cooperating teacher was not present during my first observation, due to

training she had to attend. On my second observation, the cooperating teacher was

again not in the classroom but assisting with the reading assessment exams for the

school. I was finally able to meet the cooperating teacher on my third observation

session. When I saw her, I realized that I had seen her during my second observation

at school. She had come in and out of the classroom for a few minutes throughout the

day of observation, though I did not realize that she was Judy's cooperating teacher.

During the observations, Judy led the class the majority of the time. The

cooperating teacher would only come into the classroom when there was a behavior

issue or other problem which Judy could not handle. In these situations, the

cooperating teacher usually took the child causing a disturbance out of the classroom

and a few minutes later the student would rejoin the class. When the cooperating

teacher was not attending to a problem, she went back to her other activities.

Although Judy claimed she had a good relationship with this cooperating

teacher, a different picture of the relationship emerged from the one she was claiming.

Observation and her reflective journals showed that Judy was frustrated with the fact

that her cooperating teacher was primarily not in the classroom and rarely available

to assess Judy's intern teaching.

> Mrs. J. (Judy's cooperating teacher) was not here again today. This morning
> was really rough. Today's morning circle was longer than the other days
> this week. Children would not listen or obey. It was really difficult because
> they would not listen to me at all; they only listen to Mrs. J. Honestly, this
> makes me really worried about teaching a couple days next week. And then,
> also when I'm teaching full time. Next week, Mrs. J. won't be there either,
> so it's even scarier.

One day, I observed that, during the greeting, the children were angry Mrs.

J was not there. Judy made the decision to go to library for story time, but some of

the children were still very angry their teacher was not there. Judy explained to them

what was going on and where she was, but one of the children became even more

upset and started hitting himself. Judy seemed very frustrated with the situation. She

took him to the other side of the library and sat him down to talk. She explained to

him one-on-one that she realized he was upset because Mrs. J was not there. Again,

Judy told him where she was and when she would be back. In the interview, Judy

said this was a typical day of her intern teaching and there were many worse

situations because of her cooperating teacher's absence.

The absence of Judy's cooperating teacher during most of Judy's intern

teaching at her first placement made Judy frustrated. Finally, she started to doubt

herself. From the observations and her reflections in her journal, it was evident that,

as Judy was finishing her intern teaching at the first placement, she came to have

very low self-esteem. In the reflective journals, she said

> The fact that during my whole intern teaching, Mrs. J was mostly not in the
> room at all and all the parents and principal and other people were in there
> – I just feel like I'm under a microscope and everyone is talking about
> everything I do. It's just a really bad feeling. I know that I'm capable of
> running an organized class that is a good busy and calm because I've done
> it before at my work and at The Institute and in the afternoon. But, with
> these experiences, it's really hard not to doubt my abilities.

Judy's frustration was also found from her conversation with the substitute

teacher in Judy's second placement of intern teaching. One day, during lunch at

Judy's second placement of intern teaching, I overheard Judy tell the substitute how

she was frustrated with her first internship experience because she was not able to

receive enough feedback regarding her teaching or her teaching style. This

overwhelming situation hindered Judy's autonomy because, with these experiences,

Judy began to doubt her ability with children.

During the second placement for Judy, the same issues arose for her during

her first week of intern teaching. The cooperating teacher's husband had surgery and,

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as a result, she was out the first week of Judy's intern teaching. So, Judy taught for the entire week by herself and, in the interview, Judy said the same as she did the first time: she felt she was thrown in and was forced to take over during her first week of intern teaching. However, Judy felt differently in this situation than she did in her experience at the first placement. In the interview, Judy explained that, although the cooperating teacher was not in class directly at this placement, the cooperating teacher often asked the substitute teacher to give feedback to Judy and often asked Judy, via email, how she was doing and she always encouraged her to do her best. Judy was able to get more relief the second time. The behavior and involvement of the teachers was the difference for Judy between the first placement and the second one.

In the interview, Judy said that during her intern teaching in the second placement, she really enjoyed working with her cooperating teacher. She said they had a good relationship. Judy believed that her cooperating teacher played an important role in Judy's development, as she tried to make sense of how to operate facing many dilemmas. In her second placement, Judy faced the reality of the first grade classroom environment, the first grader's learning, and the dilemmas and

challenges of the first graders. And, in an attempt to figure out her dilemmas and search for ways to solve them based on her personal theories about learning, Judy kept practicing critical thinking and kept asking herself questions and searching for her own answers. In this process, Judy thought that her cooperating teacher had encouraged her. In the interview, Judy said that her cooperating teacher always allowed her try anything she wanted and would give her feedback, which made her think critically about her teaching.

Also, in the interview, Judy said that her cooperating teacher often told Judy that this class was the best place for her to develop her teaching experience. This advice made Judy feel comfortable and open minded. She said that her cooperating teacher often reminded her that if she had any questions she should just ask her. Her cooperating teacher would always say that, if she tried something and she messed up, it was fine. Judy said that with this kind of support, she could have open communication with her cooperating teacher and she could try something different and, if it became a problem, she could ask her cooperating teacher for assistance and they would fix it together. Judy thought this assistance was helpful and the assistance encouraged her to construct her theory of teaching by freely

experimenting with her theory in the classroom.

During my observations of Judy's intern teaching in the second placement,

I often observed that, while the children had gone to P.E. or music class, Judy and

her cooperating teacher had discussions about discrepancies between the reality of

teaching and their philosophies of teaching, as well as the different topics and aspects

related to this that. In their discussions, open communication occurred because of the

mutual trust between them. In the interview, Judy said that

> I believed that my cooperating teacher and I had a very good relationship
> and had opened our minds to each other. I knew that my cooperating
> teacher trusted me and that my cooperating teacher also knew that I
> trusted her very much.

As far as Judy's decision making in her second placement, she did

whatever she wanted, but Judy always got feedback and suggestions from her

cooperating teacher. Judy's statement and my observations revealed that Judy's

meaningful learning experience was facilitated by cooperative relationships with

cooperating teachers that was characterized by reciprocal relationships. She

encouraged Judy to make sense of her daily experiences in relation to her own

philosophy.

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Judy appreciated the importance of feedback that supported her ability to

make sense of particular aspects of her intern teaching. She recognized her issues

regarding her teaching in both placements. In first placement, her cooperating

teacher's frequent absences meant she could not get meaningful feedback for the

many issues she faced and she could not share her frustrations about those issues

with her cooperating teacher. On the contrary, in her second placement, Judy also had

issues with her teaching in the first grade classroom. The first week of her intern

teaching, her cooperating teacher was also absent. But, through her intern teaching,

Judy's cooperating teacher supported Judy and shared her frustrations and attempts

to solve her issues by providing good comments and feedback.

Issues and Problem Solving

For Judy, her goal of teaching is to support children's autonomy. Based on

her definition of autonomy, through many interviews, she consistently emphasized

the importance of giving choices to children.

> In an early childhood classroom, you'll see autonomy through giving
> choices and children's choice. Say, there are nine centers in the room –
> children don't have enough time to go to all of them. So, they're going to
> make decisions based on what they like and what they want to spend time
> on. So, they're able to make a decision about where they want to go and

where they want to spend their time. You'll see autonomy through that (Interview, December 15, 2005).

And, Judy talked about one example she thought fit this idea:

> For example, a child chooses not to knock down another child's building. If the child does not knock down the building because a teacher is watching, then this is not autonomy. But, if a child sees that his friend is building a building, and chooses to walk around because he respects his friend's building, then that is autonomy. The student makes a decision based on his knowledge and then acts, rather than relying on someone else (Interview, December 15, 2005).

However, what Judy stated above, as an example for supporting children's autonomy, came from an assigned reading from one of her classes and this was not an example for how teachers support children's autonomy. Rather, in the article, these words were an explanation for the topic: how the teacher can know if children are acting autonomously or not. The article insisted that it is very difficult for teachers to figure out how children act autonomously from only the observations of their interactions. The fact that she used this scenario from the article, which was a reading assignment, may show that Judy's understanding of autonomy is not very deep.

Also, Judy thought that teachers could support autonomy in early childhood

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and in the development of problem solving because "in giving children the tools to

communicate and problem solve, they will take the initiative to develop their own

knowledge." Most importantly, she emphasized the importance of confidence in

developing autonomy. Judy explained this idea as

> You cannot have autonomy without confidence because, if you're not
> confident about your ability to make a decision, then you're not going to
> make that decision based on your knowledge, based on your experiences,
> or your beliefs (Interview, December 22, 2005).

In an interview, Judy said that, during her teaching in the first placement,

she noticed there were several children whose parents did everything for them

because it is easier and faster. About this she said

> I feel that if children are not confident in themselves, they are going to
> bring in the teacher's view, the teacher's opinion, or their parents opinion.
> With this awareness, I tried to give feedback to children like 'You're
> capable of doing this; you're capable of making this decision' (Interview,
> December 22, 2005).

During my observation, I saw how Judy tried to give confidence to the

children. One day, when one girl brought a paper to Judy, she said, "Look Ms. Judy. I

wrote my name on there." The name was just scribbles, but to her, it was her name.

So, Judy was excited about the accomplishment and said to her, "Yeah, you wrote

your name! Wow! Oh, look at that, you wrote in R." Or with Ryan, she was so

excited, she said, "Yeah, you did that, Oh, thank you, you shared. That was such a

good decision." Judy was excited for the children and encouraged them in what they

were doing.

Since Judy emphasized supporting children's problem solving and their

good decisions for the development of their autonomy, I needed to figure out how

Judy promoted children's autonomy in the classroom. Judy emphasized that

> To allow children to solve problems and come up with solutions that work
> for them, I think that I need to let them voice their ideas and opinions, and
> encourage them to do this. And, I believed that by giving children the
> opportunities to make decisions they are capable of making, there is no
> reason why people have to make those decisions for them (Interview,
> February 6, 2006).

One day during math time at her second placement, the kids really struggled

with giggling and talking to one another, rather than listening. After asking them to

stop three times, Judy stopped the lesson and talked about how they were acting and

how they were not ready to learn. Judy then had them tell her what they needed to do

to show her that they were ready to learn. They were able to tell her what they

needed to do and they did this the rest of the time. Unfortunately, the children still

had trouble believing that Judy was serious about not talking during learning time.

Judy continually reminded them. By the end of the day, Judy and the children sat down and had a class meeting to discuss the good decisions and the bad decisions they made. In that meeting, Judy wanted to set goals for the children to support them in making good decisions. So, the children and Judy made a list of three goals to work on for to the next day, regarding making good decisions with their behaviors.

Another day, Judy had a problem solving issue with a child, Amy, who was cheating. Amy was a girl who was fairly new in the class and was bright, but had no confidence. Judy noticed the day before that Amy was copying off of another child, but Judy did not have a good opportunity to address the issue. Then, Judy noticed that Amy was continually cheating on the spelling test. Judy finally pulled Amy up to her desk and talked to her about how it was not okay to cheat. She explained that Amy was so smart that she could do the activities on her own and, if she needed help, she just needed to ask the teacher. The conversation went well and Judy then had Amy stand at her desk and they did the activity together. Amy spelled all of the words by herself, so Judy knew Amy could do it. From these observations, I could see that Judy tried to incorporate her belief of supporting children's problem solving

into her teaching practice.

However, during her teaching at the first placement, observations and

reflections revealed that her understanding of how teachers support children's

problem solving was not comprehensive and deep. An observation of Judy reveals

the following situation:

> James is building with blocks when Max knocks them down. Max thinks this
> is funny; James, on the other hand, is very upset. He begins to get angry and
> starts to cry. In this situation, Judy approached them and asked James, 'How
> does this make you feel?' He says that it upsets him. Judy asked him again,
> 'Can you tell Max how that makes you feel?' He tells Max. I ask Max, 'Was
> that a nice thing to do?' He says no and the two begin playing together
> (Observation, March 1, 2006).

However, from the observation and her reflection, I thought that her

approach did not encourage children's autonomy and that her understanding of

children's problem solving was not deep and reflective. Because she asked to

children "how do you feel or how does this make feel" she did not facilitate

children's thinking for their problem solving and she did not help them solve their

problems autonomously. Instead, she needed to ask the children "how can you solve

this problem?" Her questions were not as appropriate for kindergarten children as a

preschooler who was not able to express their ideas or feelings orally. But, the

kindergarteners were able to think about how they could solve this problem and that

would be problem solving. Further, I recognized how Judy solved the problem with

those questions, "How do you feel? How does this make you feel?" The solutions

came from her learning at The Institute of Early Childhood Education where she had

her practicum for the last two semesters. Regarding the problem solving, Judy stated

the following in an interview:

> I am very satisfied with the fact children start playing together as they
> solve their problem. This is good learning experience about how to
> support children's autonomous problem solving (Interview, March 1,
> 2006).

This situation and reaction confirm that Judy's understanding of children's

problem solving and autonomy is not deep. Her practice is related to her shallow

understanding of autonomy with the example she stated earlier – the children's block

building. Also, in her reflective journal, she wrote that "It is always very cool to see

the problem solving skills we have learned and practiced in other environments in

action in new environments." Also, she did not critically think about how she could

support children's problem solving by considering their ages or their situations

comprehensively. Rather, Judy just modeled the strategies of others and followed

those strategies for her own teaching without critical thinking.

<u>Issues with Educating Special Needs Children</u>

In her first placement, the kindergarten classroom, more than half of the children had behavioral problems and were in need of special education. There were six children on IEPs (Individualized Education Program) for serious behavioral problems, one child with high functioning autism, and one with ADHD. So, the biggest challenge for Judy was that she needed to handle behavior management appropriately. Because Judy did not have experience with children who had serious behavioral problems, she felt that she was not ready to teach them. I asked her if there was anything about a teacher's role which she did not expect before she started her intern teaching. She answered that

> Having to handle all the children with the special needs – I was not expecting that. You know that you're going to have them, but never to this extent. So, that was something that I wasn't expecting as a teacher, like for a teacher's role…having to know how and actually handling all the issues that arise in a class (Interview, February 6, 2006).

Judy was extremely frustrated that she had difficulty figuring out how to solve these problems appropriately. In her reflective journal, her frustration was evident:

The children are outlandish and uncontrollable. I feel evil because I have
to yell. I hate yelling. I never yell at kids. I talk as nicely and as calmly as
I can until I'm blue in the face to most of these kids and they won't budge
till you raise your voice. This has been a miserable week. Oh, is it terrible
to say that I just want to be finished with this whole placement thing. But,
weeks like this, I absolutely hate being here. How terrible is it to dread
coming to a particular classroom because it is so terrible (Reflective
Journal, February 6, 2006).

In the interview, I told Judy that it seemed classroom management was the

most difficult task for her and I asked her how she dealt with classroom management.

Judy answered:

Well, it is not classroom management, but behavioral management, which
are two totally different things. Classroom management is fine, like
getting through the day, staying on schedule, and doing all the things.
Those are not a problem at all. It's the behavioral management...learning
how to help the children get through the day – the children that need that
help, they need that support (Interview, March 1, 2006).

I asked to Judy how she handled the children with behavioral problems

and she answered that

Well...I have no idea about special needs children...Just through
observing what the other teachers were doing and talking communicating
with other teachers to see what kind of strategies I can use, and different
things like that to stay on the same page with all the people who are in the
room throughout the day (Interview, March 1, 2006).

As she said, she did not know how to handle the special needs children

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appropriately. She just modeled other teachers and followed their strategies. She started questioning "What causes these children to lose control of their behavior?" With this as her interest, Judy decided to research this question for her project in the action research class. For this research, Judy focused her attention on three specific children in the class, concentrating on their placement in the classroom, which students are around them, what went on, was there a teacher present, was this during transition, and what time of day was this. As she investigated these questions, she decided to make her research question more specific: What causes children with autism to lose control of their behavior?

To research the question, Judy first analyzed her journal reflections over what occurred when Charles lost control of his behavior and actions. She looked at many of the different factors that occurred at the time of his opposition or his lashing out at other children. She also evaluated what modifications were used and if they were effective. She found that there were many factors that influenced Charles and his behavior. In her research paper, Judy explained her findings as:

> Some of these factors include his health, allergies, and whether he was tired or not. Another factor that affected his behavior was certain children that either had pestered him or were pestering him. He tends to hold grudges

against these children; therefore he may attack a child for no apparent reason, but he has a reason from a previous day that he is still holding on to. With this particular child and disability, the teacher's presence, and whether it is a structured or unstructured activity, does not appear to be a major factor in the child's behavior.

In the interview, I asked her how her research could be applied to her teaching practice and she answered that "this research project helped me to be more aware of the things that are occurring in my classroom." Then, I asked her were there any changes in her interaction with special needs children or in teaching them? Judy answered

> Not very much.....I just more often visited the special education children to learn how to manage their needs children more professionally...not big changes....but, I could be more aware of the reason why they are doing that actions....(Interview, March, 9.2006)

Judy did not like the reward system used with special needs children. Judy observed that children decided what they were going to work for that day and, once they got four stars for the day, they could receive their reward. Judy observed that Thomas, who had serious behavioral problems and never followed Judy's guidance, obeyed her cooperating teacher because of the star system. Thomas had three stars for the entire day and he was absolutely following the direction of her

cooperating teacher to get one more star. In the interview, Judy said the following

about this system and the child's behavior:

> I could not agree with the use of reward system that my cooperating
> teacher used with children who have serious behavioral problems. I
> believe that children need to be responsible for their actions and should
> not be rewarded for misbehavior (Interview, February 6, 2006).

However, about two weeks later, I asked Judy again about the reward

system. I knew that she continually struggled with educating special needs children

during her intern teaching and I wanted to know how she solved the issue of

educating these special needs children, Specifically, I wanted to know how she dealt

with the "reward system," which her cooperating teacher used. In the time that had

passed, Judy had come to think that the reward system was the only thing that would

work. She had come to agree with using the reward system with the children, even

though she still believed that reward system was not good for children's autonomy.

She answered

> Both I and my cooperating teacher hate the rewards systems, but, it's the
> only thing that works for these particular children. So, even though it's
> not what I agree with and my philosophy, I have to do what's best for the
> children (Interview, March 9, 2006).

Judy continued to explain why she decided to use the reward system.

Yeah, because I've taken the special needs class in which they talk about that and they say, yeah, it's going to go against your philosophy, but it's not about your philosophy. It's about what's going to work for the children. So, I totally understand the purpose. It doesn't work all the time, but it works some of the time. So, it's still something that helps them get through the day and helps them to make good decisions (Interview, March 9, 2006).

I asked Judy, what she had learned about special needs children and how she tried to solve, or learn, about educating special needs children. She answered that there were very little changes in her ideas about how to teach special needs children and the only change was trying to learn special education strategies and how to use them effectively with each child. Most importantly, Judy had difficulty finding the time to reflect on all of the special needs children in her classroom.

I don't have time for reflective thinking because I have to get this done and this is what I'm going to do. A lot of times I don't get home until ten o'clock at night because of everything else I have to do –   And so, there's no time to think critically think about anything…it feels…which is frustrating (Interview, February 27, 2006).

Also, Judy does not think of herself as a critical thinker. She said that

I'm not a critical thinker, but when I do want to spend time thinking critically about things and be a critical thinker…I'm not. When I need to be or want to be, I can be, but just as far as living life, probably not…I'm just not. I just wasn't created with a very critical and analytical brain. I mean I can do it, but I don't choose to do it very often. This has happened

and it's okay and this is what we're going to do about it. I just don't have a natural critical thinking brain. I'm a good critical thinker when I want to be, but I'd rather not do that all day long. It's too exhausting (Interview, February 27, 2006).

Overall, as Judy had issues with teaching special needs children in her first placement, she was frustrated and had difficulty making sense of how to solve the struggles. Although Judy articulated her questions, she figured out the answers for the factors that influenced the special needs children's behavioral problems. She used that information in her practice of teaching and finally abandoned searching for the answers to her issues. She solved her problems by just modeling the other teachers' strategies. In this process, Judy changed her belief about the benefits of using a reward system without critical reflection. This illustrated Judy's lack of ownership in constructing her own knowledge.

Issues with Teaching First Graders

Since Judy started her intern teaching in the first grade classroom, she struggled with what she perceived as significant discrepancies between the early childhood education setting and the first grade classroom. Judy said

There's a total difference. Here are lots of differences just in the way it's set up and run. One...just in expectation...the way the class is set up and

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run…the kindergarten is center-based the first grade class is not…it's teacher initiated, teacher-based, teacher-directed…but we do have a lot of discussions…so that's a good aspect about that. She also discusses a lot with them about all the different topics. They're doing a lot more writing…they're reading…(Interview, April 3, 2006).

At the beginning of her teaching in the second placement, Judy spent more time trying to figure out the developmental level of first-graders and what exactly the first-graders needed to be learning. Judy thought this was because of her slow learning, but because she had never done anything with first graders, she was surprised when she realized the differences between the developmental levels of kindergartens and first-graders, as well big differences in the expectations.

There's an enormous difference…like a world of difference. It's amazing that kindergarteners can't read and these guys are expected to know so much and that's so hard and so confusing ..I'm like of course you don't understand…this is hard…a huge difference (Interview, April 26, 2006).

In her reflective journal, Judy talked about her embarrassment when I observed her.

There are days, like today, where I am ready to explode on a child because she constantly is not doing her work and not paying attention. Then I have to sit by her side and explain to her how to do it while she looks at me like, 'What?' And she is totally capable of doing it. My patience definitely lies more with the younger ones, but I'm working on it with some of these kids (Reflective Journal, March 30, 2006).

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For Judy, in the first grade class, the biggest challenge for her was to teach the abstract math concepts in the required book for the math lesson. In her reflective journal, she said that

> The hardest thing is trying get these abstract concepts…how to help them understand the concepts because, cognitively, they're not able to understand them yet…some stupid writer of some stupid math book thinks that they can do it. These are absolutely not developmentally appropriate concepts for first graders (Reflective Journal, April 3, 2006).

Judy was frustrated and continually thought that the math concept in the classroom was not appropriate for children and that is why she had a very difficult time helping the children to understand the math concepts.

> Man! I cannot believe how incredibly hard it is to teach some of this math! First graders are expected to know some hard stuff and I definitely don't feel qualified to teach some of these concepts. I don't know the strategies to help them understand these difficult concepts. We are studying creating story problems with money and we are fixing to start on FRACTIONS!!!! What? You've got to be kidding me. I feel so bad for these kids because most of them totally aren't ready for that concept (Reflective Journal, April 10, 2006).

Through her whole intern teaching, Judy continually struggled with teaching math to children. But, I did not discover how she solved this issue and what she attempted to do from her reflective journals or through the observation of her

teaching. Everyday, in her classroom, there were certain pages of math books, which

children should have finished and which Judy was teaching them. I observed her

teaching math from the beginning to the end of her intern teaching. But, she

continually had difficulty teaching math to children and had difficulty helping the

children to understand the math concepts. As Judy struggled with teaching math to

the children, her cooperating teacher helped Judy with each child's readiness for

math and she discussed with Judy how to approach the math concept to help in the

children's learning. However, as Judy faced the new math concepts, which she had

never taught in the classroom, she continued to struggle. In her reflection from the

end of her intern teaching, her struggle of teaching math still existed.

> I'm not confident about teaching money and have never really taught it or
> learned effective ways to teach it. There were a handful of students that
> got it, but you knew they already understood it. The others were still not
> confident in it. This is something I want to revisit again. The math takes
> so long to do. There is absolutely no way it can be finished in 30 minutes
> (Reflective Journal, April 18, 2006).

At the end of her intern teaching, Judy had come to appreciate the

worksheets which she previously did not agree should be used with children.

> I am glad, right now, that the curriculum is all laid out and by the book
> because if it wasn't I would be totally lost as to what to do. It's totally

different from any other class that I've experienced before. We pretty
much have the explanation and the worksheets all day long, but the kids
don't mind it at all. In fact, when I finished the schedule early one day, a
girl asked to do reading worksheets. ☺ I still think the more hands-on
approach is important and beneficial. But, I must say that the worksheets
are saving my life right now because I would have no idea what to do
with first graders or even how to create stuff for them (Reflective Journal,
April 27, 2006).

I asked Judy about my observation of her teaching and interacting with

children and about the struggles she expressed during interviews. I told her I would

like to know whether she thinks he has handled the situations in an autonomous way.

Judy answers that

I think it's a little mix of both...like sometimes, you don't have enough
time...like when the kids have problems everyday over stupid things, you
do not have time to sit down and problem solve with them...it's just not
going to happen...you have a choice...you can send them out into the hall
and let them solve it...which is giving them autonomy...or if they need to
be in the classroom doing what you're doing, you tell them...I'm sorry that
happened you're fine, we're going to go on...you just handle that type of
situation (Interview, May 3, 2006).

Overall, in her intern teaching in the first grade classroom, Judy struggled

with teaching first grade, especially teaching math concept because of her lack of

understanding of the first-graders' readiness and the concepts in the curriculum. Also,

Judy could not figure out the issues she needed to discover to resolve her struggles

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with teaching first-graders. The key problem related to her struggles was that Judy did not consider her lack of understanding and, instead, complained about external causes. For example, she believed the math concepts were not developmentally appropriate curriculum or concepts for children, the time limit of the lesson was restrictive and so on. Yet, Judy had a very shallow understanding of developmentally appropriate practice. Thus, from Judy's perspective, her struggles with teaching math concepts to children could not be discussed in her own reflection about her ability and she could not solve the issues she faced during her intern teaching.

Changes in Her Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

At the end of her intern teaching in the first grade classroom, I asked Judy what were the conflicts between what she thought was right and what she needed to do in the first grade classroom and she answered that

> Well…It's the reality of the primary classes. So, I don't struggle a whole lot with it because that's the reality of it and that's just the way it is in the primary grades. So, then, I just realize that you don't have the time or the energy to be a 100% constructivist…as fantastic as that is…I would die…I'm exhausted at the end of the day.…I just don't have the energy or the time to do it (Interview, May 3, 2006).

So, I asked Judy whether her belief of teaching or learning had changed

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since she started her intern teaching in the first grade classroom and she answered

> Um...I've learned a lot more through the second placement and even
> through talking with the first year teachers who went through the program
> with us...just learning the idea of constructivism is awesome...but it's in
> a perfect world... And we don't live in a perfect world. We don't live in
> the ideal environment. There are things that you're going to have to do
> that you're not going to like. And also...just through...I'm not sure how it
> affects it...I wouldn't say it's changed, but some of the things that people
> have brought up that you have to think about it and I haven't had time to
> think about those things to see how they affect my beliefs about
> teaching...(Interview, May 3, 2006).

From Judy's answer, I thought that I needed ask her what her definition of

constructivism was. Judy defined constructivism as

> Hands on learning, interacting, child directed, being able to learn by
> doing...having autonomy in what they're doing and what they're
> choosing to do...problem solving between children...are some of the
> aspects of constructivism (Interview, May 3, 2006).

I asked Judy why she had come to think that constructivism was ideal and

that it was impossible for a first grade teacher to implement constructivism in the

classroom. She answered that

> But just...the constructivist way is so much fun, but it takes so much
> more much time....and so much more energy...than doing some of the
> things that are already prepared, that are already laid out for you...For
> example, we're doing math...this is what you're doing...this is what
> you're doing first...this is what you do second...this is what you do

third...so...there is this balance of this much time in a day...I have all this to get done...and if I choose to do all of this the constructivist way...it's like impossible (Interview, May 3, 2006).

Again I asked her was it in the meaning that of her philosophy of teaching

had changed and she answered that

Not really...I still hold that autonomy is vital and it's important...it's important to build a community which is just a part of creating an autonomous classroom...all of those things are still so vital...the only thing that's changed like I said is the reality of it...autonomy is fabulous and you want that in your classroom...but you cannot have 100% autonomous class...you cannot have 100% hands-on child centered learning...the reality of it is...you have these expectations and you have these things that you have to get done because that's the law and that's what they require you to do. You have to do those things...and with the other limited time you have, you can try to accomplish those other things. But that's just the reality of that...it's not perfect world where you can do all that stuff (Interview, May 3, 2006).

I asked Judy that, as she progressed through student teaching, what had

she found out about yourself and did she consider herself autonomous. Judy

answered that

Yes...I believe I am autonomous. I have the confidence to decide what I'm going to do and I know that I can do it. And I am just continuing to gain confidence from this intern teaching...At the beginning of intern teaching, I was so nervous and I read over my lesson like 50 million times... ...and I just wanted to make sure I knew what I as doing...but now...I can just come in...I feel confident that I know what I'm

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doing...planning on...so, like yesterday, I looked over what I was doing...alright, got it...you know and went home...didn't think about it again...I came up...I didn't get nervous ...I just have the confidence that I do know what I'm doing and can do it and do it successfully....So, I think I became more autonomous....as far as I knew I can do it.....I will do it...(Interview, May 3, 2006)

As stated earlier, in Judy's understanding of autonomy, she defined autonomy through the development of her confidence. Her belief in herself as autonomous person came from her confidence in what she had done successfully so far in her life. Judy's reflection on her intern teaching, in terms of her development autonomy, was that she could gain confidence as she went through her intern teaching and she believed herself to be autonomous because the confidence gained was consistent with Judy's prior understanding of autonomy. From these data, it was revealed that Judy's understanding of autonomy was mainly bound to her confidence of doing everything effectively and to her autonomy, Judy focused only on the pursuit of the most effective ways to gain confidence in her actions, not on making an effort to address her own questions and to solve them autonomously through her own critical thinking.

<u>Summary of Judy</u>

In the teacher education courses, Judy thought a class that provided students with enough discussion that supported students' critical thinking, that encouraged students to solve their own problems and to solve their problems autonomously supported her autonomy in learning. Regarding her cooperating teacher and her autonomy, Judy appreciated the importance of feedback that supported Judy in making sense of particular aspects of her intern teaching.

While problem solving during her intern teaching, Judy's philosophy of teaching and learning did not show much in her teaching practice. This was true, as she changed her belief of teaching without critical reflection. Overall, the findings of Judy's reflection on constructivism, autonomy and autonomous actions in her teaching and learning revealed that Judy's understanding of autonomy was shallow and she had a great deal of trouble understanding the role of theory. Judy considered the role theory of teaching and learning as the specific strategies for her teaching practice and she used them as the only strategies in her teaching. So, if her own understanding of theory, in terms of strategies, did not fit with her possible actions in the reality of a classroom, she thought those theories were useless in the teaching.

Judy never tried to develop her own questions about why there was a discrepancy between her understandings of theory and the teaching practice in the classroom. Also, she did not question her existing understandings of theory.

Christina

Background and her Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Christina is a white female who is twenty-two years old. Christina comes from a very big family and has had her fair share of parenting experience. Christina taught her sisters and brothers. Her mother, on the other hand, worked to support the family. To help maintain the family, Christina would clean, cook, and take care of her siblings, who were at least ten years younger. Christina believes that this early experience explains why teaching children is so important for her. In the interview, Christina said that she realized that there were many children who did not have the resources at home and who did not have parents who could take care of them all the time. So, she thought that, in children's live, there should be teachers who could have an impact on them and who could be resources for them.

In the interview, Christina said that when she decided to become a teacher

and study education, she expected that she would have a traditional classroom. She believed that education for children meant doing worksheets and providing stickers for everything, which is what Christina was accustomed to from her school experiences. However, after she started to study in the teacher education program, her beliefs about teaching and learning changed. In particular, her thoughts about how children learned and how to teach children changed considerably.

In the interview, she said that she came to believe that children could think for themselves, could form their own theories, could decipher what they think is right or wrong, and could make simple choices. She said that children had their own thoughts and they could construct thoughts, too. So, she thought that, in order to support children in the active and independent construction of their knowledge, they should be given choices in matters that will develop their sense of self-worth. For this, she emphasized that teachers needed to provide a meaningful learning context for children and give them the opportunity to explore and construct their own knowledge. Teachers needed to consider the children's individuality and the importance of assessment to accurately understand each child and to support that child's learning.

Influence of Teacher Education Program

Christina reflected that her understanding of autonomy had significantly

developed because of the professors and the experiences she has had in her teacher

education program. In the interview, she said that, she has been able to have a more

open view of autonomy.

> I had never heard of autonomy before until my early childhood program. I
> have become a better individual autonomously through my studies,
> readings, and experiences. I had to learn autonomy inside and out
> (Interview, January, 3, 2006)

In the interview, she stated that before she started to learn about autonomy,

she was a very independent person and considered herself autonomous. In the

interview, Christina defined her understanding of autonomy as the ability to make

decisions on a daily basis regarding what people think will best benefit them at the

current point in their lives. She said that, based on this definition, she believed that

she was autonomous because of her ability to make decisions regarding what is

appropriate for her and by her ability to live by those decisions. Furthermore,

Christina said that, to her, autonomy was very important and, as of now, her

conception of autonomy has not changed. As long as she made decisions, stood by

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those decisions, understood the consequences of her actions, she believed she would continue to grow as an autonomous person.

In the interviews, Christina also said that she thought the culture of the teacher education program influenced her understanding of autonomy because she was able to practice autonomy and use autonomous decisions in every single practice in the courses of teacher education program. In this process, she thought Dr. Beck helped form her thoughts and specific standards of autonomy and she took this information and used it to see how autonomy fit into her life.

In the interviews, Christina explained that Dr. Beck's courses, which were the first and second classes in the early childhood methods sequence, were the most helpful in the way she went about teaching her students about autonomy. In those classes, she said Dr. Beck did not tell her students how to define autonomy, but challenged them to think about autonomy through active questioning. She said that "Dr. Beck helped us to be autonomous by learning what autonomy is."

In the interviews, Christina said she thought that Dr. Beck was also her inspiration for teaching, in terms of helping her form a philosophy. As stated earlier, she came to the teacher education program thinking she needed stickers on

everything and needed everybody to pat her on the back when she did something

good.

But, as Christina learned in Dr. Beck's class, she does not need stickers and

reassurance as long as she made her decisions, stood by those decisions, and went

with the consequences of right, wrong, or whatever the case might be. But, that was

what made her a critical thinker. Still, at first, it was hard for her to grasp that. Dr.

Beck did not say this was a way to teach. She questioned student after student.

Finally, a year and half after, she took Dr. Beck's class, she knew the harm in stickers

and the reassurance of a good job. Rather, it was the benefit of not having these

crutches. In this process, Christina emphasized that Dr. Beck did not directly tell her

these things, but guided and facilitated her discovery of them on her own.

In the interviews, Christina said that for this change, in Dr. Beck's class,

questions like "Is this really what I think?" encouraged her to figure out her own

practical theory of teaching and learning. Dr. Beck provided her with opportunities to

struggle with what it meant to know, what knowledge was worth the most, and what

the answers to each of these questions implied for the education of children and the

establishment of communities of learning.

She challenged my beliefs and my thinking. She has a way of questioning and when she does ask you a question...   it's like oh, I better think about this...   I need to really think in depth about what I'm saying to her... because what I'm saying to her is reflecting what I think so is this really what I think? (Interview, January, 03,2006)

Thus, in Dr. Beck's class, Christina was required to think in depth about what she was saying in the classroom. To determine whether what she said to Dr. Beck reflected what she actually thought. At first, it was hard for her grasp that point. At first, she thought that Dr. Beck's continued questioning seemed pointless. But, as she went through this learning process, she finally recognized that the challenges and the reflective process supported her critical thinking. And, in the interview, she reflected that, through this classroom experience, she came to have confidence in herself and she believed that she had her own ideas, which could be meaningful to her and to others.

In the interview, Christina said that the most important activity in Dr. Beck's class was setting guidelines and due dates for assignments. Dr. Beck's class gave her a hands-on learning experience that made clear the affects of autonomy on children and on herself. She said that when she made her own syllabus in the classroom, she was able to pick the topics and deadlines for what she wanted to

accomplish, in order to act as an autonomous learner in the capacity of decision-maker. With this confidence, she said she would go on to develop her own voice and argue her own opinions until the day she died.

> I think it's all the classes that you take... it's developing... when you make your own syllabus in each classroom or... they're training YOU to be the person they want YOU to be teaching these kids I think... so they're letting YOU pick the guidelines, they're letting YOU pick the topics for what you want to do and your deadlines... in turn we're given the same structure... it's still putting structure on us... it still saying, okay, you have all the liberty... but you're making it up... so, we're giving ourselves structure (Interview, January, 03, 2006).

In the interviews, Christina said that she thought a couple of the classes were good about supporting her autonomy and developing it somehow. But, there were some things that teachers did she thought were absurd and not supporting of autonomy at all. Christina thought the unorganized and unstructured class could not support her autonomy. She gave an example of one class, the final class before the graduation. She thought that the curriculum of the class did not help her autonomy because she felt that class was unorganized, though it is not necessarily a good or bad thing. But, that unorganized class really challenged her autonomy. Because she was in that class where nothing seemed organized, she had to be autonomous to make the

decision to come to class and to be motivated. So, Christina was not able to predict

what she would learn and what she needed to think about for the class activity. Thus,

this class did not support her critical thinking. She said that

> I was extremely frustrated ..sit there for two hours and feel like it's going
> no where....... you have to believe that something is going to come out of
> this... that there's some sort of learning that I'm going to do. So your
> autonomy is supported with classes like that as well because you're
> ultimately making the decisions to go or not go... to participate or not...
> do the readings or not... nobody is making you do this... (Interview,
> January, 3, 2006).

From her thought, however, it is possible to think that Christina's autonomy

was found from how she acted autonomously in this unorganized class. As she was

frustrated in this unorganized class, she made the effort to make decisions about

everything by herself.

In the interview, Christina also said she thought structured classes did not

provide choices to students and could not support her autonomy. In the very

structured class, she could not think. In the structured class, she had to do certain

assignments which were mostly due on this date, with this criterion, and with these

specific percentages for each category. Or, in these classes students are presented

with a statement reading this is the course work that you will learn and it is presented

to you in this format. She thought that, without any choice in her own learning, she could not develop her autonomy.

However, later in the interview, Christina shared her critical reflection on the classes she thought were not autonomy-supportive environments. To summarize, the very structured class that did not provide choices to the students, Christina reflected that this kind of class did not support her autonomy as much as the class which was unorganized. She explained, as stated earlier, that in the former classes the students are still able to choose what they wanted to write about and what they wanted to do their own projects over. So, the class was still autonomous, but in a more structured, guided way. And, she understood the fact that the college professors knew what they wanted out of the students because they knew the assignment that they wanted you to do. In these statements, Christina meant that the students were at liberty to make those decisions. But, she also explained how significantly too much unorganized class could hinder her autonomy. Christian said that

> As far as our courses, they would support our autonomy by letting us choose when things were due, the format of different things, but it's really hard to be on top of things when you have instructors that don't turn back papers on time, that don't get grades back to you on time, that change their mind about different assignments every week, that hand you many

syllabuses week to week, that are absent minded. Those teachers really don't help. They hinder your autonomy. They don't...they're the ones that are trying to prepare you for the way things are, the way teaching is supposed to be...but they're not displaying a good model of that. So, if they can't display a good model, I don't understand how they think that they could teach a college level course that allows you to do those things (Interview, January, 03, 2006).

Overall, for Christina, her definition of autonomy was her ability to make decisions based on her own reflection about what she thought and believed would best benefit her. And she believed herself to be autonomous because she believed that she had the ability to think about what were the most appropriate decisions for each situation and the ability to act on these decisions. Based on her understanding of autonomy, she thought the autonomy-supportive class for her development of autonomy was the class characterized by providing her the encouragement necessary to figure out her preexisting practical theory of teaching and learning and by providing opportunities for her to critically think about what it meant to know and what knowledge was most worth teaching and learning. Judy also thought students needed the opportunity to make choices in their learning and to get scaffolding from the teachers for further reflection.

Relationships with Cooperating Teacher

Christina's first placement was the morning kindergarten class and the afternoon kindergarten class in a public elementary school. There were 20 children in the morning and 21 in the afternoon. In the morning class, there were sixteen boys and four girls, and fifteen of the children had special needs. However, the afternoon kindergarten class was completely different. There, only a few of the children exhibited behavioral problems. The difference between the two classes was like night and day. Her cooperating teacher at the first placement had taught kindergarten for several years and had a philosophy based on constructivism. Christina's classroom was child-friendly and the rooms were there for the children to learn and to be engaged by what they were learning so the experiences would be meaningful. Everything was easily accessible to the children and they were able to have sight words at their eye level. There were also various pets in the room to engage the children in learning outside of academics and to help to exhibit a child-friendly classroom.

Christina's second placement for intern teaching was a first grade class in a very traditional school. The philosophy of the teacher was traditional, as was the

environment of the school. Most of the children in this school came from high SES

homes. Her cooperating teacher graduated from the elementary education program

from the same university where Christina studied.

In her first placement, Christina thought, overall, that her autonomy was

supported as she worked with her cooperating teacher. In the interview, Christina

said that her cooperating teacher supported her autonomy by allowing her to

experiment with her philosophy of teaching in the classroom and she provided

scaffolding to enable her to solve the dilemmas autonomously. Christina explained

that her cooperating teacher let her do things and let her make choices about what

she did, how she taught, how she handled the kids, and where she went in the

classroom.

During my observation, I found that Christina and her cooperating teacher

had many conversations and they continually discussed every issue related to

Christina's teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. Every lunch time,

Christina and her cooperating teacher had lunch together and had their planning

period, which was a time they reflected, told each other ideas, talked about concerns,

or discussed things they thought would go well.

In the interview, Christina said that her cooperating teacher helped her by guiding her in what she needed to do, or by giving her ideas to help. Christina told me that her cooperating teacher helped her think more about what she was doing and why she was doing it, as well as other things she could do. During the observation, if her cooperating teacher felt it was a lesson that she wanted to do, or that something, perhaps, did not go over well, she redirected Christina and said, "Well, have you thought about this, or have you thought about that." In the interview, Christina reflected about her cooperating teacher's feedback as:

> The feedback from my cooperating teacher allowed me to think more in depth about it. That helped me think more about what I was doing and why I was doing it and other things I could do (Interview, March, 06, 2006).

One day, during my observation, Christina had planned one of the centers to be an exchange game with money. On the activity sheet, there were three columns. One had a picture of a penny, the other a nickel, and the last a dime. The children were supposed to roll a die and tally the marks to calculate their cents. When they got five pennies, they were to change them in for a nickel. When they got two nickels, children traded for a dime. With the morning class, the game was extremely hard. Christina stayed at that center the whole time to monitor their progress and help them

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with the game. No matter what she said, it still seemed a hard concept for them to grasp. She thought that her lesson was not appropriate for the children because of the discrepancy between her lesson and children's readiness. Thus, Christina tried to figure out how she could modify her lesson to fit with children's readiness, so they could explore the activity construct the knowledge about that the activity.

So, on her lunch break, after the lesson, Christina went to her cooperating teacher and asked to discuss how to figure out the children's ability and what she could do to modify the game for the kids. They talked about what Christina had done with lesson in the morning, what facts Christina thought were not appropriate for children and what Christina could do. They decided to draw the outlines of five pennies under the penny column, draw two nickels under the nickel column, and a dime under the dime column. The kids could then roll the dice and use actual money to put on their sheets to get a better visual of how to play the game. This modified version of the exchange game was much better. In the interview after this observation, Christina said that her cooperating teacher's feedback was helpful for her think about how to modify her lessons and she was glad about how her cooperating teacher guided her to solve her dilemma.

In the interview, Christina reflected that during her whole intern teaching at the first placement, she thought that there was never any problem collaborating in any aspect of teaching and she did not think her autonomy was hindered in any way. Because in this class, she freely used what she knew and she recalled the prior knowledge gained from her cooperating teacher, and she constructed new meaning through these things. In the interview, Christina also said that she believed that her cooperating teacher's continued support of her autonomy allowed her to make her own choices about what she did, how she taught, how she handled the kids, and where she went in the classroom. Christina thought this was possible because her cooperating teacher trusted her and, as such, her cooperating teacher could be open about what Christina thought and did in the classroom.

On the other hand, during Christina's intern teaching in the second placement, her interactions with her cooperating teacher were different from the first placement. Christina and her cooperating teacher had opposite philosophies of teaching, I observed that since Christina recognized this difference, she tried to collaborate the traditional ideas with her constructivist ideas through conversations with her cooperating teacher. Still, Christina and her cooperating teacher did not have

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open communication, as her cooperating teachers seemed like she did not trust what Christina said to her and did not want to listen her ideas.

As a result, Christina's cooperating teacher did not much give feedback and did not respond to what Christina shared with her. In the interview, Christina said that during her conversations with her cooperating teacher about the other's philosophy of teaching, she felt that her cooperating teacher appeared to understand Christina's ideas, but she did not care very much. The observation and interviews revealed that, compared to the relationship with her first cooperating teacher, Christina could not express her ideas to her second cooperating teacher openly. In the interview, Christina said she thought she would keep applying her philosophy of teaching diligently, regardless of her cooperating teacher's feedback. She also revealed that she was often frustrated by the fact that her cooperating teacher ignored and did not value her ideas.

Overall, Christina believed that her cooperating teacher in the first placement supported her autonomy through allowing her to experiment with her philosophy of teaching in the classroom and providing scaffolding to enable her to solve the dilemmas she faced autonomously. In this process, the open

communication between them played an important role. However, in the relationship

with cooperating teacher at the second placement, there was no open communication

between them, because of absence of trust in Christina by her cooperating teacher.

Christina tried to address the issues of the contradiction in each others' philosophies

and tried to discuss this with her cooperating teacher. Her cooperating teacher,

however, did not show trust to Christina and, as soon as she recognized this, their

open communication was constrained.

Issues and Problem Solving

In Christina's statement of philosophy of teaching, she described her

philosophy of teaching in the following way:

> I believe that children are able to reflect on the decisions they make and
> they are able to reflect on the different things they are doing in their
> classrooms. I thinks that to support children's active construction of their
> knowledge by themselves, teachers have to provide a meaningful learning
> context for them and they have to give choices to children and the
> opportunity for the children to explore them. Otherwise, children cannot
> learn to construct their new knowledge, explore the meaning of something,
> and expand on their own ideas

And Christina's overall goal of teaching and learning is connected with

autonomy.

Autonomy is my ultimate goal in teaching children. Autonomy, to me, is allowing a child to make self-governing decisions, which affect them directly. When they make specific decisions, children are then responsible for the consequences of that specific decision. An autonomous environment would allow children to explore various centers according to what their interests. I believe autonomy in early childhood education is exploring the world around you. It is making resources available for children and making them easily accessible. Autonomy is giving children reasonable choices that are appropriate for their level.

So, when I had an interview with Christina through email, I asked her how she achieved her goal of teaching during her intern teaching. Christina answered that

For providing good environment for children's active learning, I consider the following things. When I develop a lesson plan for children, I first figure out the specific goals for the children's learning of the lessons by checking the skills the children need to reach. Then, I research how to develop a lesson plan, which can supports children's autonomous learning and is characterized by providing a meaningful experience to children's exploration. Also, I look to create a lesson that offers appropriate choices to children and encourages them to construct their own knowledge about the topic of the lesson (Email from Christina, December 16, 2005).

Incorporating Her Theory into Practice

During my observation, I saw how she applied her philosophy her teaching practice. One day Christina tried to research what she was going to do for her lesson the following week and she decided to try a still life art activity lesson with the children. I was sitting by Christina and saw how she approached the planning of the

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lesson plan. First Christina checked the PASS skills and she found there were some

skills they needed to acquire. So, she used this new activity as a way to reach them.

At the same time, she wanted to teach a lesson she had never taught before. Christina

said that she did not want to be too comfortable to teach children and she was eager

to find out how she translated her theory of teaching and learning into her classroom

practice with a topic she had never covered. Christina was very excited about the

challenge.

I observed Christina implement her lesson over still life art. The lesson was

guided enough for children to look at what they were drawing, but they could draw it

as they saw it. Still, the children mimicked their friend's pictures. After Christina

recognized this, she encouraged them to draw their own pictures. When the children

created their own work, even though they were all drawing the same thing, all the

drawings looked different. Afterwards, in the interview, I asked Christina for her

reflection on this situation. Christina said

> I believe that each child is going to see something different and they have
> the ability to draw their own pictures, if they are appropriately guided by
> teachers, so I want to allow enough room for children to express their
> own creativity and not structure it too much (Interview, February 7, 2006).

In the middle of her intern teaching, I asked the Christina what the most important thing she learned from her intern teaching so far in her first placement. Christina said that as she observed the children's learning, she learned that all children learn differently and she needed to continually figure out how to accommodate those very different learning styles. Christina said there were so many different levels of children's ability in her classroom, especially in literacy development. In her classroom, half of children had special needs. She said that there were children who could read and write, as well children who could not identify their letters, or could only identify a very few.

This viewpoint was evident in her teaching practice in the classroom. During my observation, in the kindergarten classroom, Christina planned and implemented a lesson on the sight word for the week – "the." The children have a hard time saying the word. A lot of them said "b" or "d" or "v". Following the lesson, Christina explained that children, especially children with special needs had a hard time understanding that it is a word and not a letter that it sounds like it. She thought the children might need help putting the word into a more particular learning context, so that they could explore the word through and find a way to construct their

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knowledge about the word "the." So, she provided pictures with animals and asked

the children to pick up "the cat" or "the cow." All day, she continually used "The" in

what she said to the children and she encouraged them to use "the" with what they

said. She put her ideas into action.

Another day, also in the kindergarten classroom, Christina planned one of

the centers to be an exchange game with money. With the morning class, Christina

introduced the game to children. They tried to play the game, but, it was extremely

hard for them, especially for those with special needs. Even though Christina

explained the game over and over, the children could not grasp the concept of the

game. So, Christina stayed at that center the whole time to monitor their progress and

to help them. No matter what Christina explained to the children, the concept still

seemed hard for them to comprehend. After the lesson, Christina reflected on her

lesson and thought her lesson was not appropriate for the children because of the

discrepancy between her lesson and the children's readiness. She thought that she

should have known this would be hard for the children to grasp. After the lesson,

Christina tried to modify her lesson to fit the children's readiness and to get them to

explore the activity she provided and to construct knowledge about the activity.

During lunch time, Christina asked her cooperating teacher for advice on how to

determine the children's abilities and about what she could do to modify the game

for them. They talked about what she did during the lesson and what she thought was

not appropriate for the children. Based on this discussion, Christina figured out how

to modify her lesson for the afternoon class. That time, the activity worked much

better. In her reflective journal, she wrote about her reflection on this learning

> I had a learning experience today..........From today's lesson, I get to
> realize the importance of teachers' understanding each child's ability.
> Also, I got to see how a lesson often does not turn out the way a teacher
> thinks, but it is what teachers do with these experiences that really matters
> (Reflective Journal, February 23, 2006).

During her intern teaching, one of the most important things for her was

that she thought critically about how she would present information to children, so

the children could explore their learning environment and construct their knowledge

successfully. When she planned a lesson, interacted with children, or reflected on her

teaching after having taught a lesson, she always kept in mind how she would

present the information to children so that they could understand and so their

learning would be meaningful. In the interview, Christina said the following about

the importance of meaningful activities for children:

I've learned the difference between a meaningful activity versus one that
is just purely informational...I think I've developed a strong way to make
centers up...to put centers together and to make them meaningful. I'm on
my way to learning how to be able to convey meaning in terms of the
information that I'm trying to teach the children (Interview, March 2,
2006).

In her reflective journal, she wrote

Today was my observation and I thought it went pretty well. I did a lesson
on phonics and putting letters together to make words. I thought the lesson
was meaningful for the children because they each had their own letters to
manipulate and form words. This made the learning easy for them to see
and better comprehend. The math lesson I taught this morning went really
well, also. I taught fact families and we went through and sorted the
doubles, the near doubles, and the sums of ten. We did this as a group and
then continued with the math box, which was a review of what I have been
teaching them. It is such a good feeling when they do well on the things
you have taught them, or you see them making progress because I feel it
reflects on you as a teacher (Reflective Journal, March 6, 2006).

I asked her why she thought the exploration was so important for children's

learning and she explained that when children explore materials and when they touch,

feel, smell, and get their hands on things, they were learning. So, at the same time,

they were using thought processes to try to understand the environment around them.

Through exploration, learning becomes meaningful for them. She said that, "if

children learn through memorizing the answers, then how is it relevant to their lives?

How are they really learning and making that meaningful?" And, the children were more likely to remember if they were figuring it out on their own and making the connection between different things. That was why she thought that exploration was so important for children's learning.

During my observations, I recognized that she asked a lot of questions to get the children engaged and to get them to think more in depth about things. She frequently provided challenges for the children to figure things out by themselves through continuous questioning of the children. Christina's frequent use of questions appeared to relate to her encouragement of children to figure things out autonomously and to be reflective thinkers.

Additionally, Christina avoided providing examples for children. She thought that, if teachers gave an example to children in any activity, the children could easily think what the teacher gave them as an example was the answer and they would not have their own ideas. She thought children would strive to make their work look like the teacher's example. She said

> Maybe try not putting examples in there and let them come up with it on their own – they're all going to look different, but I think that's how children learn. In other words, they make their own and they see

somebody else's and they say... oh, I could have made mine like that... so, it was kind of how I incorporate my beliefs into it also (Interview, March 2, 2006).

Her avoidance of giving specific examples or standards, which the children expect from the teachers, was apparent in her effort to enhance the children's critical thinking about problem solving.

During her intern teaching in the first grade classroom, the week she taught journal time, calendar time, and math, she was really nervous about teaching the math because she did not have much experience in this area. Her concern was being able to deliver the information to the children in a way that they could understand. The lesson was dividing an even number of pennies among people. She gave the children their own stack of pennies to use and manipulate as she gave them problems to think about. After the lesson, she thought the activity went well and she thought the children grasped the concept she tried to reach.

In the math lesson, when Christina worked with children on how to solve the math question, the children kept raising their hands to say "I know the answer." But, she told them "I do not want to know your answer right now. Rather, I want to know what you need to do first to solve this question." However, the children kept

telling her "I know the answer." But, Christina made sure the children knew that

what they needed to know was not only the answer, rather they had to figure out how

to solve the problem.

In the interview, Christina talked about her rational for this practice of math

lesson

> Honestly; I don't care what the answers are. I want to know the process of
> what they're learning...so by...that one child who says...I know the
> answer...well, that drives me crazy because none of the other kids might
> know the answer and they have to use thinking and reasoning and problem
> solving to figure it out. So, if one child may not know it and I ask, how
> could we start, what do we start with, what do we do...that starts helping
> other kids...I see, I see the process...Or maybe if you say, well, what's
> another way we can figure it out...then there's different ways and they see
> that there's different ways of to figure things out instead of giving the
> answer...now, I might ask for the answer in the end...and maybe a child
> that was uncertain what the answer may have been uses the process that we
> used to figure out the answer and that helped them...so that's kind of why I
> do that...so they can figure out how they're getting to where they're going
> (Interview, April 5, 2006)

During her intern teaching in the second placement, Christina kept focusing

on how to integrate her ideas, based on constructivism, into the school day. She

followed the math and language the school was doing because they were on a set

schedule. However, she tried to integrate her own ideas, as well, in terms of

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constructing children's knowledge and seeing how they did. She still used the ideas

and things the cooperating teacher had to incorporate into the classroom because it

was her routine, but she added some of her ideas to classroom, which she was

excited about.

After teaching this lesson, she was extremely confident in finishing the rest of

this week teaching math in a constructivist manner. Also, as she went through her

intern teaching, she felt there was an even atmosphere of learning, facilitating,

exploration, and discipline on her part. She thought she did a great job managing the

classroom. One day, the children worked hard for her and exhibited great behavior.

She was impressed. The children came up with great ideas for rocket ships and, again,

really impressed her with their ability to construct great work at such a young age.

She was so glad she was doing this type of work in the classroom, so other teachers

could see how children could learn in an exploratory environment.

Issues with Special Needs Children

In Christina's intern teaching, the kindergarten class in the morning was

challenging for her because of the children with special needs. Since there were

many special needs children in the morning class, it overwhelmed her. During

Christina's first day of full-time teaching in this classroom, the room was out of

control, Specifically, the children with special needs were out of control and both

Christina and her cooperating teacher could not stand it. So, Christina and her

cooperating decided that Christina would not have her full-time teaching in the

morning class. In the interview, Christina said that "morning class is very

overwhelming and gives me a lot of headache." Her frustration came from the fact

that she was just not able to handle the challenging children with behavioral

problems. In the interview, Christina often said that she was frustrated trying to

figure out how to appropriately handle the children's behavioral problems.

Moreover, since there were many special needs children in one morning

class, a lot of attention and a lot of one-on-one was required and it was up to her to

figure out how to get proper classroom management. In this situation, Christina

could not figure out how to deal with them and so, she felt continually frustrated

making sure she was transitioning properly. In the interview, she said that

> I'm so frustrated over and over with these children who have such serious
> behavioral problems.....Oh... I'm not fully confident with the behavioral
> management of children who have serious behavioral problems. I have no
> clue...I really have no clue about behavior management coming into my
> intern teaching honestly (Interview, January 31, 2006).

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In the morning class, one day, during center time, it was hard for Christina

to gain the children's attention. Christina was reading a story, but had to stop

continually and redirect children and take time out of the story, or from center time,

before continuing. And every time the children got distracted, they seemed to lose

their train of thought. They very often asked Christina "where do I go?" My

observation revealed that the children seldom knew which center was which. In the

interview, Christina said that before she started her intern teaching, she expected

something quite different from the first semester of kindergarten. Christina said she

was very frustrated with the fact that children were in their second semester of

kindergarten and they still needed a lot of teacher's direction and were not able to sit

and listen to stories.

As Christina struggled with the behavioral management of the special

needs children, she was challenged to find the best way to incorporate her goal of

education and the children's behavioral management. Because she still appreciated

the importance of children's autonomy-supportive environments, characterized as

providing children with opportunities to explore, she was also aware of the structured,

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routine-based classroom for promoting children's appropriate behavior during

classroom instruction

In the interview, Christina said that

I strongly believe that children are autonomous by choosing what they
feel they need to do. But, I still have structure for children, because this is
what children need to do; this is where children need to go. Either way, I
need to focus, redirect myself, and pay attention to what I can do and
what I am doing. So, that is one way, regarding behavior, to support
autonomy in a classroom and have structure (Interview, February 7, 2006).

From what Christina experienced in her first placement, it was apparent that,

as she went through her intern teaching, she was constantly reflecting on what she

could be doing to make sure that children were getting certain knowledge from her

teaching. In the interview, Christina said that she had come to believe that she needed

to let go of some of the authority, or some of the structure, and see what the children

could do on their own. And she believed that each of these experiences contributed to

her revised theory of teaching children. She explained that, if she was not getting the

message across to children or they were not grasping it, she thought, well, "What

else could I be doing?" Also, she could say that rules, routines, and structure in a

classroom helped to support children's autonomy by giving choices to children.

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During my observation, I saw Christina say children "I'm giving you the choice of either being quiet and staying and cooperating in group, or sitting at a table and thinking about what's going on here."

During her intern teaching, Christina was diligently trying to figure out how she could balance giving choices to children who have serious behavioral problems and managing their behavior appropriately. The children with behavioral problems needed routine and structure and, if they do not have that structure, then they were out of control. Christina said that for the support of their autonomy, she tried to support children by allowing them to choose what they feel they need to do, and at the same time, she provided the children structure, this was what you needed to do; this was where you needed to go. Christina said that

> You can say that rules, routines, and structure in a classroom support autonomy because you can give the child a choice. You can say that as the teacher, 'I'm making you choose this choice of either being quiet and staying and cooperating in group or you can choose to sit at a table and think about what's going on here.'
> Either way, you need to focus, redirect yourself, and pay attention to what you're doing. So, that's one way behavior cans support autonomy in a classroom and have structure (Interview, March 2, 2006).

Through observing her teaching in the classroom, I could better understand

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how Christina supported the children's autonomy. In the classroom, Christina tried to

work one-on-one with certain children who had behavioral problems and she tried to

give them appropriate feedback to support their ability to actively construct their own

knowledge. But, as far as techniques go, such as redirection, she made sure they

knew what was going on, where they were going, and what they were supposed to be

doing. Redirecting was the technique she found to keep the children on task. She

tried to remind the children what they needed to do within the framework of allowing

them to think about what they needed to do next. She often said, "This is what you

need to be doing, this is where you need to be." Through this approach, she hoped to

avoid chaos in the classroom due to ignorance of the various classroom routines.

In this sense, Christina had a hard time incorporating what she wanted,

what the children wanted, and what she needed to do in terms of teaching the

children. She wanted to be nice to the kids and have fun with them, but they needed

structure. She had to keep in mind that they came to school to learn and not play. Her

cooperating teacher suggested that she put her foot down the next couple weeks, so

the children knew she meant business. She agreed with her cooperating teacher's

opinion, in the sense that children would respect her more if she was firm, but kind,

with them as well as consistent. Also, she agreed that learning was the primary goal

for children, but that play was the vehicle to attain much of that goal. She found that

it was difficult to incorporate learning lessons with play in the classroom. The

children needed routine and structure and, if they did not have that, or if something

happened to throw that off, then they would get out of control. Sometimes she

wanted to "pull her hair out" because she felt like the kids should know the routine

by now and they were constantly asking, where they were supposed to go next, and

what they needed to do. This challenge was observed one day when she was

interacting with the children during their center time.

Overall, since Christina did not have enough experience and knowledge

educating special needs children, she was initially frustrated and struggled with this

issue. But, Christina was diligent in her efforts to incorporate her philosophy of

teaching into the teaching of special needs children. With her strong convictions

about her ability as a theory-builder and in her beliefs of teaching, she was able to

incorporate her philosophy of constructivism into her teaching practices for the

special needs children. In this process, Christina's critical reflection on the ability of

special needs children's and on understanding their needs provided the scaffolding

for her autonomous actions.

<u>Issues with Parents</u>

Throughout her intern teaching at her first placement, Christina was surprised

and frustrated by the way parents acted. In the interview, she said the

> Parents could be crazy. I thought I might have a few parental complaints,
> you might have a few incidences where they cause some problems, but that
> is the one thing…and it's not even being involved in their kids lives, it's
> more overpowering and just the rumors that they do, the gossip, the phone
> calls that they make when they go home, it just adds up. It's unreal
> (Interview, February 7, 2006).

In the interview, Christina shared that she was frustrated with the parents of

children. Many times in the morning class there were children who misbehaved and

she had to tell their parents and then come up with solutions with them. Specifically,

there was one boy who was about to hit her and was really acting out throughout the

day. So, Christina said that she told his father about his son's behavioral problem and

the father said, "Well at least he just raised his arm at you and did not hit you." She

thought to herself, "You have got to be kidding me! If that was my child, I would talk

to them about their actions regardless if they hit the teacher or just acted like they

would." To her, it was extremely unacceptable. Christina said that she was really

nervous about these confrontations. But, she thought that she needed to know that she had to work on these types of encounters to gain confidence in this area. Because she was sure that she would see plenty more of this throughout the years and, as a teacher, she needed to learn how to interact with children. Christina said that

> I say to myself that 'Yes, you will...you will see parents whose responses are very cavalier, like this one, and others who will turn around and slap their children in the face for disrespecting you' (Interview, February 7, 2006).

Christina also had a child that was new to the afternoon class, attending for the last two weeks. She was trying to figure him out, to observe how he acted in school and his behavior. The last two weeks he was disruptive during group and when walking in the halls. He was always touching friends, walls, and anything but himself. So, finally, she had a talk with his father. In the interview, Christina shared how the meeting with the child's father went.

After class, she met the child's father and told him what the boy was doing in class and how she had to re-direct him five or six times before she could get any response from him. Having to repeat herself this many times was exhausting and unacceptable. When she told the father about this, he said, "So what should I do?"

Christina said that at this time, she thought to herself, "Well aren't you the parent?"

Christina said it was somewhat frustrating because he was the parent and the

behaviors his child exhibited in her class were typical of a five or six year old. But,

Christina thought that she needed to let the father know the appropriate way to help

his son's misbehavior. So, she explained to him that, as a parent, he should have a

talk with the boy at home about what are good choices to make at school. He, then,

was very apologetic about the boy's behavior. About this, Christina was glad that she

was able to help parent. In the interview, Christina said that what she learned from

this meeting with the child's father, was that children's families are extremely

important, so the teacher should maximize their assistance when needed, as well as

know when they will not be able to assist teacher. This drove Christina to think more

about parent education and parent involvement.

Christina came to think that she had to find the resources for how to reach

those parents, for how to guide the parents that do not know what to do with their

child because they were acting up in a certain way, and for books, literature, or

activities they could read, look at, or participate in. As a result, she became more

involved and knew more about their children and why they were doing certain things.

And this was what she learned that teachers needed to do – they needed to get resources for the parents.

To do this, during her intern teaching, Christina was continually interested in parent involvement in schools. In the interview, Christina shared what she did to learn about parent involvement. Christina said that there was a day at the staff meeting when the principal of her school talked about attendance and how to raise attendance rates. She was not really sure how one could be effective in raising attendance rates. She asked her principal, one-on-one, how exactly to do this and the principal told her that she could provide some sort of incentive to get children to come to school. She really enjoyed talking to the principal by herself. She kept questioning about how one could ensure that you could reach the parents so they would bring their children to school on time? With some parents, one had to pull teeth to get them to come to the school make a conference. And, even with this, the parents still were not active in their children's lives. She thought that the best she could do would be to educate the parents as to why it was important for their children to be there. But, she knew that she could not make other people share her same values. The sad thing about it was that the child had to pay for the parent's

irresponsible ways. She thought it was an interesting topic and a topic she needed to

keep thinking about throughout her years of teaching.

Christina's interests and her reflection on parent education continued

through her intern teaching at her second placement. At her second placement,

Christina gained more experience about how she could successfully help parents. In

her reflective journal, she wrote this experience as

> Today I did have a learning experience in one of our conferences. The last
> parent that came in expressed some concerns with bullying in the
> classroom. Her child always feels in competition with two other boys that
> seem to really click. He likes playing with the boys and doesn't want to
> be restricted from playing with them. I talked to the mom and told her I
> had indeed seen a bit of what she was talking about and had been paying
> close attention to it in the last three weeks. She asked if there were any
> other boys in the class that she could direct him to in order to guide him
> in another direction. I explained to her that the interests that her son has
> are playing soccer and sports. She agreed and said he is always playing
> sports and that it really interests him. I told her that the two boys he was
> hanging out with were the two athletic boys in the class and were always
> playing sports. The other boys in the class never played sports and didn't
> seem as comfortable in the classroom as the two friends of this little boy.
> So, I told her he may feel comfortable with the sports idea and want to be
> a part of that. She was so glad I gave her this insight on the other boys in
> class and why her son may want to hang out with certain boys in the class.
> After she left, my teacher gave me praise for putting in my ideas and was
> thankful I was there to offer advice to this parent. I felt good too because I
> really did help her and helped her understand various aspects of this issue.
> It was a great experience and I felt really good about it (Reflective

Journal, April 27, 2006).

Overall, consistent with how Christina solved the issues with

incorporating her philosophy in the teaching special need children, Christina was

also critically thinking about her theory-building and about how she could support

parents appropriately in reaching her final goal of supporting children's learning. The

first time, since Christina did not have enough experience interacting with children's

parents and had difficulties with some parents, she was frustrated. But, as she was

actively participating in the conference for getting resources, reflecting on the

appropriate means for interacting with parents, and determining what they needed to

know for their children, she was finally able to gain confidence in interacting with

parents and was able to help the parents and support and further the understanding of

their children.

Keeping My theory: Conflict with Cooperating Teacher's Philosophy

At the beginning of intern teaching in her second placement, a first grade

classroom, Christina was taken by surprise by some of the discipline techniques of

her cooperating teacher. In her reflective Journal, Christina said:

Today I was really taken by surprise by some of the discipline issues that

my teacher uses in the class. Not that I am totally opposed to them, but am just not used to her options of discipline being an option for me. When we were doing a lesson that she was teaching, one boy kept interrupting and she was getting sick and tired of it. She told the boy that if he were to lay his head on his desk one more time that he was going to stand up at his desk and move his chair. I just feel that that is a really bold and a strong statement to make. The first graders in my class seem to be pretty mature and seem like they can handle this, but I was just taken by surprise when she said that. I am not sure if I could use discipline like that, unless I was totally fed up with a situation. I watch the way she disciplines and it seems to be completely opposite of what we have been taught to do (Reflective Journal, March 24, 2006).

In the interview, Christina also said that, regarding the discipline issue, she

also noticed the constant extrinsic rewards that are in place at the school. She said

that in the classroom, there were stamps on everything, stickers on everything, and

encouraging words on everything. Christina said that she kept asking herself that "is

there is a right and wrong way of teaching, disciplining, and rewarding children?"

She said that she knew the typical answer was that every teacher was different and

she had to find what was right for her, but she was confused about if there was a right

and wrong way to discipline children.   Still, she was eager to figure out the right

way to teach, or if there was, in fact, a right way.

In her teaching in this school, Christina felt that she was forced to follow

her cooperating teacher's idea without criticism. In the interview, Christina shared an experience that, when Christina and her cooperating teacher talked about the things that Christina would teach she felt that her cooperating teacher already had planned out what she wanted in the class and the lessons she would teach. When her cooperating teacher and Christina had their planning hour with the other members of the first grade team, she saw them taking out things they had done from the previous year to integrate into next week's lesson. Christina felt that everything that she saw was so structured and she did not feel it really allowed for any creativity in the children. Christina said that all her cooperating teacher did was pull from a book, whether the math book, the language, or the literacy series. She pulled from and taught straight from these. Christina said that she could not figure it out why her cooperating teacher did things in this manner. And this experience left Christina to try to figure out what was the appropriate way to teach and support children's autonomy and children's thinking based on her theory. Christina said

> I respect how my cooperating teacher is teaching. But, I also need to respect my way of teaching…So, in this class, I am always trying to use my methods of teaching… like facilitating questions…I use questions a lot to get the children to think more in depth of things… I use that aspect of teaching to incorporate into my teaching now to get the children

engaged and to get them to thinking about things...(Interview, March 31, 2006).

During my observation, one day, her cooperating teacher set up the art center. In this activity, one of the tubs made an Easter bunny that was already cut out and there were patterns for them. After the class, in the interview, Christina reflected on that art center. Christina asked herself "Well, that may be cute, but what are the kids really getting from this cute activity." And she thought that "instead of this activity, it is better for children to be given a bunch of construction paper in a tub and tell the kids to make, draw, or construct something that reminds them of Easter." Because she felt this was a way to allow children to reflect on what Easter is, what they think of Easter, and what they want to make.

After this experience, Christina decided that she was going to talk about the two philosophies with her cooperating teacher. So, a few days later, I visited with her and asked how the meeting with her cooperating teacher went and what she shared about her philosophy and what she learned about her cooperating teacher's philosophy. Christina answered that

> We talked about philosophies and I asked her... if you have to put in words what your philosophy is... she told me that she couldn't really

think of what her philosophy would be. She didn't know how it would be... and I told her about her take on how children learn and what not and giving her ideas... what she can do to become more constructivists in her classroom...(Interview, April 5, 2006).

Since Christina said that her cooperating teacher did not know what her

philosophy would be, I asked Christina, "As you observe your cooperating teacher,

what do you think her philosophy of teaching is?" Christina answered that

> As I observed how she teaches and interacts with children, I thought that she believed that children could learn through the memorization process. Because in this class, children come in and they know their routine and how it's supposed to go... and what routine they're supposed to follow. Ok.. Now her philosophy of teaching seems to me that...the children learn through the memorization process...the repetition of doing things... revisiting various aspects of curriculum...(Interview, April 5, 2006).

And Christina continued,

> My cooperating teacher said that she would teach reading or writing or sounds at the beginning of the year... she would do flashcards...Now, I understand why she would do that... You know to get them to memorize the different sounds of things... so for her that works... the kids do know all their stuff... they know their sounds and they can write their words, they can sound it out... in words I don't know if that describes her philosophy, but as far as her teaching techniques go... that's what I've seen... is her standing in front of the class and teaching mathematics or language and literacy... really doing that. I think she has a well-rounded personal philosophy of what teaching is and it's not put into words – it's put into her actions and how she teaches...(Interview, April 5, 2006).

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But, Christina had a different perspective on children's learning and she thought that she needed to share her ideas with cooperating teachers to allow for the collaboration of ideas so better teaching could take place. In the interview, Christina said

> What we need to do is collaborate with each other. She'll tell me about her way of teaching and I tell her about my way of teaching and we'll collaborate those ideas of constructivism and tradition and come up with a happy medium. (Interview, April 5, 2006).

To do this, Christina wanted to have a conversation with her cooperating teacher to listen to her way of teaching and to tell her about her own way of teaching. She wanted to discuss both ideas and collaborate. Christina thought that it was meaningful for both her cooperating teacher and her to share their beliefs about how teachers could teach children more appropriately and could support each other to get children engaged in the lessons and thinking deeper.

One day, during my observation, with this rationale in her mind, Christina asked her cooperating teacher to have a meeting with her after class. On lunch break, Christina asked her about her philosophy of teaching and learning and asked her the rationale of her specific teaching practice. For example, Christina asked the reasons

why the cooperating teacher did things, such as using flashcards, or using the

patterns to trace and cut out in art center. For Christina's questions, her cooperating

teacher answered that those teaching practices were for repetition, which promotes

children's learning through memorization. As stated previously, Christina came to

understand why her cooperating teacher taught in this way.

Then, Christina explained to her cooperating teacher that she had a different

viewpoint about how she would set up the art center. She said

> In an art center... instead of putting the patterns that they can trace and cut
> out...... instead of doing that, why not just put the construction paper in the
> tubs? ....So, just... LET THEM TAKE it out and ...LET THEM THINK of
> what it is that they're trying to get to and how they're going to get to
> that...LET THEM EXPLORE it and kind of get to where they need to
> go..." (Observation, April 11, 2006).

However, her cooperating teachers acted like she had no idea what Christina

was talking to her about. But, Christina continued and tried to help her cooperating

teacher understand about what a constructivist classroom should be and how teachers

integrated different things and different activities, which were meaningful for

children, into the curriculum. More specifically, Christina shared different ideas she

had about specific instances she observed. Christina shared her ideas about what

teachers could do, instead of just using worksheets in the classroom and or having

manipulatives for the children to learn math. However, her cooperating teacher did

not much give feedback and response. She seemed to understand Christina's ideas,

but did not care much about them.

Afterward, I asked her what she thought about the conversation with her

cooperating teacher. Christina said that, even though her cooperating teacher did not

seem to agree with her ideas, she was satisfied that she had opportunity to talk with

her cooperating teacher about her constructivist philosophy of teaching and to share

ideas and to learn about her cooperating teacher's more traditional views of teaching.

And, Christina said that she was still eager to share her ideas about how children

learn and about how to support them as they construct their knowledge autonomously.

She did not have a fear of talking to the other teacher about how she believed

children learn.

In this sense, she talked about what she learned when she went through job

interviews. She said

> When I go to job interviews… I get nervous to tell them what my
> philosophy of teaching is because I'm scared that their philosophy of
> teaching is not going to match mine… and they're going to think that my

philosophy isn't good. But I started to think that, yes, that's what I believe. My idea needs to be respected. So, it is OK to express my ideas if I do in a respectful manner. What do I believe about children's learning? Yes... I believe that I think children do learn through exploration...And I BELIEVE that my ideas of teaching children have certain worth (Interview, April 27, 2006)

These ideas are consistent with how Christina would act if she had different ideas from the instructor in a teacher education program. She said that

I feel it is ok, if the instructor has a strong opinion about something and I do not agree with the instructor's opinion. I'll stand alone and voice my opinion on it if I have to (Interview, January, 3, 2006).

Overall, the interviews and observations of her teaching practice showed that during her intern teaching, Christina's teaching practice was consistent with her philosophy of teaching and learning. Christina had strong convictions about her beliefs of teaching and learning and diligently did her best to incorporate her teaching beliefs into daily classroom practice, which reflected Christina's autonomy. Especially, in her second placement, a very traditional first grade classroom with cooperating teacher who valued traditional teacher-oriented teaching, opposite to Christina's. Christina never conformed to her cooperating teacher's philosophy. Further, Christina made her critical reflection on how she could support children's

learning in a constructivist manner. As she developed a more complicated theory for

reaching this goal, she willingly utilized those ideas in her teaching practice and, as a

result, she became more confident in her ability as an autonomous learner and more

confident about the worth of her philosophy of teaching.

<u>Summary of Christina</u>

For Christina, her definition of autonomy was her ability to make decisions

based on her own reflections about what she thought, what she believed, and what

would best benefit her. Based on this definition, she thought autonomy was

characterized by the desire to figure out her own practical theory of teaching and

learning. Additionally, she thought opportunities for her to critically think could

support her autonomy. In her relationships with the cooperating teachers, she

believed that open communication between them played an important role in

supporting her autonomy. The cooperating teacher allowed her to experiment with

her philosophy of teaching in the classroom and provided scaffolding to enable her to

solve dilemmas she faced autonomously.

During her intern teaching, Christina consistently applied her philosophy of

teaching and learning into the everyday teaching practice. Also, as she experienced

many overriding issues, she was diligent in making an effort to makes sense of those dilemmas through continual critical thinking, to solve them autonomously, and to construct the revised practical theory of teaching and learning. Through this process, she reorganized her growth in her ability to teach children and she developed her critical theory-building approach. Finally, she became a true believer in the fact that she was an intelligent person who could create a meaningful theory that worked for children's learning and for herself. This, information showed that Christina was truly trying to be autonomous.

Jenny

Background and Her Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Jenny is the only international student in her early childhood teacher education program. She is a Korean female who is twenty-seven years old. In the interview, Jenny said that in her family, her father was always very strict, conservative and always decided everything by himself. So, Jenny, her mother, and her brother had to follow her fathers' ideas, or choices, without question. Even, when Jenny entered college, she could not decide the college and the major by herself.

Since Jenny was very young, she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher and wanted to study early childhood education at college. Her parents, however, did not allow her to do this and pushed her to study English education because her parents thought that it was better to be an English teacher than a kindergarten teacher. Jenny, however, was not interested in studying English and did not want to major in English education.

From the time she entered college, she was frustrated and was not interested in studying. As she had difficulties with her studies, her parents asked her to go the United States to study English. So, when Jenny was a sophomore majoring in English education, she came to America to learn English. After she studied at the Institute of English Language Learning Center for international students for about one year, she was so eager to study early childhood education that she started to persuade her parents to allow her to study in America. Jenny failed in persuading her parents many times, but, finally, she convinced them to allow her to study early childhood education in America. She was satisfied with her choice.

Jenny recalled that her early schooling in Korea relied mainly on textbooks and other resource books designed for tests and these books were treated almost like

the Bible. Learning for Jenny was memorizing these books perfectly to be prepared for the tests. In the interview, Jenny said that she believed that there was a definite content of knowledge and knowledge comes from the person who learns more from teachers, or from other older people. Jenny thought of learning as acquiring and memorizing certain knowledge that would be on the test, so one could get a high score on the test. She felt that the teachers operated as teaching machines for students' tests, and the students became studying machines for the tests.

Before Jenny entered the teacher education program, she did not have a solid belief in teaching and learning. In the interview, Jenny said that since she was young, she was not able to make her own choices. Rather, she had to follow her parents' decisions, or her teachers' decisions. So, she said that from very early age, she always wanted to be a teacher who could give real choices to children. In the interview, Jenny reflected that in this sense, since she started in the teacher education program and learned about constructivism, she now very much appreciates the theory of constructivism and takes constructivism as her theory of teaching and learning. She hoped that she could be a teacher who would always give choices to children and who would let them decide what they could do by themselves.

Influence of Teacher Education Program

During the interviews in this study, Jenny always referred to herself a

"hidden student." Because she said that, in her classes, she was always afraid to

present her ideas openly and to be recognized by teachers. Thus, she was eager to

just be considered a "hidden student" to her peers and teachers, so she would not be

asked to do something in front of many people.

When Jenny was asked about her definition of autonomy and about the

courses in the teacher education program that had a particular impact on her

autonomy of learning, she answered that

> I am not quite sure how to answer this question, because for me, the
> cultures of America and Korea are so different, and I was mostly busy just
> trying to adjust and survive the day-to-day teaching style of the American
> university. So, I really have never thought about autonomy in my
> learning......(Interview, December, 14, 2005).

And in the interview, Jenny started to reflect her learning experience in the

teacher education program in American, as she realized that there were many

significant differences in the ways of learning between how she learned in Korea and

how she learned in America, in terms of communication and interactions, such as

questioning and expressing one's ideas in the classroom. She came to recognize that,

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unlike the classroom in Korea, participation in an American class was very important

for being a competent student. She thought, specifically, that discussion and

questioning, as in the dialogic approach, were commonly used techniques in classes

in the teacher education program, and in most of classrooms in schools in America

for that matter. For her, she thought that the participation in the classroom was one of

the most important responsibilities for students. And, typically, teachers in teacher

education program did not direct questions specifically to students, assuming that

students who were prepared for the lesson would be able to volunteer, express their

ideas, and actively participate in discussions.

In this context of learning and teaching, Jenny was shocked by the very

different approaches of teaching and learning in the classroom compared to her

former learning experiences in Korea. She expressed a lot anxiety and frustration

about this unfamiliar learning and teaching approach. The most frustrating thing for

Jenny was the requirement to be an active participant.

In the interview, she explained the differences in the cultures of learning

and teaching between her Korean culture and American culture. For example, in

Korea, the professors lectured in class and there was not a lot of discussion among

the students, but in America, there were any discussions in class and not as much

lecturing from the professors. Jenny had a hard time getting used to this type of

learning. She felt that in the teacher education program in America, whenever the

professor would question her on her opinion or thoughts on a topic, she felt

uncomfortable answering in front of her classmates, because, although her professor

said there was no right or wrong answer, she was always self-conscious to give an

answer that was not in line with what the professor expected. As she recognized the

fact that participation in class was important for being recognized as a competent

student, she felt more stress because it was hard for her to express her ideas and

participate in discussions. She kept thinking that participation in class was important

and, during my observation of her class in the teacher education program, she kept

telling herself, "I must be more active…..I must tell something in the

classroom……."

In the interview, Jenny said that in the beginning of her teacher education

program, because most of her classes had lots of discussion time, Jenny would write

down everything she wanted to say and practice it before going to class. However,

because she worried so much about whether her opinion or thoughts were correct,

she would often have difficulty expressing what she wanted to say and, then, before she could finish contributing to the discussion, another classmate would jump in and say what Jenny was going to say. Then, Jenny would not know what else to say because what she had practiced had already been said. This process created a lot of stress for Jenny. Jenny was not used to this type of discussion style learning. The technique made it difficult for Jenny to answer questions on the spot when the professor would direct a question to her. She explained that in Korea, the custom was not for a student to express their own ideas so freely. In the interview, she explained that, even in the home, children were brought up to obey and respect the parents, which meant not pointing out the faults of the parents, even if they were wrong at times. This type of respect was part of the culture of Korea, and for Jenny to suddenly be in an environment where she could speak her thoughts and opinions in front of the professor and classmates was, again, a stressful ordeal.

A common dilemma Jenny faced in expressing her ideas and participating in discussions was a preoccupation that, if her answers or ideas were too strange and simple, the students might think her ideas were not correct and not appropriate. Then, she would appear stupid. In the interview, she said that

I really have no idea how to prove myself in the discussion and participate in the discussion. Honestly, I just want to give up (Interview, January, 5, 2006).

Jenny feared that the professor and classmates would look down on her if she gave a wrong answer. Even though Jenny wished to contribute her ideas and thoughts, her fear of being wrong caused her to not speak out and she became more isolated. Jenny did not want others to see her as incompetent, but the more Jenny stayed quiet, the more she felt others looked down on her. Jenny felt that this type of fear was more an indirect result of her cultural upbringing than a language barrier. She expressed her frustration by saying,

> Sometimes, the question is not very hard; sometimes it's very simple. It seems that I'm the only person who knows the answer to the questions, but I can't answer the questions. I'm just so afraid to answer the question in front of many peers and teachers. I just have no experience answering questions (Interview, January, 05, 2006)

In the interview, Jenny said that she particularly did not like small group discussions because there was more time for Jenny to speak, compared to the large class discussions. In the observation of her class during the teacher education program, during the small group discussions, due to her fear to speak out, Jenny mostly stayed quiet, even though she knew the answer, or had things to share. She

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said that, in order to not be called on for discussion, Jenny started to sit in seats that

would not allow her not to be as visible to the professor and she would never raise

her head for fear of making eye contact with the professor and risking the chance of

being called on for discussion. This action was noted while I observed her in class.

This stress, regarding discussions, started to effect Jenny's participation and learning

in all of her classes. In the observation of her class, when the teacher asked to have

group discussion, she hesitated to participated in the group discussion and preferred

to be left alone taking notes of her ideas instead of expressing those ideas and

sharing them with her group members. In the classroom, she always sat quietly and

seemed shy. Jenny, in short, did not have many informal or formal interactions with

her peers in the classroom.

In the interview, Jenny said that, after some time, she started to feel her

classmates no longer had any expectations she would contribute to class discussions.

Although some of Jenny's classmates might have thought Jenny had difficulty with

her English competency, for Jenny, it was a matter of not being able to adjust to the

culture of class discussions. Jenny understood the reasoning behind having

discussions, but, for Jenny, the preparation and the stress she had to endure for class

discussions blocked any type of true learning. She said that whenever she had a

course where part of the grade was based on class discussions, Jenny already figured

a zero for that part of the course grade. It was not worth her efforts to discuss when

factored with the level of stress she received preparing for it. As much as she tried,

she could not change the way she was brought up in Korea. In class one respected

the teacher and tried not to stand out and show off what one knew in front of

everyone.

In the interview, Jenny shared her ideas about another aspect of American

culture that was very difficult for her to adjust to – how students in America speak to

the professors and teachers. Jenny thought it was great that everyone was considered

equal and that the students were free to speak their minds, however, Jenny could not

get used to the manner of how students spoke to their professors and teachers,

especially when the students had a different opinion from the professor. The

communication she observed between teachers and students in the classroom was, to

her, very uncomfortable, especially when the students did not agree with teacher's

ideas and expressed opposite opinions, or when the students asked teachers questions

in the classroom, Jenny felt that students were challenging the teachers in class and

causing them embarrassment. In short, Jenny felt the students were very impolite. In the interview, she kept saying that she could not get used to how students would look at the professor eye to eye and tell them that they were wrong.

In the interview, she talked about her experiences in the Korean culture, stating that during her education in Korea, it was very disrespectful to look at someone in a higher position directly in the eye, especially while telling them they were in the wrong. She said "this was unthinkable in Korean culture." She believed that in the Korean manner, students should not disagree with a teachers' idea and should not challenge the teacher in class. If students had problems, or questions, for a teacher, they needed ask the teacher after class, not in class in front of other students, as this caused the teacher embarrassment and was very rude and impolite. In the interview, when Jenny explained how she was frustrated and embarrassed in her classes in the teacher education program in America, she often compared her former learning experience in Korea to her learning experience in America. When recalling her way of learning at the schools in Korea, she said "Students were supposed to just listen silently to the teachers' lecture and were not supposed to express their ideas at all. The students only followed the teacher's way" There were not many chances for

students to express own ideas to the teacher. On the contrary, if a student expressed their ideas to teachers or to other students openly in the classroom, that student was immediately considered strange, a very rude person, and was even ignored by others. The hierarchical relationships between teacher and students hindered the students' expression of ideas in the classroom.

In many interviews, Jenny explained that in the Korean culture, in which she grew up and was educated, Korean students were mostly scared of the teachers. Because they were scared, they respected the teacher. She thought she was influenced and accustomed to the large power distance that separated the students and teachers in Korea. She did not know how to express her ideas, how to answer questions openly, and how to involve herself in discussions. Thus, she typically accepted the authority of the teachers, or the materials studied, without question.

Related to this idea, there was one example of how Jenny thought about teachers' authority and power. One day after her class, Jenny talked about her grade with her classmates. Jenny received a "D" on one of the assignments in the core course in the teacher education program. She was shocked and frustrated. She had studied hard in that course and never expected such a low grade. The grade "D" on

the assignment was not acceptable and it did not make sense to her. However, she

could not even try to ask the professors to explain how she got the grade and she just

continued to be frustrated and continued to wonder why she receive the grade for

more than a year. While this research was conducted, she often expressed how much

she had been frustrated by that incident and she still wondered why she got that score.

So, I suggested she contact the professor and ask why she got that grade. But, Jenny

was very afraid, as she thought it was not her place, as a student, to appeal her grade,

(to me this was not an appeal, but a request for explanation). Also, because the

deadline for appeal in course already passed, Jenny's grade could not be changed at

that time. Finally, she just gave up meeting the professor, preferring to remain a

serious and polite student in the eyes of the professors.

Jenny was also frustrated with not being able to gain the trust of her peers

and professors. Related to this frustration, in the interview, Jenny shared her

experience in one of classes in the teacher education program. In the last class before

she graduated, the students had a group activity to implement their own developed

lessons in public school classrooms. At the beginning of class, the professor assigned

each student to a group with three or four students in one group.

Like the others, Jenny was assigned to one group, however, after one week, she found that she was moving to another group in her class, without any notice of this change and without any explanation for the change from the professor and her peers in initial group. Jenny was the only student who had to move.

Also, Jenny recognized that her new group consisted of the three highest students in her class. Jenny came to think that her classmates in the former group had gone to the professor to complain that they had her in their group and asked the professor to "kick her out." Jenny guessed that they observed that she was always silent in the class and they thought she would not contribute to their group assignment. Moreover, the fact the professor sent Jenny to the group with the highest students made Jenny feel that the professor believed she was not a "competent student." Jenny thought he placed in the second group so she could just "rely on the other group member's competence" and just "follow what her group members were doing" to survive in the class. Jenny said that

> I can't believe what is happening to me.....Why was I ignored by my
> peers and even by the professor... why didn't they trust me...the fact the
> professor moved me to another group without any notice and explanation
> made me SO, SO, SO frustrated....can you believe that? What are they
> doing to me? I felt insulted...I'm sure that I have more ability that any of

the other students in my class and I could show my ability if my English were my first language like the other students....

I asked Jenny if she went to the professor and her peers in the initial group to ask why they moved her to the group without any notice. Jenny answered that

No...I could not ask them...well, honestly...I'm more scared of their answer....I mean...if I asked them....well...No...I will not ask them...at all......well...Ok...Just.....if I have a chance to ask them accidentally....and if the professor and the classmates in my initial group could not explain well why they moved me to the other group, I would be convinced that they have not trusted me at all for more than two years....since I started studying in the teacher education program.....I would think they considered me not a real student, but rather a "mannequin" in the classroom.....Does this make sense to you?....Oh...I just wanted to avoid this frustrating situation on purpose....

Moreover, as Jenny worked with her new group members who were the highest students in her class, she was more frustrated with the distrust of her ability from her group members. Because, since Jenny became a member of that group, she never received any contact from them to discuss the development of lesson plans and to prepare for the implementation of their lesson plans in the public school classroom. After that, in the classroom, when the students in each group presented their lesson plans, Jenny was shocked that her group members had already met together many

times and had finished the lesson plans without her. Purposefully, they had not

contacted Jenny. Jenny said "I was just so mad!!! Just so mad......" Even in the

implementation phase, Jenny could not participate in the group discussion and she

did not have the opportunity to participate in the group. Because her group members

continually met together without Jenny, she was not able to participate. She found all

of the other members in her group met prior to those meetings and had already

decided everything without Jenny. I asked her why she did not express her frustration

with the peers in her group or visit the professor to discuss this problem. Jenny

answered that

> See....this is what the professor expected to work out for me....don't you
> agree with me? If you were me, would you go to the professor and ask
> her how to solve this problem? No way...this is what the professor
> expected and planned for me...I was just so frustrated...I cried many
> nights because I was chagrined at being looked down by them...I'm not
> stupid...

However, in the interview, Jenny said that she had very difficult

experiences in the teacher education program and she perceived that her way of

learning had not changed much through her learning in teacher education program.

Still, she believed that she experienced internal changes in terms of her self-image

and her self-esteem which might support her autonomy. And, in the confidential

interview, she shared that there were two significant teacher educators that she

referred to as "mentors of her life" who encouraged her to trust herself as a person

who could be respected by others.

In the interview, Jenny said that, more specifically, from those two

professors, Dr. Beck and Dr. Baker, she came to believe that she was enough

intelligent to make a decision by herself and trust that her ideas were just as

meaningful as another's. She thought this change was a very small thing for others,

but for her, this change in the self-awareness of her ability, was significant and

powerful. For Jenny's whole life, more than twenty five years, there was no voice.

In the interview, Jenny said that before taking Dr. Beck's course, she had

never heard of the word autonomy. She said that the word autonomy was totally

foreign to her. As Jenny looked up the word autonomy in the dictionary, she found

the meaning to be very a contrast to the way of she was brought up. Jenny reflected

on her life in reference to the word autonomy and realized that most everything in

her life had been dictated to her. She could not think of any incident where she was

able to make big decisions about her life. Her life had been structured with rules and

order.

In the interview, Jenny said that throughout the semester, Dr. Beck posed the

question of what is autonomy and what does it mean to you? At the beginning of

every class, students would reflect on the word autonomy to develop a working

definition based on the student's experience and knowledge.

She said that, as she studied in Dr. Beck's class, she was frustrated over and

over. There were no answers and in her class and there was only the question "what

do you think? "Why do you think?" Or "Is that really your idea?" In her class, Jenny

kept wondering to herself "Dr. Beck, What do you hear from me! TELL ME YOUR

IDEA!!!" For Jenny, learning was receiving specific knowledge from the teacher and

memorizing that knowledge. So, in her class, Jenny expected to hear the teacher's

ideas. Dr. Beck's way of teaching students was strange to her. Also, Jenny recognized

that in Dr. Beck's class, Dr. Beck did not emphasize the information in the textbook.

When the students answered Dr. Beck's questions intelligently with the information

from the textbook, she was not satisfied and continued to ask the students "OK, so,

where are your ideas? What do you think about that? The first time Jenny observed

this, she was frustrated because she felt lost. She said that she had no idea how she

could find the answers for this class without any resource book, such as a textbook or teacher's hint.

However, in the interview Jenny said that, she observed that Dr. Beck had respected each student's ideas, whether the idea seemed the right answer or not. Dr. Beck encouraged students to progress forward to next step of their thinking. Jenny realized that that there might be no right answer in Dr. Beck's classroom, but everyone's idea would be respected if it was coming from their mind. After she realized this, Jenny would have "a-ha moment." When she was first introduced to the word "Autonomy" in Dr. Beck's class, she wondered "What? Autonomy? What does that mean?" As stated, she did not know the meaning of autonomy and needed to find a dictionary to figure out the meaning. Even after she found the meaning of autonomy in the dictionary, she did not understand what autonomy meant to her and why it was discussed in the course on early childhood education. Dr. Beck, unfortunately, never gave an answer for what the autonomy means and why students needed to study autonomy in her course.

So, at the beginning stage of Dr. Beck's class that semester, Jenny had already given up making an effort to understand such an abstract concept, choosing

instead to wait until Dr. Beck, or other students, provide ideas about the word. She would follow others' ideas, which seemed to make sense to her. Jenny said that, but, with opportunities she also struggled with what autonomy meant to her and what knowledge about autonomy of was most worth to her in Dr. Beck's class. Jenny finally had her own definition of autonomy and was finally able to understand the meaning of autonomy and how it applied to her life.

In the interviews, Jenny said that she came to the conclusion that autonomy, for her, was the right or the freedom to make her own decisions and the freedom to choose as she wishes or desires. But, for Jenny, the word autonomy never existed in her vocabulary or life. Thus, Jenny thought that her understanding and definition would be very different from her classmates.

In the interview, she said that as she recalled her life, she never had an opportunity to have real choices, and, as such, she just followed the decisions of people with authority, such as her parents, teachers, and even her relatives. Jenny attended a very strict all girls' Catholic school throughout her school years, and then her parents chose the college she attended. Even her studies in America were decided by her parents. She was very frustrated about this, she could not make her own

choice against others who had the authority to make her follow their ideas. Jenny

believed that, in her culture, more specifically in the culture of her family, her

parents, teachers, and other older people's ideas were a kind of law and she should

obey them. Choosing not to obey was very problematic behavior in her family and in

the society which she lived and was educated. She unconsciously avoided situations

that would put her in any type of decision making dilemmas because she always

second guessed her decisions and did not have faith in herself to make choices.

Jenny said that she came to think that even her understanding of autonomy

was not as complex and sophisticated as her other colleagues', but, she believed her

own definition of autonomy was meaningful for her life. She expressed this as

"meeting the notion of autonomy in my life brings to my life a powerful change like

a paradigm shift."

In the interview, Jenny said that, although she did not like all the reflective

discussions in class, it was through the reflective discussions that she was able to

form her own working definition of autonomy. The fact that Dr. Beck helped each

student develop their own definition helped put meaning to the word autonomy for

Jenny. If Dr. Beck had just given the definition of autonomy and not had the students

reflect on this word in every class, Jenny felt that she would have just memorized the

meaning of the word, but would have never have understood the true meaning of the

word like she did today. In the interview, Jenny shared her idea that the word

autonomy was no longer just a word she reads in a book or hears in a class, but a

word that put new meaning in her life. Jenny did not know that one word could have

such an impact on her life and could change her whole concept of self. She had the

opportunity to realize that her ideas would be enough for herself and for others, and

she could make her own decisions based on her choices.

Along with Dr. Beck, Dr. Baker also had an impact on Jenny's self-concept.

In the interview, Jenny talked about Dr. Baker's class. In Dr. Baker's class, like other

classes, she struggled with expressing her ideas and participating in discussions or

group work, but she felt that Dr. Baker always trusted her to have her own ideas and

trusted that she could think critically about the content of class and produce

meaningful ideas. Jenny thought, however, that Dr. Baker helped her to develop her

self-confidence. As Jenny again stayed quiet during the discussions in Dr. Baker's

class, Dr. Baker told her that he believed in her. He told her that just because she did

not speak in class did not mean that she had nothing to say or to contribute to the

class discussions. He told her that there were no right or wrong answers in his class and that she had nothing to fear from expressing her thoughts and ideas. So, Jenny felt that Dr. Baker encouraged her to share her thoughts because he believed that she had a lot to offer to the other classmates. She remembered that Dr Baker often talked to her saying

> I know you have your ideas, I believe you can think deeply. Also, I understand why you have difficulty in expressing your ideas in the classroom. But, if you trust yourself, and you believe your ideas are worth sharing with others in the classroom, you can speak your voice. Everyone has perspectives and all perspectives can be meaningful (Interview, January, 05.06)

Also, Jenny believed that Dr. Baker encouraged her to express her ideas comfortably in the classroom in many ways. Since she perceived that Dr. Baker understood her situation and trusted her ability, she felt huge relief from the isolation in the classroom and came to have confidence in her ability and that she was intelligent enough to make knowledge, which could contribute to the others and even to society.

In the interview, Jenny said that, with this type of encouragement, she made some efforts out of respect for Dr. Baker and, as she spoke up in discussions, Dr.

Baker praised her for her contributions and even tied her ideas and thoughts to the

topics of other students, making her feel that her contributions were valid and

important. In Dr. Baker's class was one of the first times that Jenny felt comfortable

to speak up and contribute to class discussions. Jenny appreciated Dr. Baker for

believing in her and for encouraging her to share her thoughts in class. Dr. Baker

made a difference in how Jenny viewed herself, helping to eliminate the self-doubt

and lack of confidence in sharing her thoughts and ideas.

Overall, for Jenny, she thought that in her life she had not had the opportunity

to think about autonomy. In her culture of society and her family, she rarely made her

own decisions and choices by herself. Instead, she followed others who had authority.

Even after she had a chance to learn autonomy in one of the classes in the teacher

education program, she could not deeply understand the meaning of autonomy.

During her study in the America as an international student, her learning process was

constrained by her struggles with the different style of teaching. And Jenny never

believed that she was enough intelligent to have her own choices and to make

decisions by herself. However, Jenny believed that she experienced significant

changes in her life in terms of her self-esteem and self-confidence through what she

learned from the two teachers in the teacher education program.

Her two mentors, Dr. Beck and Dr. Baker, taught her to believe that,

eventually, she could have more self-confidence and would be able to consider

herself an autonomous decision maker. It is meaningful to note that listening to her

voice revealed that Jenny saw autonomy in the development of her voice and her

reflection about the development of her autonomy in the teacher education program

is focused on how she developed her voice through those two significant courses.

From Jenny's reflection about the development of her autonomy in the teacher

education program, one could infer that Jenny developed her understanding of

autonomy in the development of her voice, which means she was self-conscious

about her right to freely make her own decisions.

Relationships with Cooperating Teachers

Jenny's first internship placement for intern teaching was a half-day

kindergarten class in a central suburban school. The city where Jenny did her

internship is home to a large university and the elementary school was located close

to the university apartments where many international graduate students lived.

Having the university in the same town and closely located to the elementary school,

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brought a wide background of children to the school. So, again, there was a high

mixture of cultural and racial backgrounds. There were also many students whose

parents were from other countries and who were graduate students at the university.

As such, there were many programs for multicultural education and there were many

children who spoke English as a second language.

Her cooperating teacher in the first placement taught for nine years at this

school and she had many international students in her class, so she was very good at

understanding Jenny's situation as a student teacher from a different culture. Jenny's

first placement classroom goes along with the constructivism philosophy. The

classroom was very much a center-based room and it was very much a

constructivism-based classroom. There were many opportunities to encourage

children's own choices in the classroom. For example, every morning children

chose their seat for a day or children chose the center they want to do.

Jenny's second student teaching placement was in a first grade classroom

at the same school as her first placement. This classroom was very different from her

first placement. The teacher was strict and structured with many classroom rules.

There were a lot of worksheets and individual work, such as reading time. In the

classroom, the students did not have much cooperative work and they focused

mainly on their own work. Additionally, it seems that talking with others was not

allowed. The teacher did not tolerate any type of talking in her classroom, and

therefore, the students were well behaved and seemed daunted by the strict

classroom environment.

When I first visited this classroom, the children were in the middle of their

morning work. As soon as they looked at me, silently, the homeroom teacher seemed

to send a silent message to the children to keeping working instead of looking at me.

The students quickly continued to their work. In the classroom, since the teacher was

strict about any type of talking in her classroom, the students often interacted with

their peers with talking eyes. When the children whispered, or talked, with their

peers for any reason, Jenny's cooperating teachers seemed frustrated and sent a sign

to the children to "be quiet."

Before Jenny started her student teaching, she showed a lot of fears about

her intern teaching. In the interview, Jenny told me she thought some of her fears

came from wondering if her English language competency would play a factor in her

student teaching, or if she would be under constant surveillance by the cooperating

teacher regarding her student teaching.

But, after a couple of weeks of student teaching, Jenny started to feel more

at ease regarding her initial fears. During Jenny's intern teaching, Jenny felt that her

cooperating teacher was supportive. In the interview, Jenny explained that the

cooperating teacher understood some of the obstacles that she encountered regarding

cultural differences, language barriers, and the difficulties of student teaching. Jenny

felt the cooperating teacher was encouraging and always willing to help Jenny in any

way she needed. Jenny felt she had built a good rapport with the cooperating teacher

and could consult with her and receive constructive criticism on some of the

difficulties she faced.

During my observation, I recognized that the cooperating teacher always

gave encouraging words to Jenny and allowed Jenny to resolve issues that came up

in class, instead of offering her advice or a solution to the problem. In the interview,

Jenny said that it was good for her that her cooperating teacher allowed her to

experience the good and the bad of teaching while giving her the opportunity to

resolve issues on her own.

In the interview, Jenny said that when it came time to go to full-time

student teaching, she again had hesitations and did not feel ready to student teach on

a full-time basis. Jenny contemplated what to do and finally confronted the

cooperating teacher regarding some of her fears. Jenny felt that she had not built

enough rapport with the children and feared that she was not ready to handle the

responsibilities of student teaching full-time. Jenny talked with her cooperating

teacher about her fears and her cooperating teacher validated her fears and allowed

Jenny to extend her part-time student teaching for another week.

During my observation of the next week, I found that the cooperating

teacher took a more passive role and allowed Jenny more opportunities to take the

lead and to build rapport with the students. In the interview, Jenny said this plan was

not discussed in advance, however, she felt appreciative to the cooperating teacher

for making such great efforts to help her prepare to go fulltime.

One of the obstacles Jenny encountered during student teaching full-time

was when the students asked her permission to do something and the students did not

get the answer they wanted. The students would then go to the cooperating teacher

behind Jenny's back and ask the same question to the cooperating teacher. Many

times, the cooperating teacher would give the students permission to do what the

students were asking to do. These situations were continually noted during my

observations. I observed many situations when Jenny would see a student doing

something she had specifically said they were not allowed to do. The student would

talk back to Jenny, saying the cooperating teacher gave permission. In the interview,

Jenny said that she was frustrated by this situation over and over. The children,

obviously, were not listening to Jenny's instructions. Finally, Jenny decided to

discuss this situation with the cooperating teacher, wondering what to do about the

fact that the students were taking advantage of her. I observed that after Jenny

discussed this, the cooperating teacher immediately apologized and said that she was

not aware the students had approached Jenny first with the question.

Also during my observation, her cooperating teacher gathered the students

the next day to have a talk. The cooperating teacher reminded the students that Jenny

was going to be the main teacher for the next four weeks and she made it clear that

all questions and permissions would be directed to and by Jenny and not the

cooperating teacher. I also observed that when the students approached the

cooperating teacher later with questions, she redirected the students to Jenny and

reminded them that Jenny was their teacher now and they needed to approach her

with the question. I observed that this made a tremendous difference in how the students treated Jenny and reacted to her as a teacher. In the interview, Jenny also finally felt that the students were starting to see her as a teacher and were starting to give her the respect a student should give a teacher. Jenny felt thankful to the cooperating teacher for redirecting the children. In the interview, Jenny said she was starting to feel that she was able to teach the children without the barriers she feared for so long.

Related to this issue, I observed that in one incident, the children were told that if they continued to talk and did not pay attention, the students would not be allowed to go to recess. Jenny told them that, after three warnings, recess would be taken away. On the third warning, Jenny told the class that their recess privilege was taken away and there would be no recess. The children were upset, but Jenny stuck to her promise. As the cooperating teacher came by, she asked why the students were still inside and not out at recess. Jenny explained how the students lost their recess privilege by being loud and not paying attention even after three warnings. Jenny was at first scared to tell the cooperating teacher about taking the recess time away from the children, but the cooperating teacher actually surprised Jenny and said that

she did the right thing by keeping her promise, if they did not mind and pay attention.

The observations of her teaching and my interviews with Jenny revealed that the cooperative relationship between Jenny and her cooperating teachers provided the conditions for Jenny to make an effort to make sense of her dilemmas and to resolve them herself. Her cooperating teacher seemed to trust Jenny's ability and she provided the opportunity for her to resolve situations on her own. Most importantly, Jenny's cooperating teacher was patient as Jenny struggled with her dilemmas, continually providing an autonomy-supportive context for her theory-building process, rather than providing the answer for Jenny's dilemmas. In the interview, Jenny also thought that her cooperating teacher understood her situation very well and trusted her. Jenny said that she was aware of her cooperative teacher's trust for her, and she said she became confident in her ability. Ultimately, she made an effort to make a sense of her dilemmas and was able to solve her dilemmas successfully by herself.

On the other hand, in her second placement, Jenny's interaction with her cooperating teacher was very different. Her cooperating teacher in the second placement was strict and had strong beliefs that children should follow the teacher's

guide without any doubt. As Jenny observed her cooperating teacher interact with her

children, she learned how she needed to act in the classroom and she thought that

what she needed in this classroom was only to follow her cooperating teacher's

directions.

During her intern teaching in this classroom, I observed that Jenny had

been uncritically following her cooperating teacher's philosophy, rather than

discussing her philosophy openly with her. In the interview, when I asked Jenny

about the kind of feedback she received from her cooperating teacher, Jenny said she

rarely talked with her cooperating teacher throughout her entire intern teaching and,

as such, did not get real feedback from her.

One day during my observation, Jenny was having lunch with her

cooperating teacher and with another teacher assistant. The teacher assistant asked

Jenny's cooperating teacher for some tips on student teaching. Jenny's cooperating

teacher said to her that "you must never disagree with the cooperating teacher." In

the interview, after this observation, Jenny said she heard this statement and realized

that her cooperating teacher did not like, or want, any type of conflicts with her

student teachers. From then on, Jenny decided to always follow and do as the

cooperating teacher said. She knew that her cooperating teacher's belief that the student teachers should follow the cooperating teacher's direction also applied to her. Jenny was now scared to communicate with her cooperating teacher and she was more focused on trying to figure out her cooperating teacher's beliefs about intern teachers, such as her expectations of intern teachers, and she made efforts not to create any conflict between her and the cooperating teacher.

Overall, for Jenny, her development of autonomy was significantly influenced by her relationships with her cooperating teachers, especially in the arena of open communication based on mutual trust and respect. In her first placement, Jenny struggled interacting with children, though her cooperating teacher's trust in Jenny's ability and her support of Jenny provided the opportunity for Jenny to solve her problems more autonomously. In contrast, in her second placement, her cooperating teacher explicitly gave the message to Jenny that she must obey her guide, which meant her cooperating teacher did not trust Jenny's ability to teach. As Jenny recognized this constraint between her and her cooperating teacher, she could not find her voice.

<u>Issues and Problem Solving</u>

From the beginning of her intern teaching, Jenny struggled with the obstacle

of getting the students to respect her as a teacher. In the interview, Jenny said that she

thought her students did not give her the respect that she believed students should

give teachers. In the interview, Jenny said that

> I'm mostly frustrated by the fact that the children in my class do not seem
> to consider me a real teacher, rather, they see me as a part-time teacher
> (Interview, January 31, 2006).

I asked why she thought the children did not consider her a teacher and why

they were disrespectful. Jenny answered that her frustration came from having a

difficult time getting her students to listen to her and follow her directions. When she

asked the students to do something, such as follow specific rules in the classroom,

they were not doing what Jenny told them. The students disregarded her.

During my observation of her teaching, I also observed her struggles and

frustration from interacting with children. One day, I witnessed how Jenny struggled

with one student, Thomas, about following her instructions. The children were

supposed to go to the gym from the class and they needed to line up in front of the

door of their class. When the children lined up, Jenny came to the children and told

one boy, Thomas, that today he would be leader for their class and, so, he needed to stand at the front of the line and lead his friends. But, Thomas said, "NO." Jenny told him, "NO, you need to do that" and, again, he said "NO." As Jenny asked Thomas again to lead the line to go to the gym, he again refused and disregarded her instructions. Jenny asked him again several more times and each time he refused to take the lead. Finally, as the other students stood in line waiting to go to the gym for over five minutes, another student spoke up and asked Jenny why it was so important for Thomas to lead, reminding her that they were going to be late for the gym. The student asked if someone else could lead for the day. Although Jenny felt a loss of authoritative control in this situation, she gave in and did not have Thomas lead to go to the gym.

After the class, in the interview, I asked Jenny why she insisted Thomas be the leader of the line to the gym. Jenny said

> See… if I let it go with Thomas… then it shows the other children that Thomas has control over me when I give instructions to Thomas…It is obvious that the children will not follow my guidance again… And I really cannot understand how the children do not show respect for me who is a teacher…I'm really frustrated…. (Interview, February 16, 2006).

In the interview, Jenny said she felt sad to see that, even at an early age,

students see teachers as equals. Jenny felt that teachers should be given respect and treated with respect. This was how Jenny expected her students to treat her. She did not want to be thought of as equal with her students.

Jenny's belief was revealed continually throughout her intern teaching at the first placement in her interactions with children. During my observation, most of her interactions were about discipline. With very strong expectations from the children in school about how they must respect their teachers and be respectful as they follow what the teachers said to them, she believed that teachers should teach children to act appropriately toward their teachers with respectful manners. Also, in the interview, Jenny said that she believed teachers should teach children to follow the rules in the classroom and, so, she always to tried to make sure the children followed the rules. During the observation, Jenny was mostly following the children, reminding them of the rules of their classroom, and making sure they followed the rules. Even the children who were doing their jobs in the centers, but who did not follow a rule, were interrupted, or stopped, and reminded them strictly of the rule. However, the children often did not hear, or follow, what Jenny told them and they seemed to disregard her. As a result, Jenny became frustrated throughout her intern teaching.

This account reveals that Jenny's expectation was that students were

supposed to follow the teachers' guide and they should not disagree with the

teacher's idea. Jenny's expectation was consistently revealed in her relationships

with cooperating teachers and with her professors in the teacher education program.

Jenny, expected the role of a student was to obey the teacher.

As stated earlier, Jenny's hope was that she would be a teacher who always

gave choices to children and let them decide what they could do themselves.

However, in her intern teaching, she had many hesitations about teaching students

with her ideas and philosophies of teaching. In the interview, Jenny said that she was

afraid of failing and she did not have enough confidence to try her ideas. She was

afraid of being labeled a bad teacher. Jenny said that she still believed in the

importance of giving choices to children, but that during her intern teaching she just

wanted to try and mimic the teaching style of the cooperating teacher.   She wanted

to do what the cooperating teacher did, dismissing her own ideas or philosophies.

She said that she did this in an attempt to make everything go smoothly.

While Jenny did her full time teaching, the cooperating teacher took a

passive role and allowed Jenny the opportunity in the classroom to take the lead and

to build rapport with the students. In the interview, Jenny reflected that as she started

her student teaching full-time, she realized that she could not continue to teach like

someone else, rather, she needed to allow herself to test the waters of her own ideas

and philosophies. She realized that if she failed to succeed that the failure was

necessary. As I observed her full-time teaching, I recognized that soon, Jenny started

to incorporate her own style of teaching into her lesson plans.

At the beginning of her full-time teaching, in an interview, I asked Jenny

about her specific goals for supporting children's learning. Jenny said

> Well...how I can say this...it's too difficult to answer in just a few
> words...let me think...well.... I believe in acknowledging the unique and
> diverse attributes of each child...so...I feel that as a teacher....I should
> allow the children to develop and evolve through their creativeness and that
> she should help foster their creativity towards learning (Interview, February
> 27, 2006).

However, Jenny's belief was not revealed during her teaching practice in the

classroom. One day, during the observation, there was an art project. Jenny was very

strict about order and rules and those idea things must go in sequence. She insisted

the children start with the drawing first and then cut out the picture. But, one child, a

girl, wanted to cut the paper before she drew the picture and Jenny told her "NO!

You can't cut it before you draw the picture. You must draw the picture first and then

you cut it out. Jenny did not allow her to do this because Jenny thought that was the

rule for that art project and that not following the rules was not appropriate behavior

for children. Also, Jenny did not allow the students to do other activities in that

center, such as reading. Always, Jenny was very strict about the students doing as

they were told.

In the interview, when I talked with Jenny regarding this contradiction in

philosophy and practice, I asked her if she felt that she made any difference in

changing the contradiction she found in her self-reflection. Jenny said that, although

she tried to change her way of teaching to allow for more creativity in the students,

she also said that "I am confronted with the limitations of reality... which are time

restrictions" Jenny said that when she only had a specified time allotted for an

activity, it was too difficult to allow the children to be creative and still have them

complete the project. When the children went off on tangents and were too creative,

it resulted in projects that could not be completed, or that were not recognizable by

the lesson objective.

In another interview, Jenny did some self-reflection on her student teaching.

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She realized that she was going against her beliefs. Regarding her teaching, Jenny could not believe that she held one philosophy, but was teaching another. Jenny said that

> I know that I am going against my philosophy of teaching. I know…but, I'm not confident at all in allowing the children to have choice…and so on. Because if the children cannot control their bodies, I will be lost…I'm afraid that so much…(Interviews, March 6, 2006).

Jenny's this statement was consistent with my observation of her teaching in the classroom. During my observation and in the interview, Jenny said she wanted to make efforts to teach according to her philosophy. Still, I did not see much change in her teaching style where flexibility was allowed with her students. Rather, she was more concentrated on a structured way of teaching and this was hard for Jenny to break from.

Although Jenny had many opportunities to incorporate her philosophy of teaching during her student teaching, Jenny opted not to for fear of failure and leaving an impression of failure. Even though Jenny knew the cooperating teacher would fully support anything she wished to do, Jenny did not want to attempt anything new in the short time that she was student teaching because she worried she

would not have time to redeem herself if she failed. Jenny was more concerned with just finishing her student teaching and making sure that it all went smoothly. Jenny avoided any type of situation that made her look incompetent as a teacher and therefore she did not attempt to do anything new or anything that would cause the students to show disapproval of her or her teaching.

At the beginning of this research, Jenny stated in an interview that she believed that it was important for children to learn in a constructivist manner, which she explained was children being able to construct their own knowledge. More importantly, as stated earlier, she emphasized that she wanted to be a teacher who always gave choices to children and let them decide what they could do by themselves.

However, while I observed her teaching practice during her intern teaching, it was clear that, while she thought these were the goals of a teacher, she responded by saying that it was the teachers responsibility to make sure that the students were not only taught the curriculum, but that the students also understand what they were taught. Also, she believed the teachers should not only be teachers of academics, but also of social interactions and rules. Jenny felt that school was a good place for

teachers to help students learn more about the social interactions among friends, such as sharing and taking turns.

As I observed Jenny's lesson in her first placement, the Kindergarten class, I noticed that Jenny took it personally when the children had a difficult time understanding certain concepts she was teaching, such as math. In her lesson, Jenny was concerned about making sure the children understood and learned everything she taught them in every lesson. Jenny thought that she must finish her lesson in the time allotted and that she must make sure the children learned perfectly. One day, Jenny had a math lesson and the children seemed to have difficulties understanding the math concepts Jenny taught. Jenny kept asking questions to check for comprehension. If the children did not understand the lesson, Jenny was frustrated. Jenny thought the teacher should make the children learn the concepts perfectly before the lesson was over. When the children could not grasp the math concept that Jenny was teaching, Jenny said that she felt that she was not qualified to be a teacher because she was not able to relay simple math concepts to her students. However, on other occasions, when Jenny noticed how some of the children were applying the concepts she taught, she felt proud of the fact that she was able to teach the students

and they were able to apply what they learned correctly and appropriately. So, Jenny became confident in her ability to teach children.

In the interview, Jenny told me that when her supervisor came to observe, that she was teaching a lesson on land and water animals. The children were not in control and many were not paying attention to her and doing their own thing. But, she told me that she never redirected the children and continued to proceed with her lesson. I asked Jenny why she did not redirect the children to pay attention by using some sort of intervention. She stated that, because her supervisor was there to observe her for a specified time, she found it more important to continue with her lesson to show her supervisor her teaching skills, since that was the purpose of the visit by the supervisor. Through my observations of Jenny, I also often observed her to be focused on the instruction aspect of teaching.

Overall, during her intern teaching in the first placement, Jenny teaching practice in the classroom was a contradiction to her stated beliefs about children's learning and to her philosophy of teaching. In the interview, she focused on the importance of giving choices to children in their learning, so that they could construct their knowledge autonomously. But, during the observation of her teaching

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practice, Jenny appeared to have a set of firm beliefs that teachers should give

specific knowledge to children and children should learn that knowledge from the

teacher's instruction through the memorization of the information. Jenny was

thinking that knowledge existed externally with definite information and much value

placed on the belief that the role of the teachers was as the providers of knowledge

for children and it was the teacher's responsibility to make the students competent in

terms of academic knowledge.

Teaching in the First-Grade Classroom

For Jenny's second student teaching placement, Jenny was in a first grade

classroom at the same school as her first placement for intern teaching. This

classroom was considerably different from her first placement classroom. The

teacher was strict and structured with many classroom rules. There were a lot of

worksheets and individual work, such as reading time. In the classroom, the students

did not have much cooperative work and they focused mainly on their work. Here,

too, it seemed that talking with others was not allowed. The teacher did not tolerate

any type of talking in her classroom. As a result of this structure, the students were

well behaved and seem daunted by the strict classroom environment.

In the interview, Jenny told me that she was surprised to see that there was

such a big difference in the academics between the kindergarten and first grade

levels. Because, in her first placement, kindergarten, the atmosphere was very

relaxed and the students had a lot of choices about what they could do. In

kindergarten, most activities were center-based. On the other hand, in her second

placement, the first grade, there were many rules, as well as structure and academic

work. Jenny was surprised to see how much work and how many tests the first

graders had to do on a daily and weekly basis. After the first week of her intern

teaching at the second placement, Jenny told me that,

> I could not believe how there is a such a big differences in kindergarten
> and first grade levels. The first-graders were in the kindergarten only a
> few months ago and now they face such a different world in their lives. I
> wonder how it can happen. I really never expected such a difference. I am
> just shocked...(Interview, March 24, 2006).

In Jenny's second placement, the first grade classroom, Jenny tried to

incorporate her constructive philosophy into her teaching, which focused on

questioning. Her students had a difficult time with critical thinking in their work. In

my observation, Jenny often tried to ask the children questions to encourage their

critical thinking. In the interview, Jenny said that she believed that the following

questions helped the children to think more deeply about what they were learning:

"What do you think about this? How would you solve this problem?" However, whenever Jenny asked a question to encourage critical thinking, the students became defensive, thought that they had the wrong answer, and were then unable to think beyond just answering the question. One day, during the observation, while the students were working on their math workbooks, Jenny came to see how they were problem solving each math question. She asked the students "How did you solve this question?" Or she asked them "How did this question turn out?" She wanted to encourage the children to think, though the children seemed frustrated and afraid of being asked questions by Jenny. Again, the children thought they had the wrong answers and the children kept asking Jenny "Am I wrong? Is my answer wrong?" Afterward, in the interview, Jenny said this happened often in this class and these were frustrating incidents for Jenny. As I observed how the children were being taught and how they were learning in their classrooms, my opinion was that this situation stemmed from the fact that these children had not been taught to think critically. In the interview, I asked Jenny what she thought about this and Jenny said that the students were unaware of how to answer her questions and, because they did

not know how to respond, they thought the questions meant they had the wrong answer.

In the interview, Jenny said that, in this class, she observed that the children did a lot of worksheets to teach different concepts and they were then tested over the concepts. She realized that these students were being taught to pass certain skills for that grade level. She felt the structure of the curriculum was to teach to the test. At this time, there was no room in the curriculum to allow for different theories or philosophies to be tested out or to be adapted into the classroom. In the interview, she said that during this student teaching period, she reflected back on how to be creative in her lesson plans, while still teaching to the test and being effective. But, Jenny told me that in the reality of first grade classroom where the children are required to have a lot of tests, she began to have a better understanding of the homeroom teacher and the reasons for the worksheets. Eventually, Jenny decided to stop asking questions that confused the purpose of her critical thinking questions and she decided to follow her cooperating teacher's way of teaching children.

Also, in retrospect, Jenny felt that her teaching style changed and was not what her cooperating teacher felt was important for the class. In the interview, Jenny

said that she felt that it was more important, at this time, to leave a good impression

with the homeroom teacher and she felt it was important to be recognized as a good

student teacher. During her intern teaching, she continually said that she did not want

any conflicts to arise from her desire to go in a new or different direction. Therefore,

Jenny made it a point to prioritize her goals according to what the homeroom teacher

felt was important. On the other hand, Jenny really enjoyed the structure of this

classroom. In the interview, she said that she especially liked how the students

behaved and followed her instructions without talking back to her. And she was very

proud of her students and felt good as a teacher when they behaved and listened to

her.

Compared to her first placement, Jenny felt the respect she thought she

deserved as a teacher. As stated before, as students gave her respect as a teacher,

Jenny developed more confidence and more enthusiasm for teaching. Jenny felt that

she had a much easier time working with the second placement of students than the

first placement of students.

Throughout Jenny's student teaching, and during my observations of her

teaching, Jenny's true philosophy of teaching, which focused on providing choices to

children, never showed. Jenny was always more concerned about how the teachers would perceive her and how they would think of her. Jenny mentioned how she focused on what the cooperating teachers found to be important. Jenny did not want to leave the impression she was a difficult, or bad, student teacher. Jenny's ideas became more confirmed after hearing her cooperating teacher's idea about the role of an intern teacher. As stated earlier, as Jenny was having lunch with her cooperating teacher and with another teacher assistant, Jenny's cooperating teacher commented that as an intern teacher "you must never disagree with the cooperating teacher." Jenny heard this statement and realized that her cooperating teacher did not like or want any type of conflicts with her student teachers. From then on, Jenny decided to just follow and do as the cooperating teacher said.

Jenny justified her actions by saying that there was not enough time to incorporate what she believed to be important in the practices of her theory, and for this reason she followed the homeroom teachers' examples and focused her priorities on what the teachers felt was a priority. During the majority of her intern teaching at the second placement, Jenny focused on observing how her cooperating teacher reacted and solved certain problematic situations, like when the children were not on

task, or when they were talking with their peers during the lesson. When Jenny faced similar situations, she did exactly what her cooperating teacher did.

By comparing what I observed about how Jenny approached problem solving with children and classroom management in her first placement and in her second placement, the differences were apparently. In the first placement, she could not apply her belief of teaching and constructivism appropriately, though she was still aware the importance of constructivism. But, in the second placement, whenever the children complained about anything, such as how their peers acted towards them, she did not listen to what the children said to her. Instead, she just kept saying, "I will not listen to you. What are you supposed to do right now?" These were the things her cooperating teacher always said to the children when she faced problem solving with the children. As Jenny went through her intern teaching in this class, she often used the phrase "I will not listen to you. What are you supposed to do right now?" whenever she needed to redirect to children from complaining, or doing other things. When Jenny asked the children "what are you supposed to do right now?" the children in the classroom seemed concerned and quickly redirected the work in their task. In the confidential interview with Jenny, she thought that she learned many

strategies of classroom management and children's behavior and problem management from her cooperating teachers. Jenny said that, as a result, she was getting more confident about classroom management and it was a good learning experience for her.

Different from the first student teaching placement, Jenny felt a lot of respect from the students in her second placement. Jenny was satisfied with the fact that the children respected her and she believed that the children recognized her as a "REAL TEACHER." Especially, as children in the classroom respected her and showed their respect when they followed her instructions, Jenny came to be very confident about her ability to teach children. In her intern teaching at the second placement, Jenny was concerned about the rules for the children. In the classroom and with her students in the classroom, Jenny was focused on having the children strictly adhere to the rules. Her classroom demeanor carried over and, when Jenny walked in the hallways or when she was on lunch duty, she was also strict with the children. One day, Jenny encountered a situation where a student from another class was dribbling a ball in the hall. Jenny confronted this boy and told him to stop playing ball in the hallway, but the boy ignored her. Jenny lets the boy know that she

was a teacher, but he still ignored her. She was determined to let the boy know that she was a teacher and that he should show respect and acknowledge her as such. So, she asked him, "Do you know who I am?" The student did not answer and she asked him again, "Have you ever seen me at the school?" The student was about to leave and Jenny grabbed him and told that "I am a teacher at this school. So, you must follow what I am saying to you? OK?" But, the child just ran away. Jenny was very upset and told me that "He must know who I am…"

In this sense, Jenny was always proud of her students and of how they never misbehaved outside of the class, when compared with students from other classes. She felt that this was the result of the strict structure the cooperating teacher had in place in her classroom. In the interview, Jenny said that she liked this type of structure and the respect the students showed for the teacher. Jenny saw this cooperating teacher as a role model in the way she had control over her students. In the interview, Jenny said that she hoped to model her future classes after the way her cooperating teacher structured her class. Jenny believed that, in order for children to effectively learn, they needed to be in a strict and structured environment and she hoped to have the same respect from her own class of students one day. The

observation and from what Jenny shared in the interviews revealed that, during her

intern teaching in the first grade classroom, Jenny's belief about her goals as a

teacher and her responsibility of teacher were to make sure that the students were not

only taught the academic curriculum, but also that the students understood social

interactions and the rules they learned from the teacher.

At the end of Jenny's second placement in student teaching, Jenny thought

that she had developed a lot of self-confidence and had a better understanding and

knowledge of how she wished to structure her class when she has her own class to

teach. In the interview, Jenny said that she felt that students need structure and rules

to most effectively learn. Jenny felt that the first grade cooperating teacher had good

control of her students and was very effective in teaching students to prepare for

exams, or in teaching to the test.

In her second placement, since the personal practical theory of teaching

between Jenny and her cooperating teacher matched Jenny did not struggle much in

this placement. Throughout Jenny's intern teaching, what she was most concerned

about and what she focused on was teaching children to respect their teachers and to

give them knowledge for their learning. Jenny's personal practical theory was

opposite of what she believed was good teaching, so her philosophy of teaching

never appeared in her teaching and she considered this discrepancy without any

conflict. Rather, her belief of traditional teacher-oriented practice was more

confirmed during her intern teaching.

Summary of Jenny

For Jenny, she did not have opportunity to think about autonomy because of

her cultural, societal, and family background which forced her to follow others who

had authority. During her study in America as an international student, her learning

process was constrained by her struggles with the different style of teaching.

However, Jenny believed that she experienced significant changes in her life, in

terms of her self-esteem and self-confidence, brought on, in part, by two professors

who trusted in Jenny's ability. These two professors were the most important

motivation for Jenny's changes.

In her relationships with her cooperating teachers, it was revealed that

when her cooperating teachers trusted Jenny's ability and supported her, she had the

opportunity to solve her problems more autonomously and could support her

autonomy. Otherwise, Jenny could not find her voice at all.

Throughout Jenny's intern teaching, what most concerned her and what she focused on the most was teaching children to respect their teachers and giving them knowledge for their learning Jenny's personal practical theory was the opposite of what she believed was good teaching, so her philosophy of teaching never appeared in her teaching and Jenny considered this discrepancy without any conflict. Rather, her belief of traditional teacher-oriented practice was more confirmed during her intern teaching. She never tried to make a reflection on her actions, rather focusing on avoiding the fears in risk-taking. So, her actions were mostly the other's opinion.

Lucy

Background and Her Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Lucy is a white female who is twenty-three years old. Lucy was born in small town in the southwest. Her family is very arts oriented. Her mother and father are a theatre teacher and a director, respectively, and her older sister graduated from college with a drama degree. Her little sister is an artist. Lucy is also very involved in art.

Since she was young, Lucy wanted to study early childhood education and be a kindergarten teacher. Her aunt played a large role in this decision, spurring her interest and her fondness for little children. Her aunt was why Lucy decided to go into early childhood education and why she decided to go to the same teacher education program from which her aunt graduated. Her aunt was also a kindergarten teacher and Lucy was able to go to her classroom and see how she did things. Her aunt told Lucy about all the different teachers, what to expect, and what she would be learning in the teacher education program.

In the interview, Lucy said that, since she entered and studied in the teacher education program, each class she took during the program challenged her view of children in the classroom and molded her current thinking. She said that in the first class in the early childhood method sequence, Lucy learned a great deal about how she viewed the children in her classroom and she learned, through reflection, how she truly saw children in and out of the classroom. In the interview, she said that she combined what she learned about the ways children learn and think with different approaches to teaching and with her knowledge of psychology to come up with her current view of children in her classroom.

From this knowledge, she formed part of her view of children in the

classroom. In the interview, Lucy said that she viewed the children in her classroom

as explorers and investigators who she had the opportunity to help and guide along

their journeys to discovery. So, she wanted the children in her classroom to be

learners and explorer, not sponges.

Based on this belief, in the interview she said that she emphasized that the

important aspect of a teacher's job is to set up the environment so children would be

able to discover, explore, and investigate the concepts they want them to learn. And,

she believed that teachers needed to physically set up the environment and prepare

their students for the social environment they desire. She thought that it was

important for students to have a safe environment where they felt free to explore and

come up with ideas and make their own mistakes. In the interview, specifically, Lucy

explained that teachers needed to allow the children to move around and construct

their own knowledge about things, helping them to retain information and learn

concepts. Related to this belief, in Lucy's statement of her philosophy of teaching

and learning, she made clear that

The physical layout of my classroom should appeal to the children's

instincts to explore and discover and invite and make the children feel safe and secure. Because, if the children do not feel secure around their teacher and their classmates, they will not be very likely to fully participate in explorations and class discussions.

Influence of Teacher Education Program

In the interview, when I asked her "What is your definition of autonomy?"

Lucy answered the following:

> My understanding of autonomy is that I could do for myself on my own. In some ways, I thought I was autonomous and I was not, at least not for the most part. I'm not completely on my own because my mom still helps me financially and everything, but I would say that I am for the most part. There are a lot of things like paperwork that my mom still does for me, like my taxes and things like that, but I still think that I'm autonomous. I've been living on my own in my own apartment for two years and paying my bills and all those kinds of things (Interview, January, 09, 2006).

Through the many interviews with Lucy, I asked her about on what she

based her own definition of autonomy, and what she thought about the class in the

teacher education program which influences her autonomy in many different ways.

I asked these questions to gather more ideas about the questions. As I looked through

the transcripts of Lucy from the interviews, I found that Lucy did not disclose much

information regarding her notion of autonomy or her thoughts regarding her ideas

about the classes which influenced her autonomy, especially when compared to the

other participants in the study. This may be because Lucy did not have a strong

understanding of her notion of autonomy and because she was still in the process of

defining her autonomy and how it applied to her teachings.

And it was important to note that when Lucy shared her ideas about the

classes which influenced her autonomy, Lucy interpreted the meaning of autonomy

as the development of constructing her knowledge autonomously. This meant Lucy's

understanding was different from her initial definition of autonomy and the other

three participants, as well .

In the interviews, Lucy thought the main type of activities that were helpful

for her in constructing her knowledge autonomously were small group discussions.

She thought that during the discussion, students could make up their own ideas, and

the ideas raised the respect level between teacher and student because the teacher

stepped back and let the students have a voice. She felt that if students just got the

information from the teacher, they would not think in depth about the information.

And, the information would be one-sided information, like their opinions on the

issue. Lucy felt that when students could discuss, they got a whole lot of ideas.

Lucy also said that the class which supported the students' participation in

class activities supported the students' development of their ideas through interacting

with others as they shared each other's ideas. Students needed to be allowed to freely

discuss and share each other's ideas. The autonomy-supportive class was required to

get students involved in the conversation and ask questions to better understand each

other's ideas and develop better ideas.

In this sense, Lucy thought Dr. Adams class was helpful for supporting her

autonomy.

> In Dr. Adams's class, we have a lot of small group discussions. It's just
> everyone talking about articles we've read or chapters or things that we've
> done in our field experience and I really liked that. Because it's a lot more
> helpful when everyone is just talking and getting to know what everyone is
> going through and everyone's ideas. It's a lot better than just having the
> teacher telling us their ideas (Interview, January, 12, 2006)

In the teacher education program, Lucy thought that the classes which

provided the opportunity for problem solving and safe environment for them to

experiment with their own ways of problem solving with a lot of trial and errors was

also very helpful for her development of autonomy in learning. The safe environment

for making mistakes was the most helpful because, when faced with problem solving

for the first time, she was afraid to make a mistake. But, after she realized that

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teacher educators respected her, she felt like it was okay to make a mistake. She felt

very comfortable making mistakes and error was just a process of learning. With this

reasoning, Lucy thought the lab experiences at the campus preschool provided good

opportunities for her to develop her autonomy in constructing her theory of teaching.

During her lab experiences, she had the opportunity to problem solve in her teaching

of children while the cooperating teachers were there, again making it a safe

environment.

Overall, Lucy developed her understanding of autonomy through the

development of independence. The reason she considered herself autonomous was

the fact that she could do for herself and paid her way, such as paying her bills. In her

reflection on how the teacher education program influenced her autonomy, her own

definition of autonomy was also revealed. She emphasized the importance of small

group discussion in the classes where students could create their own ideas

independently from their teachers. It seemed that Lucy's understanding of autonomy

was not deep. Just expressing each one's ideas during discussion did not make any

deeper reflection and support of one's autonomy and the construction of their

knowledge. Since Lucy had a shallow understanding of autonomy, Lucy was also not

able to understand the key point about how discussion and exchanging each other's

ideas supported her autonomy in learning.

Relationships with Cooperating Teachers

Lucy's first placement for intern teaching was the campus preschool in the

college of education at a big Southwestern university. There was a classroom for

two-year-olds, as well as a classroom for three and four-year-olds. The goal of the

campus preschool was stated on its homepage.

> At the campus preschool, we attempt to provide a quality early
> childhood education experience for your child. We believe two major
> goals of early childhood education are to help children achieve
> autonomy and self-control through:
>   - Self-selected center learning experiences and projects
>   - Encouraging children to be responsible for their personal needs,
>   wants, actions and behaviors and examining the consequences of
>   their actions.
> (Website:http://www.ou.edu/education/ilac/ICD/home.htm).

At the campus preschool, Lucy had her practicum in two consecutive

semesters, following her teacher education courses and under the same cooperating

teachers of her intern teaching. Lucy thought that the institute is where she

established her philosophy of teaching and learning.

Lucy's second placement was a third grade classroom. The school was

very open and very relaxed. Teachers ran their classroom they way they thought they

should be run. The principal was very accepting of letting her teachers teach how

they needed to teach. Even student teachers were able to go to the teacher's lounge

and have lunch. Most teachers in this school were also very accepting and interested

in the intern teachers' teaching , as well as eager to see how and what they could do

to support them. Her cooperating teachers went through the same teacher education

program as Lucy. The cooperating teacher operated her classroom based on the

constructivist theory.

In Lucy's first placement, there were two homeroom teachers, Ms. Jackson

and Mrs. Thompson. They had different styles of teaching children, different

philosophies of about teaching children, and different philosophies about how they

approach the classroom and planning. Lucy struggled with her two cooperating

teachers' philosophies, as well as with her philosophy of teaching. In the interview,

Lucy said of this situation, "I was kind of torn between the two of them because I

have to please both of them."

In the interview, Lucy explained this situation. Whenever Lucy was

planning the lesson, she had to take into account what Mrs. Thompson liked, what

Ms. Jackson liked, her view and perspective, and then the children's interests. She

had to get of these ideas together. For each of Lucy's lesson plan, Mrs. Thompson

and Ms. Jackson often gave her opposite feedback and Lucy was frustrated with how

she was to deal with this conflict. For example, Lucy said that when she planned the

theme, art from different cultures, like mosaics and different kinds of art, Mrs.

Thompson's feedback was positive. She liked Lucy's idea very much and told Lucy

that was a good lesson. However, Ms. Jackson did not like the same idea. Ms.

Jackson's feedback was that children would not understand Lucy's lesson and it was

not appropriate for their age. Lucy said she was very frustrated with Ms. Jackson's

feedback because she believed that children could not fully understand what a

country was yet. The experience was meaningful to Lucy, however, because for

children art activities could still expose them to different kinds of art and different

mediums to use for expression.

However, Lucy decided that she would not share her ideas with Ms.

Jackson. In the interview Lucy explained the reason that through her accumulated

experience and interaction with Ms. Jackson through her practicum and through her

intern teaching, she realized that Ms. Jackson seemed solid about her opinions and

did not want to hear Lucy's opinion, which was the opposite of hers. That was why she just wanted to give up her ideas and not create any problem during her unsecured position as an intern teacher. Instead, she was going to come up other ideas. which Ms. Jackson would like to do.

Continually, through her intern teaching at the first placement, Lucy kept getting frustrated because she thought that Ms. Jackson did not trust her ability to manage the class and educate the children appropriately. Because of this, Ms. Jackson would not allow Lucy to take the whole class. In the interview, Lucy gave the example that when she, would ask to Ms. Jackson to approve her lesson plan, Ms .Jackson often told her that "I know you thought about this, so I am not going to drill you on it." Lucy thought that it went back to the fact that Ms .Jackson did not trust her and wanted to be in control of her classroom. Also, Lucy was often quite frustrated when Ms. Jackson felt she lacked teaching ability.

During my observation, there was one day when the daughter of another cooperating teacher, Mrs. Thompson, was sick. So, Lucy could not be in charge of the class today. I observed that before the class started, Ms. Jackson tried to change the day around and stressed about everything in the classroom, even though Lucy

had already worked everything out on the day's schedule with Mrs. Thompson. In

the interview, Lucy reflected on this situation and she said that she could understand

why Ms. Jackson felt she could not handle the day like it was laid out on the

schedule. But, she hesitated to discuss this situation with Ms. Jackson, because she

was not sure about this. Lucy said that she thinks Ms. Jackson was not receptive to

what she tells her because she does not trust her.   In this way, she has already been

frustrated many times when Ms. Jackson seemed to not trust her and when Lucy

wanted to communicate cooperatively with the intern teachers. In her reflective

journal, Lucy talked about that day

> Today started out crazy. The day started like this and Ms. Jackson was quite
> frustrated and this made me more frustrated and I lost my confidence in
> teaching children.

Also, there was another conflict between Lucy and Ms. Jackson. Lucy had

a different perspective about the noise level in the classroom than Ms. Jackson and

this discrepancy made Lucy frustrated. In the interview, Lucy said she thought that

Ms. Jackson had more pet peeves about her in the classroom than the noise level.

There was a week that Lucy had music and instruments. In the interview, Lucy

reflected on this lesson and said that she was most concerned about Ms. Jackson's

feedback about this lesson. Ms .Jackson had a low tolerance for the musical instruments and for making noise. Lucy felt that it was difficult for Ms. Jackson to step aside and trust what Lucy was doing with the children. Lucy wrote in her reflective journal that

> If the kids want to make a lot of noise, obviously, I did not let them just go crazy, but, I let them…as long as they're being constructive with their noise, then that's fine. But, Ms. Jackson often taught children how to fake scream because of the noise in the classroom. That's mainly the difference between my ideas and Ms. Jackson's ideas.

During her intern teaching, Lucy was continually frustrated when Ms. Jackson interrupted her teaching because she could not trust Lucy's ability, especially in problem solving with children. In her reflective journal, Lucy wrote that

> The time when children first come in the door was the most uncomfortable…Because I know that Ms. Jackson also will continually intervene in a lot of problem solving episodes that I will have… I am frustrated, because this makes me feel inadequate.

As I observed the classroom, I noticed that Ms. Jackson intervened in a lot of problem solving episodes that Lucy had. There was one day, Lucy was with the little boy that had problems cleaning up. She put her foot down and said that he was going to clean and she was not going to let it go. The boy started crying, throwing a

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fit, and became very upset. Lucy tried to deal with the situation and tried to stay calm.

She said, "You need to pick up because you played over here with these blocks and

so we need to clean them." Then, she tried to make a game out of it; she tried all

these different ways to try to engage him in cleaning up and he was not going to do it.

At this time, Ms. Jackson came in and took him. She told him "Ok, we're not going

to clean up, we're going to come over here and read." Regarding Ms. Jackson's

action, Lucy could not understand what she was doing and was frustrated about the

interruption in the middle of her problem solving with a child. In the interview, Lucy

said that she really could not understand Ms. Jackson's action and she worried that,

from the experience, the children might think that it is okay for them to not clean up

their own things in the classroom.

Lucy's concern became a reality. During my observation one day morning,

the boy's mother told Ms. Jackson that her son came home and told his mother that

"I did not have to clean up. I just had to get upset and then I did not have to clean

up." Ms. Jackson that realized what made the boy think that way and came to Lucy

and apologized for interrupting Lucy's problem solving with that children and for

making him think that way. Ms. Jackson explained to Lucy why she interrupted that

situation and solved it differently. Ms. Jackson said that she felt sorry for the boy

because she thought that he had a lot of stress at home with his family.

After Ms. Jackson realized that her interruption in Lucy's problem solving

with children might make situations worse, Ms. Jackson seemed to try to let Lucy

handle her problem solving situations. In the interview, Lucy said she recognized that

Ms. Jackson allowed her to problem solve in the classroom autonomously and she

was glad. In the interview, she said "I was very happy, and I felt more in charge with

more confidence from Ms. Jackson."

But, as Lucy continued her intern teaching, she thought that Ms. Jackson

still did not trust her. In the interview, Lucy explained what made her think like that.

Lucy was supposed to co-teach with Ms. Jackson for one week. That was one of Mrs.

Thompson's ideas that Lucy would co-teach with Ms. Jackson and Candy, another

intern teacher, would co-teach with Mrs. Thompson. But, Ms. Jackson really did not

like co-teaching and Lucy was frustrated. Lucy thought that Ms. Jackson did not trust

her to deal with many emerging problems in the classroom and to teach children

appropriately. Lucy felt that in Ms. Jackson' class, she had no desire to do anything,

but she did not want to just stand around. She needed to think of things to do during

that time and she asked Ms. Jackson for ideas, so it would not be awkward.

On the other hand, Lucy received the emotional support from another cooperating teacher, Mrs. Thompson. In the interview, Lucy said that she felt that Mrs. Thompson was trying to trust her and to support her solving of problems autonomously. Lucy felt that, unlike Ms. Jackson's feedback, when she passed ideas by Mrs. Thompson, Lucy felt that Mrs. Thompson provided a chance to talk about them openly and she tried to let her figure out why an idea was not as good as another idea. Lucy explained that Mrs. Thompson's feedback was more like, "Well, these are the complications with that, but if you want to do that, then it is your teaching." Lucy said that she understood that Ms. Jackson was also trying to challenge her and she knew that she needed that, but sometimes she got frustrated with Ms. Jackson. Lucy continually felt that Ms. Jackson did not trust her and she felt she never had the opportunity to expressing her ideas to Ms. Jackson.

From this, it could be inferred that the cooperative relationships based on mutual respect between Lucy and Mrs. Thompson provided the conditions for open communication with a free exchange of ideas. As such, Lucy was encouraged to develop her self-regulated theory-building process.

In Lucy's second placement, Lucy thought that her cooperating teacher was a very good mentor. In the interview, Lucy said that she did not have any conflict and disagreements between their philosophies and practices of teaching in the classroom. Lucy was more focused on learning the specific ways Mrs. Sharp incorporates the early childhood philosophies into an older classroom, as Mrs. Sharp was well versed in this area.

During her student teaching in Mrs. Sharp's class, Lucy was impressed with Mrs. Sharp as a mentoring teacher. In the interview, Lucy said she thought that Mrs. Sharp had supported Lucy's autonomy more than any of her other cooperating teachers. Through her whole intern teaching in Mrs. Sharp's class, Lucy felt that Mrs. Sharp truly trusted Lucy's teaching ability enough that she gave her the class and said whatever because it was your time to teach. Lucy was very appreciative of the way of Mrs. Sharp guided her to think more deeply. Lucy said that, if she and her cooperating teachers had different ideas about a lesson plan or classroom management they would discuss the difference. I observed and heard from Lucy in the interview, that everyday, after the class was over, Lucy and her cooperating teacher would sit together and talk about what Lucy thought about the class. In this

conversation, Mrs. Sharp always tried to listen to Lucy's ideas and to how she felt about the class first. If Lucy had some dilemmas or issues related to the practice of teaching, her cooperating teacher supported her, considering why she thought that was a problematic situation and she would encourage her to find her own way to handle those situations.

During my observation, Lucy had a big problem getting one of her boys to work on anything. The children had a million questions and she was trying to get all the children started and kept on task. Lucy felt the afternoon was frustrating and claustrophobic. Lucy talked about this with Mrs. Sharp after school and Mrs. Sharp asked what frustrated Lucy about the afternoon and why she thought that way. Mrs. Sharp made her reflect on her practice of teaching and supported her in finding out what made her think that she had a bad class. Then, they talked about what Lucy could do to alter her plans and her approach for tomorrow.

During another observation, Ms. Sharp was not going to intervene in Lucy's problem solving with children and let Lucy handle it in her own way. If the children sought an answer from Mrs. Sharp, she said, "Ms. Eaton is our teacher and she will talk to you if you ask her." After for a while, Mrs. Sharp approached to the

children who asked the questions of her and asked "Did you solve your problems? Could you tell me what Ms. Eaton told you? Because if other friends asked me the same questions, I would like to tell them what Ms. Eaton told you." In the interview, Lucy said that as she finished her intern teaching in Mrs. Sharp's class, she believed that she had enough ability to educate children and would gladly try to apply her philosophy into her future classroom. In her reflective Journal, Lucy said that

> I feel like as long as I have the support that I have of people to go to...it doesn't make me very nervous to have my own classroom... did not want a school that was completely open, completely autonomous because they're already doing things to help their children...they did not need me to bring in new ideas because they already have what I have...I'd like a school that is a little different than mine.

Overall, the most significant factor for Lucy's awareness of her ability was that she had the chance to apply her philosophy of teaching into the practice of teaching, as her cooperating teacher trusted her ability, let her create and teach her own lessons, and supported her reflections of her lesson with critical thinking. On the contrast, when Lucy recognized the fact that her cooperating teacher never trusted her ability as teacher, the issue of Lucy incorporating her own ideas was never discussed with the cooperating teacher and so, her development of autonomy was

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constrained. At the same time, interviews and observations of Lucy's interaction with her cooperating teachers revealed that, for Lucy, the mutual respect and trust with her cooperating teachers supported her ability to figure out issues and take responsibility to solve them with her own abilities.

Issues and Problem Solving·

Since Lucy became an intern teacher, a significant task for her was supporting children's problem solving in the classroom. When she was doing her practicum as a preservice teacher at this institute, she did not, for the most part, get into the situation of children's problem solving. Instead, she only observed how her cooperating teachers solved these problems. In the interview, Lucy said that, since the way she disciplined children was very different from how the children are handled at the campus preschool, it was very big task for her to appropriately support children's problem solving at the Institute. Lucy explained that at the campus preschool, the teachers always supported children in solving their own problems autonomously. This was true, despite the fact that she had practicum at this institute for two semesters and she did not have experience interacting with children to problem solve and interact with other children. For Lucy, this was difficult.

In the interview, Lucy said that "it is always a power struggle between me and the children." Since she became an intern teacher and since she was at institute everyday and all day with children, she became more involved in their lives and had the responsibility to educate them professionally. This experience gave her many opportunities to apply what she learned through her studies in the teacher education program. Now, Lucy had different ways of handling these situations.

One day, during my observation, Lucy had a difficult time problem solving with one of four little girls. The girl was not receptive to anything Lucy said and the little girl was angry with Lucy. She did not want to listen to what Lucy told her. Lucy continually talked to the girl, trying to explain why she needed to calm down and follow the rules, but, still, she did not listen. So, Lucy was frustrated that she was not able to do anything for her and simply waited until she calmed down. Finally, the child calmed herself, put her art work away, and put her jacket on for outside time. In the interview, Lucy said, "those moments are the most difficult – when the children tries to engage me in a power struggle." She said that she had to take a minute and remember that a power struggle would get her absolutely nowhere.

In my observation, on another afternoon, one of the other girls was having a

rough day away from her dad and she kept following Candy (the other intern). She

was not engaging in any activity, despite attempts by Candy. Finally, she played with

Legos, but Lucy noticed she took a purse from dramatic play and dropped it in the

manipulative area. Lucy had her leave the Legos and go to pick up and put away the

purse. The child went straight back to the Legos, but Lucy worried that if she took

her away from her activity she would not engage again. Lucy believed the rule was

that the children could not drop things all over the room. She wanted the things to

stay in their areas, unless the children were using them constructively elsewhere. So,

Lucy went the girl and asked her what the rule was in the classroom for placing toys

in the right place. Lucy wanted to help the girl think about the rule of her class and

fix what she had done wrong by herself. Lucy did not want to tell her directly "You

need to do this." But, after Lucy asked the girl, the child ignored what Lucy said to

her and went to another place to join and play with her friends. Lucy followed her

and said again that she could not play right now because she did not follow the rule

and fix what she did wrong herself. Again, the girl ignored her and continued to play

with her friends. Lucy seemed frustrated about how to deal with the children's

problem solving that did not work in the classroom. Lucy said silently to herself

"Oh....I don't know...what is wrong. Well...yes...I'm not ready to teach children..."

Lucy's frustration was also revealed in her reflective journal:

> I did not feel confident at all in this class. I felt out of place and I was
> always wondering what I should do. I really felt as if in the hour between
> classes I had reversed into a fundamentals class student again. I know that
> this is because I have never worked on children's behavior problem-solving
> before, and I did not know what the parameters for this class were
> (Reflective Journal, February 16, 2006).

In her intern teaching, Lucy tried to let the children know the rules in the

classroom and have ownership over their rules. She wanted the students to follow

these rules autonomously, rather than needing to have the rules pointed out to them

and merely following the teacher's instruction. But, as her efforts did not work well,

she was frustrated and felt that she was lost.

Lucy frustration with children's problem solving was related to her philosophy

of teaching children. In the interview, she talked about her belief of teaching children

as:

> And as far as classroom management, have them help you write up the
> rules and just let them know that from the beginning your expectations on
> how the classroom is going to be run. I have to find balance with children
> because I want to give my students freedom (Interview, February 24, 2006).

During my observation, on another day, at the sand table, three boys were

pulling all the sand into a hill to make a volcano. They were cooperating great. This

went on until they decided to erupt the volcano. The eruption consisted of all three

boys all at once flinging sand into the air and all over the floor. Lucy's first reaction

was to grab as many arms and hands as she could to keep the sand on the table. She

then talked with them about why they could not do that. The boys then swept the

sand off the floor. After this part of the interview was over, she said that she could

not believe she grabbed their arms. She thought that she could handle the situation

better.

Along with her efforts to support children's problem solving appropriately,

one day Lucy had to pry a pencil out a girl's hands. The child has grabbed the pencil

from another little girl and refused to give it back. She tried a number of different

problem solving approaches, but the child would not budge. In the interview, Lucy

said that she kept wondering if there was something different that she could do, but

she did not know how to deal with the situation and was frustrated.

As I observed in the classroom and during interviews with Lucy, she was

continually frustrated with the situation, which came from the discrepancy between

her goal of supporting children's autonomous problem solving and the children's

feedback to Lucy's teaching practices. So, in the interview, to try and figure out how

Lucy solved this problem, I asked her if "in your reflective journals and interviews,

do you often write and talk about how you need to handle problem-solving situations

more appropriately." And I ask her "So, have you found revised ways for improving

your teaching practice after your reflections of prior teaching?" She answered

> Well…I don't know… I just keep trying my own way of teaching
> children….if it is not working well, then the next time, I try different
> things…if that does not work well too, I try again different ways
> again…Kind of repeating…Finally it works out, and I feel very good and
> get confidence….."… (Interview, March 3, 2006).

In the interviews with her and through her reflective journal, her solution to

these problems, even with deep reflection and critical thinking, was not found. Lucy

seemed more likely to keep trying to repeat the practice of her own teaching without

additional critical thinking. Lucy was more concerned with the results of her

teaching practice with the children and less concerned with how her teaching

practices worked for the children and whether they led to results.

While I was observing her teaching practice, it was often found that when

she was faced with children's problem solving, Lucy tried many different ways,

rather than addressing the questions and trying to figure out how to solve it

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appropriately. And then, if somehow children reached the target goal of her teaching, she felt happy and thought that she gained confidence from her teaching.

In her reflective journals, the ways of Lucy's problem solving were also found. In her reflective journals, she wrote that

> I had a moment today when I was at the end of my patience, I already used many tactics, but all those are not working. But I decided to try one more tactic and it worked somehow. I'm so glad (Reflective Journal, March 6, 2006).

With the continual trial, as she was getting a lot of practice to strengthen her ability to defuse situations, she felt more much confident to lead children through problem solving. During my observation, one afternoon, there was a boy in the class that was very stubborn, and there were many power struggles between him and the teachers. During clean up time, there were a lot of blocks to clean up, but he was 'sleeping' on the mattress in gross motor. Lucy went over and talked to him about cleaning up, but he ignored her. She kept trying to handle this situation in different ways until she finally got him to his feet and said he had to help clean up and that was all there was to it. So, he walked over to the blocks and started to pick them up. After this, in the interview, she said she was very happy about the fact with trials, she

could finally solve the problem and from this experience, she had became more

confident in her ability to problem solve. In her reflective journal, Lucy talked about

gaining her confidence

> During my intern teaching, I realize that I am on my way to being able to
> tackle the challenge of my own classroom. Even through the rough times,
> I have already become more confident and feel like a more competent
> teacher (Reflective Journal, March 7, 2006).

Throughout her internship at the first placement, the problem solving

regarding children's behavior was the most significant task for Lucy. Lucy

continually repeated the same ways for solving those problems without critical

thinking. As Lucy experienced that some of those trials worked for the children's

problem, she gained confidence in herself as teacher. However, how she solved these

problems with deep reflection and critical thinking was not found. Because Lucy was

more concerned with the results of her teaching practice regarding children and less

concerned about how her teaching practice worked with children and led to those

results. From the observations of her teaching, interviews, and reflective journals, it

was revealed that Lucy was more likely to keep trying to repeat the practice of her

own of teaching without additional critical thinking.

Confronting the Accountability

Since Lucy started her full-time teaching and was in charge of her class,

an important task in her teaching in a third grade classroom was to figure out how to

balance accountability and constructivism. In the interview, Lucy said

> As soon as I enter the third grade classroom, well…..as soon as I started
> my full-time teaching, I definitely realize that it is so difficult to get
> constructivism in a third grade classroom, because there is so much
> thing…the pass skills that we have to get through by the end of the year
> and a lot of tests (Interview, March 22, 2006)

As I observed the Lucy's second placement, in the third grade classroom,

the children had many tests and they had testing in couple of weeks during Lucy's

intern teaching. So, the teacher needed to get the children ready for those tests and

the classroom was more structured to what they need to know. In the interview, Lucy

said that

> Here it's more…we have testing in a week…it's a lot of getting them
> ready for the test…it's more structured as to what they need to know
> when.   It's a lot different.   The first couple of days I was here I was
> really bored because it's a lot more sitting at their desks (Interview,
> March 28, 2006).

Actually, during her full-time teaching, the children took many important

tests. In Lucy's class, there were specific things teachers need to teach, especially

since testing was coming up. Normally, the children have two or three worksheets in a class and, if testing was getting close, the children had more than four or five worksheets to make sure that they were able to work with information in the same format as the test. In her interview, Lucy said that she thought that it was very difficult when testing time approached to be completely constructivist because there were so many parameters the teachers had to work within. Lucy was frustrated with the fact it was impossible for her to incorporate the accountability with the constructivism. And, she felt that the lack of her ability made the situation worse. In the interview, Lucy said that

> I think Ms. Warren has done a good job about fixing all that stuff in her classroom. She did really good job incorporating constructivism into the all kinds of tests stuff...but...I can't...I think.....it is really impossible (Interview, March 28, 2006)

Lucy also thought about the accountability, with required tests, teachers could not teach children in a 100% constructivist manner. In the interview, Lucy said

> There's so many specific things that I need to teach, especially since testing is coming up and we have to do so much...: So, it's really hard when it gets to testing time...but it's harder in a third grade classroom to be completely constructivist because there are so many parameters that you have to work with...(Interview, March 28, 2006)

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Also, Lucy struggled with getting children to understand content for their test. During my observation of Lucy's full-time teaching, Lucy struggled with answering the children's questions One day she taught the *Children's Weekly Reader* in the afternoon. This is a short magazine with articles and questions about the articles in the back. The children asked a lot of questions regarding the activity in the weekly reader and Lucy had difficulty answering the children's questions and communicating with them. Afterward, in the interview, she reflected that at the moment that she felt she was "getting bombarded with questions from every angle." I observed that the children were even going out into the hall to ask Ms. Warren questions about the paper. Regarding this situation, Lucy's frustration continued. In the interview, she said, at that time, she was frustrated about her ability to satisfy the children's questions and she thought that she needed to get better at explaining and answering questions for children, rather than letting children help other children with the same question. Also, she was frustrated because she thought that some of the children were testing her and did not treat her in the same way they did the cooperating teacher.

In her effort to incorporate constructivism into her teaching practice, Lucy

thought the possible way for this was through classroom management, as this was

something that had control over and something that could help make her classroom

constructivist. In the interview Lucy said

> I just try to find all the little things that I can change and that I can tweak
> and work with in the classroom…like to get their attention I can clap a
> rhythm…it's a lot of being respectful to the kids and it's like very little
> things…if they're getting too crazy and their pen is like drawing on another
> piece of paper…then I can say…I need to get your pen under
> control…rather tell children directly what you should do…(Interview, April
> 18, 2006).

In the interview, Lucy said she might try to get the children prepared for

tests without being worksheet driven, which meant constructivist way to Lucy. But,

Lucy said those kinds of activities were only possible a couple weeks before testing

when the children were not required to take test. Because as tests came up, she did

not have enough time to spend on those kinds of activity. Instead, she needed to

focus mostly on getting the children ready for the real test with worksheets.

There Are No Problems

In the interview, Lucy said that she was very glad for the fact that both of her

placements for intern teaching had philosophies of teaching similar to Lucy's own

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philosophy and, so, she did not have any conflicts during her intern teaching when it

came to implementing her philosophy into the teaching practice. In the interview,

Lucy said

> I've been very lucky.....I've been very lucky.... because at the first
> placement I agreed with almost everything they believed and I didn't
> have any conflicts. I'm sure when I get a job there will be teachers on my
> team that I will have conflicts with...so I'll have to learn how to deal with
> it then...(Interview, April 9, 2006).

In an interview during Lucy's intern teaching, Lucy called her second

placement the "ideal" classroom for learning constructivism teaching practice. Lucy

said that during her intern teaching in the second placement, she really did not have

conflicts in terms of a mismatch of philosophies between her and her cooperating

teacher and with the tasks from her teaching practice in this second placement. And

she thought that she was very lucky because she was placed in such an ideal

classroom for her intern teaching. She expected that her cooperating teacher and her

classroom would be a perfect model for effective teaching strategies. In the interview,

she also talked often about what she observed about how her cooperating teacher

taught children in a constructivist manner, even in the process of getting children

prepared for tests, such as working worksheets. She said that she really wanted to get

her cooperating teachers' ideas for her future classes and she wanted to try and

mimic how her cooperating teacher was doing in the classroom.

The observation of Lucy's teaching revealed that Lucy was not that active

in the classroom. Rather, she spent more time observing how the children were doing.

Because in this classroom, the children were very independent and they knew well

how to do most activities by themselves and did not ask the teachers. Lucy's

reflective journals and interviews also revealed that Lucy minimally addressed tasks

or dilemmas compared to other intern teachers in my study and even at her first

placement. Also, her efforts for problem solving were not discussed much in her

reflective journals, or through observations and interviews. So, I wondered if that

meant Lucy did not have any dilemmas or issues or she did not address them in the

interview or journals. At this time, I asked her how she applied her philosophy of

teaching, which was supporting children's autonomy while she taught. Lucy

answered that

> Well...I really don't have to....just...just a lot of the things that Ms.
> Warren has already set up in the classroom...I have kept that going...help
> children control what is going wrong...(Interview, April 9, 2006)

Overall, in her intern teaching at both placements, Lucy felt that she really

did not have significant dilemmas or conflicts because of the characteristics of her

placements, which fit well with her belief of teaching. In her reflective journals,

interviews, and observation, it was also found that Lucy did recognize many issues.

Even after Lucy addressed some issues, it was found that she did not make a deep

reflection about them and she went the trial and error method until her issues were

solved without additional critical thinking. In her second placement of intern

teaching, she faced the issues of how to incorporate constructivism into the third

grade classroom with many tests. For this, she focused mostly on learning the

specific techniques of Ms. Warren and on incorporating early childhood philosophies

into an older classroom instead of making an effort to find her own ways for them.

Also, it was revealed that her understanding of constructivism was limited. Her

understanding of constructivism was defined with the certain teaching strategies, or

skills, such as the methods for questioning children.

Summary of Lucy

Lucy developed her understanding of autonomy in the development of

independence. So, the reason she considered herself autonomous was the fact which

she could do for herself, such as paying her bills. In her teacher education program,

she emphasized the importance of small group discussion in the classes, where students could create their own ideas independently from their teachers. That thinking showed her understanding of autonomy was not deep. In her relationships with her cooperating teachers, she believed the following to be important: trust by her cooperating teachers in her ability, the ability to teach her own lessons, and the support and reflection of her lessons with critical thinking and autonomy.

During Lucy's intern teaching, her philosophy of teaching, teachers need to allow the children to construct their own knowledge by providing an environment where they are able to discover, explore, and investigate the concepts they want them to learn, was rarely observed in her teaching and in her reflection in the interview and her journal. Mostly, Lucy did not reflect on her teaching and, as such, she could not recognize dilemmas or issues in her teaching. Her lack of reflection on the teaching practice was also related to the fact that her understanding of autonomy and how her autonomy developed through discussion was shallow. All of this information, comprehensively, revealed that Lucy was not reflective in her thinking and in her action.

Analysis of the Data

All four preservice teachers in this study were in the same cohort and studied in the same teacher education program together. During their studies, all of them developed their own philosophy of teaching and learning. Also, as they were doing their intern teaching, they all struggled with some significant issues related to their teaching and learning. However, how they interpreted those issues and solved them was very different for each of them. Thus, in this section I will compare the differences and similarities of each of four preservice teachers in their personal practical theories, how they developed their own personal practical theories, and what factors have influenced those processes.

What are the preservice teachers' personal practical theories about teaching and learning?

Before they started their intern teaching, each of them had a philosophy of teaching and learning. As they faced many issues and conflicts during their intern teaching they struggled to find a match in terms of applying their philosophy into daily teaching practice. For Becky, Jenny, and Lucy, their stated philosophy of teaching was not found consistently in their daily teaching practice. Different from

the other three preservice teachers, Christina consistently incorporated her stated philosophy of teaching to her daily teaching practice.

For Judy, before she began her intern teaching, she stated that her philosophy of teaching was to support children as they learn and develop their ability to interact with others and to construct their knowledge autonomously. She emphasized her role as teacher as the facilitator and the questioner, not the source of knowledge. As she struggled with incorporating her philosophy into her teaching practice, she came to believe that her philosophy was too ideal for the reality of teaching and abandoned her constructivist theory to follow the modeling of other teachers' strategies without reflection.

For Jenny, even though she stated her philosophy of teaching as constructivism and giving choices to the children, in her teaching practice, this never showed up. Her personal practical theory was more in line with a teacher-oriented style, perfectly opposite with her stated philosophy.

Lucy stated her philosophy of teaching as supporting children's construction of their knowledge by providing appropriate environment. This was rarely observed in her teaching. She showed little reflection on her philosophy in her

journals or during interviews. It seemed that she even did not recognize her philosophy very well. Her personal practical theory was also not found consistently, rather she tried many teaching strategies randomly.

However, for Christina, she stated her philosophy of teaching as providing a meaningful learning context for children and giving them the opportunity to explore and construct their own knowledge. During her intern teaching, her daily teaching practices were very well matched with her philosophy of teaching. These teaching practices were very consistent throughout her intern teaching regardless of children's grade and the mismatch with her cooperating teacher's philosophy. So, her personal practical theory was the same as her philosophy of teaching. This was possible because of her very strong convictions about her beliefs of teaching and learning and her critical reflection on how she incorporating her philosophy into her everyday teaching practices.

The differences of four preservice teachers in the match or mismatch between their philosophy and personal practical theory related to the how preservice teachers have developed their personal practical theories in context. The differences also are an indicator of each student's personal autonomy.

How have preservice teachers developed their personal practical theories in the context?

During the intern teaching, the four preservice teachers faced different dilemmas and issues related to their teaching practice. How they interpreted those dilemmas and solved those issues appeared to depend on their notion of autonomy. Judy, Jenny and Lucy, did not use critical reflection as they solved their dilemmas. Furthermore, they did not have strong trust in their ability to figure out how to solve those problems by themselves. They appeared to be afraid to take that risk. They relied on others to provide them with the answers to their problems.

Judy and Christina both struggled with teaching special needs children. They also shared a dilemma regarding appropriate instruction for first-graders. Their approach to solving these dilemmas was very different. Both Judy and Christina had many special needs children in their kindergarten classrooms. Several of these children had serious behavioral problems. Since they did not have enough experience with special needs children, they were both very frustrated and struggled with teaching them. Specifically, because of the special needs children's lack of attention and behavioral problems, it was very difficult to apply their belief of giving choices

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to children to support their autonomy.

For this issue, Judy did not use critical reflection, rather she found the solution from abandoning her philosophy, as simply accepting the "reward system" which was effective for special needs children, but opposite to her philosophy. On the other hand, Christina diligently tried to figure out how to balance giving choices to children who have serious behavioral problems and managing their behavior appropriately. So, she tried to find the best way for them and redirecting was the technique she found to keep children on task. She tried her method and consistently revised it.

Judy and Christina also had difficulty in teaching first-graders. In particular, both of them had difficulty teaching math concepts to children. They used the same required textbook for first-grade. Judy could not figure out the issues underlying her problems. She attributed her struggles with teaching math to first-graders to the math books or time limits for the lessons, not to her lack of understanding or her lack of reflection on figuring out the struggle.

On the other hand, Christina continually tried to search for how she could support children's construction of their knowledge of math concepts. It is important

to note that Christina's cooperating teacher had very strong traditional teacher –

oriented philosophy and so the children in her classroom were taught with that way.

So, at the beginning of her intern teaching, Christina had more difficulty in teaching

children in a constructivist manner, which was frustrating to her. However, she was

very reflective and developed and applied many of her own methods for teaching

math to children to support their construction of knowledge. This shows her strong

conviction to her beliefs about teaching and learning.

Jenny, Lucy, and Christina all had cooperating teachers who had very

strong beliefs about teaching and learning. But, how they interpreted and resolved

these issues with cooperating teachers was very different. Jenny's cooperating

teacher in her second placement was very strict and had very strong beliefs that

students, even intern teachers, should follow the teacher's guide without questioning

it. Jenny was very fearful of risk-taking and disagreeing with her cooperating teacher

with any point. She did not make any struggle or conflict by herself, so, she never

reflected on her actions and always did as the cooperating teacher said.

Lucy's cooperating teacher in her first placement had very strong

opinions on her teaching style which were different from Lucy's philosophy in some

part. So, when Lucy planned the lesson with her philosophy of teaching, she was

denied often by her cooperating teacher, which made Lucy very frustrated. However,

Lucy never struggled with figuring out the how to combine her ideas with the

cooperating teacher's ways or applying her own philosophy itself into her teaching.

Finally, she just gave up planning the lesson based on her philosophy to avoid any

further conflict with her cooperating teacher.

On the other hand, as soon as Christina recognized the mismatch

between her philosophy and her cooperating teacher's philosophy of teaching and

learning, she continually tried to collaborate to each other's ideas for better teaching

practice for children through conversation about their philosophy or sharing her ideas

on her cooperating teacher's practice and provide suggestions for better teaching

practices. Even though her cooperating teacher did not cooperate with her, Christina

never gave up her philosophy of teaching and willingness to participate in the

struggle to reach her goals for children's learning.

While this study did not systemically explore each preservice teacher's

personal biography, it clearly reveals that personal biography appears to be very

influential for one specific teacher, Jenny. Jenny, who was born and educated whole

her life in Korea, was very shocked and struggled with the very different approach of teaching and learning in America. Jenny's pre-existing practical theory was formulated in the context of the Korean culture and significantly influenced the way she constructed her knowledge in the teacher education program in America.

Also, her personal practical theory of teaching and learning consistently influenced her teaching practice in her intern teaching. For example, in her first placement, Jenny struggled very much with getting respect as the teacher from the children. In her culture, Jenny developed strong belief that students must obey the teachers. Even though Jenny stated that her philosophy of teaching and learning had changed since she entered the teacher education program, her personal practical theory, which developed in the context of her earlier school experience, was very prominent in her practices.

Their Theories of Autonomy

Judy defined autonomy in the development of her own confidence. So, if she gains confidence, she considers that she is more autonomous. At the end of her intern teaching, Judy believed that she had become more autonomous because she had gained confidence in teaching children in the real classroom.

Christina's definition of autonomy is her ability to make decisions based on her own reflection about what she thinks and believes will best benefit her and her children. She saw herself as autonomous because she believed that she had ability to figure out the most appropriate decision for each situation and act on her own decisions.

Jenny did not have certain theory of autonomy. In her culture of society and family, she did not have as much opportunity to reflect on autonomy compared to three American students. Jenny's understanding of autonomy can be inferred from her reflection on the development of her own autonomy in the teacher education program. Jenny constructed her theory of autonomy in development of her own voice, which means she is self-conscious about her right to freely make her own decision. Because she considers the most significant changes in her life is gaining self-esteem and self-confidence, she eventually came to believe that she could be an autonomous decision maker.

For Lucy, she constructed her understanding of autonomy was in the development of independence. She considered herself autonomous because she can do things for herself such paying her bills or living by herself.

Since each of their autonomy has been influenced by many different factors,

it is difficult to figure out comprehensively how they developed their autonomy from

the findings of in this study. However, based on the fact that they went through the

same teacher education program and they all learned about autonomy in the program,

it is interesting to note that in these four preservice teachers,, there were big

discrepancies in their understanding of autonomy.

Judy and Christina both constructed their autonomy based on their

confidence in their own ability. However, as compared how Judy and Christina

constructed their personal practical theory of teaching and learning, it was apparent

their understanding of confidence is very different. Judy's personal practical theory

revealed that her concept of confidence in autonomy is mainly bounded the her

confidence of doing everything effectively, so during her intern teaching, she mainly

focusing on pursuing most effective ways which developed confidence in her actions.

She did not make efforts to addressing her own questions and solve them

autonomously with her own critical thinking. On the other hand, Christina's

understanding of her confidence focused on the very strong conviction and self-

assurance in her ability to make a most appropriate decision or each situation and act

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on her own decisions. For example, when Judy and Christina struggled with teaching

math concepts to first-graders, their actions were completely different. Judy was

trying to building up her confidence by avoiding the situation, on the other hand,

Christina had very strong trust in her ability to make sense of this struggle and find

out the most appropriate way to support children's learning.

What are the factors influencing the preservice teachers' development of autonomy

in constructing their personal practical theories of teaching and learning?

In this study, how the preservice teachers' teacher education program and

their relationships with cooperating teachers influence on their autonomy were

investigated. Across the four preservice teachers' voices, there were common

characteristics of autonomy-supportive environment of teacher education program. It

was the class that challenged preservice teachers to re-examine their prior and

existing beliefs and encouraged them to develop the own theory of teaching and

learning through critical thinking. They believed that the challenge from this class let

the students develop their ownership for their own theory building. Furthermore, the

well organized guide for scaffolding of this critical theory building processes

emphasized the development of their own autonomy. The discussion based on open

communication among students and teacher appeared to support some of the preservice teachers' autonomy.

However, the ways of encouraging their autonomy was interpreted differently by the preservice teachers based on their culture. Jenny's ability to construct her knowledge for meaningful learning was constrained by the same ways that the three American students considered supportive of their autonomy. For example discussions, group projects etc., made Jenny be very frustrated and overwhelmed. Rather, Jenny believed that trust established from the teacher educators was the most important motivation for her changes in self-awareness and self-confidence influencing her ownership and responsibility of her learning.

In the relationships with cooperating teachers, the four preservice teachers' stories revealed the importance of establishing trust between the preservice teachers and their cooperating teachers' to support preservice teachers' autonomy. This different manner of interaction between the preservice teachers and the cooperating teachers provides a good explanation for the importance of the interactive nature of autonomy. It was found that a firmly established foundation of mutual trust provides opportunities for preservice teachers to have self-regulated learning through open

communication. Mutual trust allows preservice teachers and their cooperating

teachers to openly discuss philosophies. This, more so than the fact of matching or

mismatching their philosophies of teaching and learning, is a critical factor in

supporting preservice teachers' autonomy in constructing their personal practical

theories of teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Through the case study of four early childhood preservice teachers' and the

analysis of the development of autonomy in constructing their practical theories, I

was able to understand the depth and the resilience of the process to develop their

autonomy, specifically within the influence of the significant internal and external

factors in their learning processes. The four early childhood preservice teachers in

this study, Judy, Christina, Jenny, and Lucy, graduated from the same teacher

education program and did their intern teaching in similar classroom settings.

However, each participant appeared to have different reflections on their experiences

in the teacher education program. Additionally, during their intern teaching, though

each experienced similar issues or dilemmas, these were experienced in completely

different ways.

The purpose of this case study was to develop an in-depth description of the:

(1) how each individual preservice teacher constructed their knowledge, (2) how

each acted in their theory-building process to a better understand the complexity,

uniqueness, and diversity of theory building in preservice teachers, and (3) how those factors significantly influenced their development of autonomy.

Personal Practical Theory of Teaching and Learning

There were many contradictions between the participants' beliefs and their practices during their intern teaching. Each of the four preservice teachers faced issues and dilemmas, as they implemented their lessons and interacted with the children and their cooperating teachers. While interpreting participants' personal practical theories of teaching and learning, I found there were significant discrepancies between what I heard from the preservice teachers in the interviews or in their statements about their beliefs, or philosophies of teaching, and what I learned from actually observations of their daily teaching practices in the classroom. The findings implied the fact that, by interpreting one's personal practical theory accurately, the careful observation, along with a preservice teacher's statement of their beliefs, is required. Rodgers and Dunn (1997) insisted on the importance of not separating reasoning and action: "interactions with colleagues and children would be more representative of person's practical theory than general statements about beliefs and practices" (p, 24). As the preservice teachers attempted to solve these issues,

their personal practical theories were revealed.

From the analysis of the data, one can infer that the preserivce teachers developed their personal practical theories through their experiences in their formal schools and they entered their teacher education programs with firmly established beliefs about teaching and learning. In the interview, all of the four preservice teachers said that, before they entered the teacher education program, they had confirmed beliefs about teaching and learning and, so, they had an expectation of their role as teacher and how they would teach children. These ideas are mostly based on their experiences as students observing the teacher's role. And, the participants stated that these initial beliefs, or philosophies, of teaching and learning had significantly changed during their learning in the teacher education program. Especially, each emphasized the importance of constructivism and appreciated the fact they could have totally different perspectives on teaching and learning from their initial beliefs of teaching and learning, However, in their teaching practice, with the exception of Christina, the preservice teachers' real actions were not consistent with their stated philosophies of teaching and learning. Rather, their actions were more related to their initial belief of teaching and learning, which were formed by their

experiences in their earlier schools. So, these actions can be interpreted as their personal practical theories. Each of the four preservice teachers' worked consistently to achieve personal practical theories through their actions in the implementation phase. Continually, their practical theory played a role as a working model for the preservice teachers in how they interpreted their challenges and acted on these challenges.

These findings were consistent with the findings of Rodgers and Dunn's (1997), which state preservice teachers find some of their ideas changed by the challenges raised in a constructivist centered education program, although those changes were involved in their perceptions of themselves as practitioners, rather than in their core beliefs about learning.

Also, it was found that the preservice teachers' practical theory of teaching and learning could significantly influence their own learning process in the teacher education program. As the participants took classes and studied in the field of early childhood education, they attempted to interpret the course information in light of their personal practical theories of learning and endeavored to combine new knowledge and their prior knowledge to develop their new theories of learning and

teaching. This study did not systemically explore each preservice teacher's personal

biography and their learning process in the teacher education program. In Jenny's

case, her personal practical theory was observed and how it influenced her learning

process in the teacher education program was found. Also, clearly, it was found that

Jenny's personal practical theory was formed in her personal biography in the culture

of Korea and in the culture of schools in Korea, specifically regarding teacher and

student relationship and the manner in which the students are taught and learn. Also,

in the process of developing Jenny's practical theory of teaching and learning during

the internship, her pre-existent practical theory of teaching and learning was firmly

established and this significantly influenced the way she constructed her new theory

of teaching and learning

Related to this finding, research on teachers' personal beliefs, for example

their worldviews, commonly indicated that such beliefs significantly influenced their

teaching practice (Peterson, 1988). Additionally, teachers made decisions regarding

classroom teaching practices based on personal experiences (Hair, 2002). The

research also indicated that teachers made decisions in their teaching practices based

on the personal and practical experiences in their lives (Hair, 2002: Gill, 2005).

In the area of the implications on teacher education, based on the teacher educators' understanding of their students' personal internal processes of theory-building, educators provided more appropriate opportunities for preservice teachers to recognize how their personal theory affected their own learning and teaching practices in classrooms (Hollingsworth, 1989; Schubert, 1986).

Autonomy in Theory-Building

All four preservice teachers had dilemmas and issues related to their teaching practice. How they interpreted those dilemmas and solved those issues were different. For Judy, she understood the importance of autonomy in her problem solving and learning. In her statement of philosophy and in the confidential interview, she insisted that autonomy was to be vital in the learning of the children and of herself. But, she did not choose to be a reflective critical thinker in order to be autonomous. She decided to give up autonomy for the following reasons: "I cannot be 100 percent autonomous because of the reality of it."

Jenny was more fearful about risk-taking to be an autonomous person than she was in appreciating the autonomy in life. So, she mostly hesitated to speak her voice and rarely acted according to her decisions. Rather, she followed the ideas of

people of authority. From this fact, one could determine that Jenny was not autonomous. However, I would add that her autonomy developed more than any of the other three American students in this study. And, even Jenny's actions and reflections about her actions were, for the most part, not autonomous, she started to think about autonomy reflectively and to recognize the importance and the value of autonomy in her learning and in her life. Also, Jenny came to believe in herself and in her ability to construct her own knowledge and make decisions based on her ideas. Jenny's changes could be significant changes in her life considering the fact that, she never had the chance to think about autonomy and to act autonomously. Moreover, she could not believe in her own ability. Even Jenny's understanding of autonomy was not as complex and sophisticated as other three preservice teachers in this study. However, I believe that her definition of autonomy was most meaningful and worthwhile to her.

For Lucy, all of the information from the process of her theory-building in constructing her personal practical theory revealed that she was not reflective in her thinking and in her actions and she did not reflect on her teaching. As such, she could not recognize dilemmas or issues in her teaching. This fact showed that Lucy did not

value autonomy in her learning and teaching, and her reflective critical thinking about autonomy was shallow. For Christina, the study clearly revealed that she highly valued autonomy in her learning, in her teaching, and even in her life. Additionally, Christina acted autonomously in her theory-building process.

The most significant differences among Christina and the other three preservice teachers, Judy, Lucy, and Jenny, was the "ownership" in their learning, their appreciation of critical reflection in their own theory-building process, and, most importantly, the application of their learning to real life.

From the findings of the differences of confidence between Judy and Christina, one had a deeper understanding of what is true confidence in autonomy. I came to understand that the confidence related to one's autonomy does not just mean having competence in one's actions. The confidence in autonomy should be more complex and more powerful, so the participants can willingly afford the risks and challenges from turning their decisions and their ideas into real actions in real life. Christina' confidence inspired me to think critically about the meaning of the authentic confidence for autonomy and I concluded that authentic confidence is focused on the following question: what is the primary task for their development?

On the other hand, the shallow confidence is focused on the question of what is the primary <u>risk for their competence</u>?

This reflection went to the reflection on the role of teachers and teacher educators for accountability in the early childhood education. As teacher and teacher educators face extreme pressure to conform to the many mandates of accountability in their teaching practice, they thought the question of what is the primary task for encouraging children's autonomous learning from the accountability needed to be asked. However, they should refrain from asking, then, "What is the primary risk from not conforming to the pressures of accountability in the education?" to "What is teachers' primary task to support children's autonomous learning in the pressure of accountability?

Each of four preservice teachers developed their own definition of autonomy and acted differently in terms of being autonomous. However, based on my understanding of autonomy as the ultimate goal for encouraging the preservice teachers' professional development, overall, with the exception of Christina, the three other preservice teachers did not act autonomously. Because their critical reflections on their most salient issues during intern teaching were not found much in

their reflective journals, in their voice, or in their observations of their teaching

practice. Rather, each easily abandoned their philosophies, complaining of

discrepancies between theory and reality. This behavior may show that preservice

teachers have a great deal of trouble understanding the role of theory. The

participants seemed to use the theories of teaching and learning as the certain

strategies for their teaching practice. Judy's understanding of theory was shallow and

only focused on the teaching strategies. When those strategies did not fit her teaching

practice in the classroom, she thought those theories were useless.

In the preservice teacher's teaching practice, the philosophies about

teaching and learning were revealed as shallow fragments. What each understood

about theory was more focused on strategies without a deep understanding of the

strategies. This result was consistent with the Winitzky & Kauchak (1997)

explanation that preservice teachers' initial knowledge at the beginning of a teacher

education program is fragmentary and unstable. They also found that from inspecting

the concept map of the preservice teachers, their concepts of teaching and learning

were little and were not linked to each other in organized hierarchies. Rather, the

concepts were arranged haphazardly (Winitzky, 1992; Winitzky and Kauchak, 1992,

Winitzky, Kauchak and Kelly, 1994; Winitzky and Kauchak, 1992, 1995a; Winitzky and Kauchak, 1996, Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

The findings of this study clearly revealed that teaching the theories of learning and teaching or teaching the strategies for teaching did not guarantee that the preservice teachers interpreted and used the knowledge as the teacher educators intended. As students studied in the field of early childhood education, they attempted to interpret the course information in light of their own practical theories of teaching and learning and endeavored to combine the new knowledge and their prior knowledge to develop their new theories of learning and teaching. This information means the preservice teachers' personal practical theories about learning and teaching might be their assumptions that extended to all their learning and teaching processes. This information also supported the statement that their personal practical theories were constructed through their formal schooling and were quite firm (Hair, 2002: Gill, 2005; Rodgers & Dunn, 1997). Again, however, all the information emphasized that for teacher educators to support preservice teachers' autonomy in constructing their own knowledge, teacher educators must have reflected on what the preservice teachers' personal practical theories were and how

they interacted within the preservice teachers' learning process.

The Diversity and Uniqueness in Understanding of Autonomy

In this study, there was the diversity of each of the four preservice teachers' definitions of autonomy. This diversity can be interpreted as the theoretical framework through a motivational theory of autonomy (Yanay, 1994). Yanay (1994) insists that "on the basis of female experience, autonomy is conceived of as a self-authoring experience emanating from the struggle to meet one's needs and achieve one's significant goals. And the notation of struggle and significant goals are suggested as key concepts viable for a motivational theory of autonomy" (p.209). Based on this theory, one can infer that, in constructing their definition of autonomy, each of the four preservice teachers' concepts of autonomy were defined differently, in light of reconciling the issues most salient to them. In the research on preservice teachers' practical theory-building process (Rodgers &Chaille, 1998;Rodgers & Dunn, 2000a; Rodgers & Dunn, 2000b), it was found that individual preservice teachers continually constructed their personal practical theories as they responded to the issues most salient to them based on their personal understandings of the world (Rodgers & Dunn, 2000b).

Jenny's story clearly revealed that she constructed her theory of autonomy

through the teacher education program as she tried to reconcile the most salient

issues in her life. For Jenny, through her life, her significant goal was to have her

own choices and the right to make her own decisions. She did not want to be forced

to make decisions based on people of authority. As she studied in the teacher

education program, she constructed her theory of autonomy as her right to make her

voice, the freedom to have her choice, and the right to make her own decisions. To

understand more comprehensively how each of the four preservice teachers' theories

of autonomy were constructed throughout their lives and how they were influenced

by different factors, a future study requires the analysis of their life histories and the

most prominent issues in their lives.

With the cross-cultural perspective, the differences in each of the four

preservice teachers' definitions of autonomy can be interpreted more broadly. There

was a distinctive characteristic in definition of autonomy between the three American

preservice teachers and the one Korean preservice teacher: ability vs. right. Three

American students understood autonomy in the development of their own ability,

which was decided by themselves, not others, and was characterized by

independence and by high self-esteem. However, Jenny, the Korean student,

understood autonomy in the development of her right, which needed to be approved

by others, her interdependence, and her self-criticism. Cultural psychologists

revealed the diverse views of the self across cultures (Kitayama & Markus, 1991;

Shweder et al., 1998, Lee, 2001) and found that the independent self, characterized

as an entity that is independent, separated, confident, uniqueness-oriented, success-

oriented, expressive and enthusiastic (Shweder et al., 1998, p.901), is valued in

Western culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). So, the significant task was to develop

the culturally valued independent self through the finding and elaboration of positive

aspects of the self with maintaining a high self-esteem (Markus & Kitayama, 2001;

Lee, 2001). By contrast, in Eastern cultures, the interdependent self is characterized

as an entity that is connected, context-based, relational, and self-critical, as well as

responsive to other's expectations, preferences, and feelings, is valued (Markus &

Kitayama, 1991; Shweder et al., 1998). So, in this cultural context, individuals tend

to incorporate high expectations, standards, or norms shared with others with the

same personal goals to form a relational unit (Kitayama, & Markus, 1997; p.737).

Thus, it can be inferred that individuals may construct their meaning of autonomy

through their own culture.

Influence of the Teacher Education Program

For all the four early childhood preservice teachers, the characteristics of

the autonomy-supportive teacher education program emerged. Most importantly, the

preservice teachers thought that the class that critically challenged them to examine

their pre-existing theories of teaching and learning promoted their autonomy. From

this, the preservice teachers were motivated to construct their own knowledge, which

made sense to them. As a result, one preservice teacher came to appreciate the role of

critical reflection in her own theory-building process and applied critical reflection to

all aspects of her learning. Rodgers and Dunn (1997) also proposed that preservice

teachers develop a philosophical principle through the critical examination of their

practical theories about teaching and learning

Moreover, in this study, the teacher educators' emotional support and trust

of the preservice teachers were emphasized for the development of the preservice

teachers' autonomy in their theory-building process. In the literature, there was

research that focused on the differences between the way teacher educators motivate

their students and the quality of the students' motivation, or intrinsic and extrinsic

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motivators (DeWolff & van Ijzendoorn, 1997; Furrer & Skinner, 2004; Ryan and

Deci, 2002; Reeve & Jang, 2006). More precisely, the research explained that, to

promote an internal locus of control, a sense of own choice, and an intrinsic

motivation to do something in preservice teachers, teacher educators must support

the preservice teachers' intrinsic motivational resources, such as their psychological

needs, interests, and integrated values. On the other hand, to promote an external

locus of control, a sense of pressure, and a sense of extrinsic motivation for their

actions, teachers rely on outer motivational resources. These outer motivational

resources are the pressure of what the teacher must to do, or the punishment and the

rewards.

Also, Daloz's (1986) insisted that support and challenge needed to be

combined to encourage a student's meaningful learning. He insisted that challenge,

however, needed to go beyond supportive interactions to activities and experiences

that generated discussions, questions, and problem solving (Edick, 2001). According

of Daloz (1986), while the function of support is to bring personal and professional

boundaries together, challenge peels them apart. Because challenge can generate

dissonance through questioning and problem solving, challenge can also create

opportunities for the learner to construct their own theory (Edick, 2001). So,

developing trust at a significant level before they challenge preservice teachers to

encourage their autonomous theory-building is essential.

Most importantly, teacher educators must encourage preservice teachers to

perceive that they are intelligent enough to create knowledge that can contribute to

others, as well as intelligent enough to self-support their efforts to construct their

own knowledge. Unless preservice teachers respect their own abilities to make sense

of their lives and, reciprocally, respect others' abilities to make sense of their lives,

the preservice teachers cannot autonomously construct their own knowledge.

Empirical research on students' autonomy shows that students with autonomy-

supportive teachers, compared to students with controlling teachers, experienced

greater perceived autonomy, as well as a more positive functioning of their self-

esteem, their intrinsic motivation of classroom engagement, and their creativity and

psychological well-being (Black & Deci, 2000; Harder & Reeve, 2003; Reeve &

Jang, 2006). From the findings in this study and from a review of the literature, if

teacher educators support a preservice teacher's development of autonomy in

constructing their knowledge, the educator first needed to trust the preservice

teacher's ability to reflect on their own work and to construct their own knowledge. The teacher educator must "step back from the authoritarian role and encourage the preservice teacher to question everything they have believed as a truth" (Rodgers & Long, 2002, p.302).

However, the ways of encouraging their student's autonomy were interpreted and affected differently from ways of the preservice teachers because of their cultures. For Jenny, her ability to operate her knowledge for the meaningful learning was constrained by the same ways the other three American students were considered good for supporting their autonomy. For example, discussions and group projects made Jenny frustrated and overwhelmed. Jenny believed that the trust established by the teacher educators was the most important motivation for her changes in self-awareness and self-confidence and for her ownership and responsibility of her learning.

The findings of Jenny, the Korean preservice teacher, and the other three American preservice teachers, demonstrated that, when teacher educators provided preservice teachers with the opportunity to critically examine their personal practical theories and to construct them autonomously, each preservice teacher was affected

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differently.

Specifically and most importantly, Jenny struggled with communication in the following contexts: asking and answering questions, giving her opinions and expressing her ideas, managing interpersonal skills in a cooperative learning context, and interacting with teachers. Jenny's struggle was a different issue from the other three American preservice teachers. In Jenny's culture, she developed strong beliefs about a students' need to obey teachers and to not express their own ideas. Cortazzi & Jin(1998;1999) and Lin (2004) had similar findings as the Eastern Asian and the same as Jenny. Specifically, Chinese and Taiwanese students believed that teachers should be the source of knowledge, should have authority in knowledge. As such, the students believed the teachers should lecture to the class while the students listened and accepted everything the teachers said without question. In other words, these students from Eastern Asia believed that it was the teachers' responsibility to give knowledge to the students (Lin, 2004). In this sense, that was the reason Jenny had strong beliefs of teaching children, as she, as a teacher, must make students learn something from her instruction.

According to Holmes, the "Western world-the United states, Canada, the

United Kingdom and so on, share a similar approach to higher education, one which

is underpinned by a Socratic tradition in which communication is central, and in

which knowledge is generated, or co-constructed, through a process of questioning

and evaluation of beliefs" (Holmes, 2005. p. 204). In contrast, in Asia, and Korea,

communication with the teacher was not typically considered part of the learning

process (Holmes, 2005. p. 204).

The different methods of interaction between teachers and students in

American and Korean classrooms were influenced by individualism/

collectivism and power distance (Hofstede, 1986, 1997). Collectivist values

encouraged Jenny's desire to fit into the group without openly expressing her ideas;

she wanted to fit in by just listening to others' ideas and following them. In contrast,

students in individualist cultures, like that of America, are more willing to engage in

the communication requirements of asking questions, giving answers, and discussing.

Power distance in Korean culture resulted in Jenny's unconditional acceptance,

rather than in the questioning of knowledge, especially where such challenges might,

for her, have resulted in a loss of face.

Based on the above, one could infer that Jenny's learning was constrained

by the discussion-centered and student-centered learning context. This result raised

important implications for teacher educators in classrooms where there are students

from other nationalities who may share similar characteristics. Gonzales, Houston, &

Chen (1994), and Carbaugh (1990) suggest that people, as individuals and as

members of a group, should negotiate their relationships with one another. In this

manner, ways of communication are redefined, or recoded, accruing to culture-

specific criteria. Furthermore, communication is influenced by one's dominant

culture and the unshared cultural patterns among people may result in

misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and discrimination in intercultural

communication (Holmes, 2005).

That teacher educators recognize the salient struggles of Jenny during her

teacher education program is important. She was mostly concerned about

"surviving" in school in America, so the development her own knowledge about

teaching and learning was limited. If the teacher educators understood what the

international students endured during their studying in the teacher education program,

teacher educators would more constrained the international students' learning. With

the increase of international students in American teacher education institutions, host

teacher educators need to recognize the importance of developing and fostering

international students' practices in the classroom.

Most importantly, international students need to develop trust in

cooperative activities that result in positive and successful communication among

international students, teacher educators, and peers in the classroom. Improving

intercultural communication among students and teachers in the classroom is not a

matter of espousing one's way or one's voice over another, but of recognizing, of

understanding, and of accepting different and diverse ways of learning and being

(Holmes, 2005). Biggs (1996) notes that students from Asian cultures may continue

to learn by interacting with their teachers in warm and social contexts outside of the

classroom. Also, teacher educators needed to figure out different ways to promote

preservice teachers' critical thinking to target students who have host cultures and

personal practical theories of teaching and learning that differ from those of

American teacher educators. In this respect, this study provides useful insight for the

development of preservice teachers from different cultures and educations, but also

in other respects, such as cross-cultural adjustment inside or outside the classroom.

Because, as many foreign students from different cultures entered and studied in the

teacher education program, teacher educators needed to understand the foreign

students' culture of learning and how their culture of learning affected the students'

theory-building in teaching and learning. Therefore, the findings of this research

might be useful for preservice teacher education in multicultural learning and

teaching contexts, as well as for other academic disciplines.

　　　With regard to the preservice teachers' development during their intern

teaching, I reflected on how teacher educators, including university supervisors,

support preservice teachers' professional development. Researchers (Dangel

&Guyton, 2003, Gill, 20005) emphasize the importance of field experience and

student teaching because each field experience and each student teaching experience

provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to apply the previous knowledge

gained in the teacher education program to their real teaching in the classroom. More

precisely, researchers emphasize the importance of how to elaborate on these ideas.

However, in this study, it was found that providing the experience of intern teaching

and supervising preservice teachers could guarantee the preservice teachers'

autonomous development. In their reflective journals, most of them reflected on their

salient issues with which they struggled, but reflective critical thinking on how they

solved those problems was not often found. The four preservice teachers'

experiences of intern teaching in this study implied that the supervision of the

interns' teaching needed to be more reflective on each of the preservice teachers'

complex and individualized process of development during their intern teaching. And,

based on this understanding, supervision for their intern teaching needed to be more

focused on encouraging the preservice teachers to figure out how they could solve

their problems autonomously.

Related this issue, the present system of intern teaching has been criticized

because it does not give student teachers the opportunity to fully reflect on their

theories of teaching and learning and on the social-cultural aspects of teaching Also,

the current system is criticized because it forces student teachers to concentrate on

the technical aspects of teaching (Zeichner, 1992; Sullivan, 2005). So, teacher

educators need to make the internship experience for preservice teachers an

opportunity for the greatest growth and learning. Specifically, teacher educators need

to figure out how to provide an optimal learning experience for intern teachers, along

with providing the field experience to support their critical reflections on their

teaching and learning. Finally, teacher educators need to determine how to help the

intern teachers to autonomously develop their own theories of teaching and learning

through their field experiences. To do this, teacher educators must identify key

factors that influence the quality of the internship experience.

Relationships with Cooperating Teacher

In the relationships with preservice teachers and with cooperating teachers,

the possibility of open communication may be an important contextual factor in

promoting the preservice teachers' critical reflection and autonomous theory-building

process. More precisely, in the relationships, mutual trust, especially the cooperating

teachers' trust in preservice teachers, was an important factor for the development of

autonomy in preservice teachers. Because these relationships provide the opportunity

for student teachers to critically reflect on their teaching and learning by themselves.

Thus, in the relationships, high trust between the cooperating teacher and the

preservice teacher made it possible for the preservice teachers to experiment with

their philosophy of teaching and the trust provided more potential for the preservice

teacher's development.

Consistent with previous research (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996 Kahn, 2001;

Rodgers & Dunn, 2000), the findings of this research show that the relationships

between the intern and the cooperating teacher identify key factors that may influence the student teachers' professional development. Rodgers and Dunn (2000) explained that preservice teacher's autonomous learning is promoted through open communication with cooperating teachers. Cooperative relationships based on mutual respect provide the conditions for open communication with a free exchange of ideas. This relationship is critical to the self-regulated theory-building process.

According to the Edick (2001), the research about trust between mentor and preservice teachers showed that mentor/preservice teachers relationships with high trust enable the sharing of professional secrets, successful teaching strategies, materials, and equipment in the interest of helping students learn (Kratzer, 1997; Short & Creer, 1997). Based on this finding, Edick (2001) developed logical assumptions that a high level of trust has the potential for the beginning teachers' development and Edick investigated the relationships and found that trust may be key in "funneling" true mentor relationships between teachers. Edick (2000) reported that trust encouraged the mentoring that not only provided support, but has the potential for beginning teacher growth and development. And, consistent with Daloz's (1986) findings, Edick's (2000) findings also insisted that, without a well-

established sense of basic trust, developing cooperative relationships is difficult. And, she emphasized the challenge in the relationships between mentors and beginning teachers is that the mentoring relationship continues to "feel-good," but that this feeling could not encourage the beginning teachers' further development.

Related to trust, Piaget's (1965) concept of "equal footing" could provide the theoretical explanation for the importance of mutual trust between preservice teachers and teacher educators. Rodgers and Dunn (2000a) explain that "according to Piaget (1965), 'equal footing' makes true cooperation possible by providing an atmosphere for the development of mutual respect and trust where individuals can participate in an authentic exchange of each others' viewpoints" (p. 20). Closely related to Piaget's idea, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002) also suggests that a teacher's way of encouraging students' motivation can be conceptualized along a continuum that ranges from a highly controlling style to a somewhat controlling, or from a somewhat autonomy.

This finding provides important implications for teacher education. When teacher educators make internship placements for preservice teachers, they need to consider the communication style of the cooperating teachers so preservice teachers

can have open communication with the cooperating teachers. For example, Jenny

was an international student and had difficulty with English, so her conversations her

cooperating teachers were constrained by their different cultures and by her lack of

communication skills in English. In her first placement, her cooperating teacher

understood Jenny's frustration in communicating with her and encouraged her to

have open communication. This example shows the importance of considering the

communication style of the preservice teachers and the cooperating teachers. Also,

this example reinforces that teacher educators need to reflect on how they support

open communication between preservice teachers and cooperating teachers.

Similarly, university supervisors need to re-examine their communication

styles with the preservice teachers and re-examine their goals for supervision. In

keeping with the theme of autonomy, supervisors need to promote the preservice

teachers' self-motivated construction of personal practical theories of learning and

teaching. In this respect, teacher educators need to critically think about how to

recruit university supervisors, how to train them, and how to work with the

cooperating teachers and the preservice teachers to ultimately encourage the

preservice teachers' autonomy in their theory-building of teaching and learning.

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Moreover, cooperating teachers also need to recognize the importance of preservice teachers' autonomy in developing their personal practical theory during their intern teaching. Furthermore, cooperating teachers need to learn what factors, especially regarding the interrelationships of preservice teachers and cooperating teachers, influence each other's autonomy. Furthermore, they need to discover what ways are effective for supporting the preservice teachers' critical thinking of their learning process during intern teaching and they need to actively apply these ways to their real supervising.

Future research, then, should include the following: (1) develop a better picture of how the relationships of preservice teachers and cooperating teacher influence the preservice teachers' development of autonomy, and (2) what are the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the development of relationships with intern teachers that need to be examined. This study examined only the preservice teachers' perspective of their relationships with cooperating teachers, but all relationships involve at least two people. In this sense, additional research on how the relationship of preservice teachers and cooperating teachers influences the cooperating teachers' development of autonomy in mentoring the preservice teachers, or influences overall,

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needs to be conducted. Also, research about the dialogue between interns and cooperating teachers, and the question of whether the cooperating teachers invest in the mentoring process differently when they become aware of the importance of their relationships with the preservice teachers will be meaningful.

Finally, future researches needs to think about the preservice teachers' relationships with their supervisors. For example, how do preservice teachers perceive the support they receive from their university supervisors? Also, in what ways and to what degree do university supervisors value and support the autonomy of preservice teachers under their supervision? And, finally, what is the supervisor's interpretation of what it means to support the preservice teachers' autonomy? These questions are also important for cooperating teachers.

Conclusion

My goal for teacher educators, with regards to the preservice teachers' education, is for teacher educators to encourage and support preservice teachers to become autonomous theory-builders in their lives. By conducting this study, I gained many important implications for my personal goal of being a teacher educator for early childhood preservice teachers in Korea. In this study, the differences in

development of autonomy between American students and Korean student inspired

me to reflect more critically on how Korean students develop autonomy in their

theory-building in different settings. Also, I have come to regard the importance of

studying how American students develop their autonomy in a different cultural and

educational setting. Specifically, I regard the importance of studying what are the

students' most prominent issues for developing their autonomy in the setting of a

culture different from their own culture, how they solve these issues, and what

factors encourage or hinder their autonomy during their learning and teaching in

different cultural settings. I think it will be meaningful for me to conduct a follow up

study on how Jenny, the Korean participant who studied in the American teacher

education program, developed her autonomy when she was taught and learned in her

own Korean culture and the differences in her development of autonomy.

Specifically, I wan follow up on the differences in interrelationships with her

students, her colleagues, and the parents of her students.

Most importantly, I learned that, to accomplish my goal of supporting the

preservice teachers' autonomy, I, as teacher educator, must be able to support

preservice teachers in developing a keener awareness of their personal practical

theories of teaching and learning. I must support the preservice teachers in their

attempt to figure out how their personal practical theories are constructed and

developed through the complex process of interacting within environments that

significantly influence them.

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APPENDIX: LETTER OF IRB APPROVAL

The University of Oklahoma
OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 11068
Approval Date: November 01, 2005

November 01, 2005

Min Kyung Han
Education
820 Van Fleet Oval, ECH 114
Norman, OK 73019

RE: The Influence of Culture on the Development of Ealry Childhood Preservice Teachers' Autonomy

Dear Ms. Han:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 6 & 7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Consent form - Subject   Dated: October 31, 2005
IRB Application   Dated: October 31, 2005
Survey Instrument   Dated: October 13, 2005 Interview questions

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on October 31, 2006. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lynn Devenport, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Ltr_Prot_Fappv_Exp   660 Parrington Oval, Suite 316, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3065 PHONE: (405) 325-8110 FAX: (405) 325-2373

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The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 11068
Amendment Approval Date: October 26, 2006

October 26, 2006

Min Kyung Han
Education
820 Van Fleet Oval, ECH 114
Norman, OK 73019

RE: IRB No. 11068: The Influence of Culture on the Development of Early Childhood Preservice Teachers' Autonomy

Dear Ms. Han:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed your protocol modification form. It is my judgement that this modification allows for the rights and welfare of the research subjects to be respected. Further, it has been determined that the study will continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the potential benefits to subjects and others warrant the risks subjects may choose to incur.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described in:

Consent form - Subject   Dated: September 01, 2006
Protocol   Dated: September 01, 2006
Other   Dated: September 01, 2006 Interview questions
Amend Form   Dated: September 01, 2006

Amendment Summary:
Change in title of study from "The Influence of Culture on the Development of Early Childhood Preservice Teachers' Autonomy" to "Early Childhood Preservice Teachers's Autonomy in Constructing The Personal Practical Theory of Teaching and Learning". Also, change in Protocol to broaden research topic to include new themes and present a more comprehensive understanding of preservice teachers' autonomy.

This letter covers only the approval of the above referenced modification. All other conditions, including the original expiration date, from the approval granted October 26, 2006 are still effective.

Any proposed change in approved research including the protocol, consent document, or other recruitment materials cannot be initiated without IRB approval except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to participants. Changes in approved research initiated without IRB approval to eliminate immediate hazards to the participant must be promptly reported to the IRB. Completion of approved research must be reported to the IRB. If consent form revisions are a part of this modification, you will be provided with a new stamped copy of your consent form. Please use this stamped copy for all future consent documentation. Please discontinue use of all outdated versions of this consent form.

If you have any questions about these procedures or need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lynn Devenport, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Ltr_Amend_Final_Appv_Exp