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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

CHANGES IN THE QUALITY OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING AS PERCEIVED BY KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS USING GREAT EXPECTATIONS A CASE STUDY

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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A Dissertation
APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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Abstract

Literature from the early 2000's reported that public schools and teachers were being held more accountable in helping children succeed. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 specifically stated that schools were to provide those students who have difficulty meeting high standards with assistance in terms of a quality teacher in every classroom.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological case study was to determine if kindergarten teachers who had implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years perceived changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness; if so why? If not, why not? Based on the perceptions of kindergarten teachers and earlier research, the study was designed to help determine factors that constituted effective teaching practices.

The phenomenon was examined from the teachers' perceptions in order to expand the current literature base, as well as to inform other schools about professional development and programs such as Great Expectations. The data were gathered using interviews, observation instruments, field notes, and follow-up discussions. Phenomenological case study was the methodology used in the study. Themes were found in the data of each of the four subsets along with findings of research that had been previously reported in the literature. These data were analyzed for commonalities and for new categories not previously reported.

Results indicated that findings of the current study concurred with those of earlier research. Important factors affecting the perceptions included professional development and character education. This study indicated that the expansion of the Great Expectations teaching model and increasing character education benefited teachers in this school.

Findings indicated that kindergarten teachers who had implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for at least three years did indeed perceive changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness.

Changes In The Quality of Effective Teaching as Perceived By Kindergarten Teachers Using Great Expectations

A Case Study

Chapter 1

Introduction

Much of the current research on effective teaching suggests that professional development, content knowledge and teaching experience play key roles in determining the effectiveness of classrooms (Blair, 2000; Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fetler, 1999; Shellard & Protheroe, 2000; Wenglinsky, 2000). Research indicates the most successful of these efforts occur when teachers promote a high level of enthusiasm and motivation for learning and a positive attitude toward the teaching profession (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997). Teacher enthusiasm for teaching and learning has been shown to be an important component in effective teaching and results in higher levels of student achievement and student motivation (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999). While teacher involvement in professional development or graduate studies indicates enthusiasm for learning, it may be a source of motivation that translates into higher academic achievement for students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Some studies indicate that the enthusiasm factor is more significant with older students than younger ones. However, effective primary teachers also have demonstrated enthusiasm for their work as part of their overall effectiveness (Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993b).

Other important indicators of effective teaching include a positive attitude toward teaching and a dual commitment to student and personal learning (Blair, 2000). Effective teachers view themselves as being responsible for the success of their students and feel that it is up to them to provide a variety of methods to reach their students. Furthermore, effective teachers believe that all students can learn. A positive attitude also reflects how teachers interact with colleagues and other staff members. They are willing to assist other teachers, share ideas and provide leadership for the rest of the faculty (Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997). Teachers who exhibit a positive attitude model for their students that education and learning are valuable assets. This can be accomplished by teacher investment in their own education and by participating in professional development and showing that they believe in the value of lifelong learning.

Research has documented the importance of effective teaching and the role professional development plays in this practice (McBer, 2000). In addition, effective teachers recognize that the amount of time spent on instruction directly affects the outcome of their students' academic achievement. Several studies have emphasized the importance of a focus on quality instruction in supporting student achievement. The findings report that effective teachers view consistency and organization in their classroom as important because they allow the central focus of classroom time to be on teaching and learning. Effective teachers reinforce their focus on instruction through their allocation of time to the teaching and learning process, as well as, their expectations for student learning (Berendt & Koski, 1999; Cawelti, 1999a; & Cotton, 2000).

Another key factor in determining effectiveness is the need for teachers to maintain clear and specific expectations for their students in the area of behavior as well as achievement. An extensive body of research suggests the importance of high teacher expectations in the classroom. Studies indicate that teacher expectations relate to student achievement, represent an overall orientation toward improvement and growth in the classroom, and improve student responsibility and accountability (Cawelti, 1999a; Cotton, 2000; Peart & Campbell, 1999; Price, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Further, research on teacher expectations has consistently demonstrated that teachers have significantly lower expectations of and give less encouragement to students in the bottom third of the class (Peart & Campbell, 1999; Price, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Low expectations of students is just one reason that many classroom teachers are reporting feelings of inadequacy and a lack of effectiveness. Some teachers are finding that they are spending more instructional time dealing with student conflicts, discipline problems, uncontrollable students, demanding administrators, and discontented parents. The result is less actual instructional time, which limits the learning process and student achievement. Many teachers have become disillusioned with student apathy, the lack of respect among students, and the daily problems associated with schools. These teachers have become complacent in their teaching duties, which, in effect, make them less effective teachers (http://www.ed.gov/pub, 1996; http://www.ed.gov, 2000).

Need for the Study

Research has documented both the importance of professional development for experienced and novice teachers and has shown that teachers who participate in professional

development tend to be leaders and involve themselves in all aspects of school life rather than just learning how to cope while doing their job (Darling-Hammond, 1997). There is a convincing need for teachers to participate in professional development and for schools to invest in a program offering character education as part of the curriculum. One program that focuses on instruction, character education, and provides teachers with professional development is Great Expectations. This program appears to be gaining status for staff development inservice at both the state and national levels.

There has been a limited amount of research conducted related to Great Expectations. Published research related to Great Expectations included: Spreading the Paradigm of a Master Teacher: The Great Expectations Initiative in Oklahoma (Ferguson, 1993); Differences in Student Motivation (Montalvo, 1994); Written Evaluation of Great Expectations (Coppedge, 1991); and Southwest Education Development Lab Research Study (2000).

Upon examining the material related to Great Expectations, there seemed to be a lack of published information concerning the theoretical framework of the Great Expectations teaching model. In order to provide meaningful research regarding Great Expectations' effectiveness, it is necessary to describe how and where Great Expectations components fit into a theoretical framework. In addition, a vague picture exists of how this particular program has influenced teachers over a longitudinal time frame. The results of this study will contribute to the limited existing body of knowledge about teachers who have utilized the Great Expectations teaching model over a specific period of time.

In addition, during 2001, the Great Expectations Foundation signed a $95,000.00 contract with the University of Oklahoma to conduct research related to Great Expectations. This quantitative study will collect research data for empirical evaluation. This research will be used to report students' achievement using standardized test scores. The pre-testing will begin in September of 2003, and the post-testing will take place in April of 2004. It is the hope of the Great Expectations Foundation to be able to expand and promote this program throughout the United States. Finally, these data will add a new understanding and dimension to the existing body of literature that relates to Great Expectations, and will provide additional research information as it expands to a national level.

Research Question

Listed below were the research question and the sub question that guided this study. The research question was: Do kindergarten teachers who have implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years perceive changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness? If so, why? If not, why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

The objective of the research was to answer the question through data gathered from teacher interviews, classroom observations, field notes and journal entries, and follow-up discussions. This study identified how Great Expectations has or has not changed the participants' perceptions about the quality of their teaching effectiveness for at least three years.

Definition of Terms

The following list will help clarify terms used in the study. These terms come directly from the Great Expectations Methodology Handbook (2002).

Contingencies - Contingencies are "when/then" statements. Example, when you are quiet, I will finish the story. Contingencies always have a positive sound and offer a positive result.

Creeds - A creed is a positive statement, which creates a common language for the school or classroom and is intended to instill a sense of pride and honor in the students.

Magic Triad - A smile, a hug, and kind words.

Mind-Mapping - A technique used to help students remember, understand concepts, and use higher level thinking skills. Mind-Mapping helps children to connect ideas and gives a visual mental picture of information they are trying to remember.

Neck Up-Check Up - A concrete method of self-assessment for teachers to use on a daily basis. The teacher learns to put all outside distractions away for the day and devote his/her full attention to the students.

Positive Daily Messages - This concept is incorporated into the Magic Triad and consists of teacher/students sharing a kind or friendly message with someone else in the classroom. Example: A PDM could consist of shaking hands and saying one nice thing to and about the opposite person.

Upshifting - A way of expressing unconditional love and caring to the students. When a student does something negative they know the teacher may not like the

action or behavior but they will always care about the individual person. Example: We all make mistakes. What did you learn from this one?

Limitations/Delimitations of Study

Limitations related to this study were:

- The research design called for interpretation of the phenomenon being discussed. Therefore, the possibility existed that the participants would filter what they said in order to appear to be perceived the way the researcher wished them to appear.
- Because case study focuses on a particular situation, in this instance a change in the quality of effective teaching over a three-year time frame, the teacher sample does not reflect the general teacher population. The case is not generalizable beyond the school setting.
- The maturation level of the students being taught.
- The availability of the participants' time.
- The fact that this principal requires all teachers to participate in the training and implementation of the Great Expectations program.
- The method of selecting participants may not have provided an accurate view from the entire population.
- The researcher had a pre-existing relationship with the school, due to unrelated university work there.

Summary

This chapter presented various concepts to identify effective teaching such as enthusiasm, motivation, and a positive attitude. It included content knowledge and teaching

experience as a way of examining effective teaching. Chapter one introduced the role of professional development associated with effective teaching. The need for the study presented information concerning a lack of theoretical framework linked to the foundation or theory base associated with The Great Expectations program and possible addition to its existing body of knowledge. The research question was stated along with the objective of the research. A section about the definition of terms was included to explain terms, which will be used throughout the study. Limitations and delimitations to the study were discussed and the chapter concluded with this summary.

Chapter two will review the literature pertaining to this study. Specific areas covered will include: the Great Expectations program, character education, effective teaching practices, and professional development.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature related to effective teaching. The chapter provides information about the literature relevant to this study. Four main topics were examined: the Great Expectations program, character education, effective teaching practices, and professional development. The literature related to these topics is relevant to the research question: Do kindergarten teachers who have implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years perceive changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness? If so, why? If not, why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

Great Expectations

This section examines the Great Expectations program and its foundation. It will focus on the history, required training, instructional components, and the research findings relevant to the program.

History of Great Expectations

The idea for Great Expectations began when Charlie Hollar, a businessman and civic leader from Ponca City, Oklahoma, met the renowned teacher Marva Collins after hearing her speak. Collins was well known for her work with the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago and her unique philosophy of teaching. Her teaching philosophy stressed a strong emphasis on basic skills, and the importance of the relationship of values to the rest of the

curriculum. Hollar was impressed with the apparent success and student achievement from Collins' style of teaching; therefore, he asked Collins to conduct a training session for Oklahoma teachers. An agreement was completed and a pilot program was initiated. The project included working with students, teachers, and principals from 25 "at-risk" schools. The results were impressive. Test scores doubled and tripled in some of the participating schools. Within a two-year period all 25 schools were removed from the "at-risk" list (Office of Great Expectations, 2001). In 1991, Hollar formed the Great Expectations Foundation with the objective of bringing new and innovative ideas to classrooms across Oklahoma. The program focused on character and academics. The foundation promoted a vision of inspired learning and teaching, where students were challenged and supported by inspired teachers who value each student and are committed to student success in the classroom. At the time of the study the foundation continued to operate from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, with a board of directors committed to improving the quality of education not only in Oklahoma but also across the United States.

In 1992 there were 775 participants in the training program. By 1998 the number of participants had grown to 3,135. A scholarship system was established to pay for training a large number of participants. By 1999, the summer institute workshops enrollment reached more than 5,200 educators who represented 51% of the school districts in Oklahoma.

Enrollment in the summer institute during 2001 was 5,450 with representation from 298 of the Oklahoma school districts or 58.4% of the school districts in Oklahoma. In 2002, summer institute workshops reported approximately 5,600 participants with workshops held on six Oklahoma college campuses (http://www.greatexpectations.org). Special training

sessions were started for administrators, support personnel, and parents for schools involved. The program had expanded to Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, California, Michigan, Vermont, and the Virgin Isles; all of these states and the territory have sent representatives for training in Oklahoma's Great Expectations workshops (Office of Great Expectations, Information Packet, 2001).

One indicator of growth is the support shown for the program by the Oklahoma State Superintendent of Schools, "The program has experienced much success. From the very beginning we knew that the dream of Oklahoma classrooms with Great Expectations would be classrooms filled with bright futures for all children. I have seen this spirit and dream move throughout the state" (Great Expectations Conceptual Framework, 2000, p. 2).

In December 2001, Hollar, the Oklahoma Secretary of Education, and other Great Expectations board members met with the U.S. Secretary and an Under Secretary of Education in Washington D.C. The purpose of the meeting was to announce plans to make Great Expectations accessible throughout the United States.

Great Expectations Workshops

The multi-state Great Expectations Program consisted of the teacher and administrator-training program that was developed in Oklahoma. The program objectives were based on increasing student self-esteem, intellectual knowledge, and social competencies. The framework focused on the improvement of educators through their training institutes and the improvement of entire schools through organizational change. The program was designed to help teachers re-examine the way they teach and the manner in which they interact with students. Great Expectations encouraged teachers to examine their

values and beliefs about how students learn. The training was grounded in the belief that all children can learn, regardless of the labels placed upon them. Teachers learned to focus on the learning climate and on how to teach instead of what to teach. The training from this model was applied in the classroom where the attitude of teachers and students was altered. The emphasis of reaching each student was redirected to the teacher's roles and responsibilities in the classroom. The concepts of increasing self-esteem and motivation were key factors in helping children believe in themselves and to see that they can indeed succeed (Great Expectations Methodology Handbook, 2002). The teachers were challenged to change their teaching habits and to create a classroom climate that presents a sense of mutual respect between teacher and students. This action provided a sense of empowerment to the children who, in turn, may improve their ability to take risks. This may result in increased academic abilities. The model suggests children will learn from their classroom teacher that making mistakes is not only all right, but is a part of the natural learning process. The Great Expectations model encouraged and trained teachers how to facilitate positive student behavior and to guide students in the areas of solving social and emotional problems. The program demonstrated how to model the desired behaviors and attitudes teachers expect from their students. The model suggests this should lead to a learning environment that is conducive to the best possible opportunities for academic, social, emotional and moral growth that leads to the success for all students (Great Expectations Methodology Handbook, 2002).

The Great Expectations Summer Institute Training sessions have been held at two Oklahoma college campuses since 1991, with four more campus locations being added in

2002. All participants were required to attend a four-day introductory methodology course where they learned the Great Expectations major components, which included: the six tenets, classroom practices, and life principles. Teachers learned about Great Expectations in pre-selected grade-level groups through experiential "hands-on" lessons that demonstrated how the tenets, classroom practices, and life principles could be applied in their own classrooms. Methodology was offered to early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school teachers. Administrators, parents, and other school staff could also participate in the training. The basic methodology course is the foundation of the Great Expectations training and is considered to be the "philosophical umbrella," for all other training and development (http://www.greatexpectations.org). The Great Expectations methodology provides the knowledge and skills needed to relate to students in a way that inspires learning. Teaching and learning to apply the program's six tenets, classroom practices, and life principles was designed to accomplish this goal. A variety of additional advanced courses were available for those who had completed the introductory training. In addition, Great Expectations offered mentoring services through their offices, as well as follow-up training opportunities, which included meetings and retreats for teachers and administrators (Great Expectations, Conceptual Framework, 2000).

One of the most positive aspects of Great Expectations training was the fact that classroom teachers who used and practiced this model in their classrooms conducted the training. The instructors modeled the Great Expectations practices so learning was experiential for those being trained. Therefore, participants experienced training in the same manner that students experienced the model.

Components of the Great Expectations Model

The Great Expectations Teaching Model is an eclectic approach to teaching that encompasses a variety of ideas considered among the best of what is known about teaching. Drawing from a variety of learning theories, teachers do whatever it takes to teach children through an integrated holistic curriculum (Program Overview and Research Findings, 2001).

The model is founded on six basic tenets that are based on different learning theories. The Great Expectations Handbook (2002) lists the following:

All Children Can Learn...

All children can learn, no matter what labels are placed upon them, whether it is learning disabled, low socioeconomic status, unstable home life, inner-city, or rural. "It is the teacher's responsibility to find ways to reach every student and to believe in that student's ability to learn" (Glasser).

Climate of Mutual Respect...

Students are empowered to take risks necessary for growth in a classroom where mutual respect is evident. Mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn, and students' ideas are valued. Teachers show the same respect for students that they desire to receive from them (Likert).

Building Self-Esteem...

Building the self-esteem of students is key to helping them believe they are capable of learning and motivating them to try (Clemes, Bean, and Clark).

Teacher Attitude and Responsibility...

Teachers who have positive attitudes possess the influence necessary to shape the attitudes of the students in their classrooms. The teacher's attitude is one of a facilitator of learning: encouraging, believing in students, caring and requiring excellence in every detail (Ginott, Gilmore & Gilmore, 1984).

High Expectations...

Teachers must hold high expectations of students; when students recognize those expectations, they will respond by reaching upward to achieve them (Rosenthal and Jacobson).

Teacher Knowledge and Skill...

Teachers must be knowledgeable and skillful in techniques that enable students to achieve success (Bloom, Benjamin, p. 11).

The review of the literature discovered no publications that linked the components of the Great Expectations model with learning theories. The Director of Great Expectations explained ways in which the tenets teach character education through the use of life principles. "However, no one learning theory exists" (Price, 2002). Great Expectations is described as an eclectic way of teaching, using all the best-known methods in teaching today, according to the Great Expectations central office.

Great Expectations Research Findings

The Great Expectations Foundation and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory conducted a longitudinal study, which profiled 31 Oklahoma schools that implemented Great Expectations in both third and seventh grades. Twenty-six schools

provided only third grade data; three provided third and seventh grade data; and two provided only seventh grade data (Program Overview and Research Findings, 2001).

Baseline data for the study compared the third and/or seventh grade level of achievement for each school. Data were collected one year prior to implementing the Great Expectations program and for the grade level achievement in 1999, which was the final year that Oklahoma mandated norm-referenced testing in these grades. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) was the standardized, norm-referenced test used in the study (Program Overview and Research Findings, 2001). The results of this study will be described in the next few paragraphs.

Comparing the baseline grade level achievement for each school with the achievement data from 1999 revealed that 62% of the third grade and 80% of the seventh grade classes demonstrated increased levels of achievement following the implementation of Great Expectations. For further clarification Table 1 presents the grade level data in three categories: (a) those in the first year of implementation, (b) those in second, third, or fourth year of implementation, and (c) those implementing for five or more years. The grade level achievement is described in National Percentile Rank (NPR) points (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

Implementation of Great Expectations for:

First, Second, Third, or Fourth Year and Fifth or More Years.

Number of Years in Implementation of Great Expectations	First Year (n=7)	Second, Third or Fourth Year (n=15)	Fifth + Year (n=12)
Classrooms Showing Gain	5	7	10
Total Amount of Gain (NPR Points)	21	50	190
Average Gain (NPR Points)	4.2	7.14	19

Table 1 – Gains for Grade Levels and number of years for implementation of Great Expectations for first year, second, third, or fourth year, and five or more years.

There were seven classes in their first year of implementation. Five reported gains in terms of National Percentile Rank (NPR) points. Fifteen classes were in their second, third, or fourth year of implementation. Seven classes showed gains in terms of NPR points. Twelve classes had been implementing Great Expectations for five or more years. Ten of those classes showed NPR point gains. The grade level students' classes in the final category, those with implementation for five or more years, showed the greatest average gain in NPR points.

The findings of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory study were consistent with effective schools research (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001). Changing attitudes and expectations, along with organizational and instructional practices must occur over a period of time before true improvements in learning become evident. The overall results of the comparison revealed that 62% of the third grade and 80% of the seventh grade classes demonstrated increased levels of achievement following the

onset of Great Expectations implementation (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

Another important component in the growth and success experienced by Great Expectations concerns the leadership within the school implementing the program. The literature presents evidence to support research that underscores the importance of the principal's role in implementing school reform. "Unquestionably, the principal's leadership role is vital, and research shows that leadership turnover jeopardizes school change efforts. More than almost any other factor, the sense of a professional community in schools enhances student achievement" (Moffett, 2000, p. 36). Great Expectations is now placing more emphasis on principals. While superintendents and teachers play key roles in school change, research shows that success depends consistently on active and informed support from the principal (Hall, Hord, & Griffin, 1980). Great Expectations acknowledges that had they placed more emphasis on working with principals in the first few years of its existence, it is likely that some schools would be further along in reaching their potential for growth and change (Ferguson, 1993). Principals are a key factor in determining, the outcomes that foster change and character development in their schools.

In conclusion, Great Expectations is a teaching methodology created to promote change in many areas. The British philosopher and humanist Sir Herbert Read, said, "there were two principles to guide education, one was to help children become who they are not; the other was to help children become who they are" (1944, p. 583). Part of school change requires children to assume responsibility for framing their own goals and learning how to achieve them (Eisner, 2002). Through life principles or character aspects, such as

commitment, responsibility, and respect, Great Expectations integrates character development throughout its methodology.

Character Education

Teachers are expected to assist children in gaining knowledge. Children should also learn character in school. While core learning, such as reading, math, and science, can give children strength of mind, character education is strength of heart. Good character is not something you are born with; it is something you must learn from those who have it (Paige, 2001).

President Bush has made character education a special priority. The No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2001, reflects the importance of character education programs. The law triples funding for character education grants to states and districts to $25 million. Grants can be used for developing character education curricula, which may include implementing model character education programs that involve parents and community members, and training teachers to incorporate character-building lessons and activities into their classrooms. Children will be taught about the principles and values of good character through their daily curriculum. In keeping with the guiding principle of the No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2001, what matters most in character education is product, not process (Paige, 2001).

There are many components and beliefs associated with the Great Expectations Program. Character Education is incorporated in all six tenets, which include: teaching life principles such as respect, responsibility, and honesty.

The concept of character education is certainly not new. It is, in fact, the oldest mission of schools and is crucial to both moral and intellectual development (Bohlin, Farmer, & Ryan, 2001). The term "character" can be traced back to the English word *character* which derives from the Greek word *charassein,* which literally translates "to engrave" as on some type of writing surface. The root of that word evolved into the meaning of character as a distinctive mark or sign. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* now defines character education as "an individual's pattern of behavior...his moral constitution" (2002, p. 1).

The concept of character education presents countless views of what it is or isn't. Character education seems to fall into a gray area for what is considered to be a broad umbrella term. No one set definition for what character education involves really exists (Otten, 2000). There are however, many commonly related elements for generalizable terms such as: moral reasoning/cognitive development, social and emotional learning, moral education/virtue, life skills education, conflict resolution/peer mediation, and ethical moral philosophy. Despite the terminology the idea inescapably reflects back to a moral consciousness (Bohlin, Farmer, & Ryan, 2001).

Character education should not be confused with "good behavior" but constitutes the development and growth of three separate elements: These include cognition, emotion, and behavior. One study indicated that younger children must learn to be moral thinkers. Cognition helps children to distinguish between right and wrong. It provides the thinking process to choose the right thing to do and then to do it (Elkind, 2000). Aristotle called this practical wisdom. It is a learned phenomenon that causes people to make good choices in

their life. A report published by The Character Education Partnership (1999), stated that emotional learning is an element that constitutes feelings and emotions that come from the heart. Children learn to value what is good, and reject that which is not, and grow in their empathy for others. Emotional feelings are about wanting to make good choices and to do what is right. Finally, outward signs of character in action refer to the behavior mode. It revolves around the will to carry out a particular action. One may weigh the odds by considering all the facts in a situation, but then they must be motivated to go ahead and carry out that action.

Character education cultivates the mind, heart, and the behaviors that enable a person to develop his/her moral constitution. Although character education is not new, it has been tried and retried in various waves of educational reform. Character education can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century when it was specifically implemented in response to the multitudes of immigrates who placed their children in public schools. The reasoning was to combat the lawlessness and immorality of those considered uneducated, lower class. After World War I the immigration process began to decline and the demand for character education diminished but was still in use (Elkind, 2000).

Throughout the years further research studies have been conducted on the subject of character in schools. Kohlberg (1975) brought about a new interest in moral education upon the effects of events such as the Civil Rights and Women's Rights movements along with concern for social, economic, and educational inequalities in society. Other factors have become prevalent with the changes of society such as single parents who have less time to spend with their children, influences from movies, music, television and the Internet. Parents

have a more difficult time monitoring their children's exposure to these outside factors. As a result parents must share the role in character education with external factors over which they have little or no control over (Elkind, 2000). These apparent decreases of control along with increased bullying and violence in schools have brought about a renewed interest in character education.

Many education leaders of the twentieth century, including John Dewey, advocated moral, as well as academic, development for children. Lickona (1991) also confirms the sentiment with the idea that a well-designed curriculum encompasses components to include feelings as well as thinking. "As we address character education, it is important to remember that character education is not a new idea. It is an idea as old as education itself – indeed the school's most important mission" (p. 6).

Effectiveness of Character Education

Even though character education is a broad area, the data and statistics concerning its effectiveness are limited. Bier, the Project Director for Character Education at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, has been compiling results of effectiveness from several comparison studies. Two of these included: The Child Development Project (CDP) developed by the Developmental Studies Center Program (Barristich., Schaps, Watson, Solomon, & Lewis, 2000) and Reach Out to Schools: Social Competency Program http://www.wellesley.edu/OpenCircle/StoneCenter). The CDP was selected as a model prevention program for elementary schools for substance abuse prevention. This program was initiated in the early 1980s and continued to expand. It has since been implemented in over 130 schools in six states. The original program goal was to promote social, ethical, and

emotional development of K-6 students. The K-6 CDP program was based on: (1) direct teaching of pro-social values through the use of a literature-based reading program, (2) inductive discipline as an approach to classroom management (this included creating a caring classroom community used for problem solving, and cooperative learning), and (3) mutual understanding. The program promotes increased student responsibility, helpfulness, cooperation, and social skills.

CDP has been evaluated in three longitudinal studies, comparing project schools with demographically comparable non-project schools. The data collection included: classroom observations as well as questionnaires and interview assignments of students and teachers. The observations were conducted by qualified observers who were unaware a specific project was being used. The findings suggest that given the proper support toward implementation, progress can be achieved in a wide range of school settings. Examples include: high poverty, African American schools, and affluent, largely European-American, suburban schools (Paige, 2001).

When teachers in a given school move significantly toward CDP practices, students consistently show positive change in a wide range of attitudes, feelings and behavior. These include: (1) conflict resolution skills, (2) trust in and respect for teachers, (3) positive interpersonal behavior in and out of the classroom, (4) academic motivation, (5) commitment to democratic values, and (6) sense of personal efficacy. Decreases were shown in the following behaviors: (1) loneliness in school, (2) social anxiety, and (3) decreased substance use (www.devstu.org).

Another program, which was known to show positive effectiveness, was the Reach Out to Schools: Social Competency Program (http://www.wellesley.edu/OpenCircle/StoneCenter, Wellesley College, MA). This program is a comprehensive multiyear social-emotional learning program for children K-5. The emphasis on the program is the Open Circle Curriculum, a yearlong, grade-differentiated social competency curriculum. The focus is on three areas: (1) communication, (2) self-control, and (3) social problem solving. The class meets in the open circle concept twice a week for 15-30 minute sessions. The teacher and students discuss a lesson on a variety of topics and then engage in activities that support the topic of the day. The open circle serves as a forum for discussion of issues important to an individual or to the entire class.

The teachers working in this program were asked to make a year-long commitment to their training. Each teacher must attend four full days of training; two days in the summer, one day in the fall, and one day in the spring. In addition, a consultant comes to the school to demonstrate teaching a lesson, observe, and work with the teachers in their classroom.

Through the Reach Out to Schools Program, a series of evaluations were conducted to document impact on teachers, students and parents, and to understand what changes needed to be made. The results of the evaluations showed that the program promoted increased instruction and learning time and an increase in a caring classroom community atmosphere. Findings further suggested that the Open Circle program provides opportunities to address problematic student behavior. Through the program, Reach Out to Schools has trained over 2,850 teachers and shared the Open Circle Curriculum with over 200,000 students in over 200 elementary schools and 67 diverse communities in New England and New Jersey. These

two programs and others such as the Great Expectations Program focus on teaching life skills and life principles. All of which are an integral part of the overall character education reform movement.

Effective Teaching

In this section common attributes of effective teaching are described. The information is based on what educational research has shown to be important in the preparation and practice of effective teaching. Researchers define effective teaching in various ways. It can be related to student achievement, performance ratings from supervisors, or comments from interested stakeholders including students, parents and administrators. Effective teachers have been called analytical, dutiful, competent, reflective, diversity-responsive, and respected (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). Researchers had focused on the characteristics and processes utilized by effective teachers. This was done to develop a greater understanding of what teachers do that result in student learning.

The increasing body of research related to effective teaching has reinforced the idea that specific characteristics and behaviors have a direct correlation to student achievement, positive attitudes toward school, interest in learning, and other desirable outcomes. This section will focus on four measures of effective teaching--teacher characteristics, teacher preparation, classroom management, and classroom instructional practices.

Much of the research on effective teaching related teacher behavior to student achievement. Studies suggested that both instructional and management processes are key to effective teaching. However, many interview and survey responses emphasized teachers' affective characteristics, or social and emotional behavior more than pedagogical practice

(Strong, 2002). Teachers' psychological influence on students has been linked to student achievement in various effective teaching studies (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999; Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001; Demmon-Berger, 1986; Good & Brophy, 1997; Mitchell, 1998; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, no date; Thomas & Montomery, 1998).

The literature suggested that effective teaching includes: (1) caring, (2) fairness, (3) respect, (4) listening, (5) understanding, and (6) knowing students. Research on caring teachers has found:

1. Caring teachers who know their students can create relationships that enhance the learning process (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001).
2. Caring teachers are intentionally aware of student cultures outside the school (Peart & Campbell, 1999).
3. Effective teachers consistently emphasize their love for children as a key element of their success (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001).
4. Caring teachers truly believe each student has a right to a caring and competent teacher (Peart & Campbell, 1999).
5. Teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students (Cotton, 2000).
6. Effective teachers care and appropriately respect confidentiality issues when dealing with students (Peart & Campbell, 1999).

7. Caring teachers regard the ethic of care and learning as important in educating students to their full potential (Peart & Campbell, 1999).

Teacher characteristics is a broad area but none have shown more positive results in the realm of effective teaching practices than the promotion of enthusiasm, motivation for learning, and attitude toward the teaching profession. Research indicates effective teaching practices have residual positive effects on student willingness to work beyond their potential (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Teachers who are effective in their classroom practices find ways to motivate their students to learn. It is the responsibility of the teacher to find what works with each child so he or she is able to bring out the best in each child. Researchers have investigated the influence of teacher enthusiasm on student motivation and learning with the following results and conclusions: (1) High levels of teacher motivation contribute to high levels of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000); (2) Enthusiasm is more significant with older students than younger ones, but effective practices among primary teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm for their work indicate it is a part of their overall effectiveness (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999); (3) Teachers' enthusiasm for learning and for subject matter has been shown to be significant in student motivation, which is closely linked to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000); and (4) A teacher's participation in graduate studies indicates enthusiasm for learning and may be a source of motivation, which may result in higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Another important perspective of professionalism is the teacher's dedication to students and to the job. Sources of evidence indicated a dual commitment to student learning

and to personal learning had been found repeatedly in effective teaching practices (Blair, 2000; McBer, 2000). This follows the idea that effective teachers believe it is up to them to provide a number of ways to reach students; it is the teacher's responsibility to see that each student experiences success and to believe that all students can learn.

Effective teachers model the importance of learning in many ways. They serve as examples of lifelong learners as they continue to further their educational development. Research has found a relationship between teachers' attitudes and effectiveness in the following areas: (1) Effective teachers display positive attitudes about life and teaching; (2) They promote and participate in a collaborative work environment which results in more positive attitudes in the classroom; and (3) They hold their students accountable while doing the same for themselves (Blair, 2000; McBer, 2000; Mitchell, 1998; Thomas & Montomery, 1998).

Teacher Preparation

Studies show that the amount and type of educational coursework in a teacher's preparation program impact teacher effectiveness. The findings support that fully prepared teachers with background knowledge of pedagogy are better able to recognize individual student needs and customize instruction to increase overall student achievement. Scherer (2001) indicates that teachers with more professional preparation are able to provide students with more diverse learning opportunities. In contrast, teachers with little or no coursework in education consistently have difficulties in the areas of classroom management, curriculum development, and motivation of students.

Further research findings point out that both content knowledge and pedagogical skills are crucial aspects of effective teaching. The following points were significant outcomes related to educational background in teacher preparation: (1) The more methods courses in a teacher's professional education program, the more likely the teacher is to emphasize conceptual understanding and hands-on learning techniques in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2001); (2) A positive relationship exists between student achievement and how recently an experienced teacher took part in a professional development opportunity such as a conference or workshop (Blair & Wenglinsky, 2000); and (3) The ability to apply and integrate knowledge or skills to a particular population in a classroom setting is a key characteristic of effective teaching (Holt-Reynolds, 1999).

Other important factors in teacher preparation include teacher certification, content knowledge, and teaching experience. Research indicates that the number of well qualified, certified teachers within the state is a reliable predictor of student achievement on standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001). In addition, one of the best predictors of low student achievement is the number of uncertified teachers in the school. Some important findings related to certification are: (1) Fully certified teachers have a greater impact on gains in student learning than uncertified, provisionally certified or alternatively certified teachers, especially with minority students in urban and rural settings (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001); (2) Teachers with certification tend to have higher achieving students than teachers working without any type of certification (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001); and (3) Teachers who are certified within their specific field have higher achievement

scores among their students, than teachers working out of their fields, especially in mathematics (Fetler, 1999).

Another area of effective teaching that has had extensive investigation is content knowledge. Researchers who study effective teaching have consistently identified content knowledge as an essential part of the process. Subject matter knowledge positively affects performance in the classroom. Investigations on the importance of teacher content knowledge lists the following results: (1) Students, teachers and principals have all expressed the importance of subject matter knowledge (Shellard & Protheroe, 2000); (2) Content area preparation is positively related to student achievement within subjects, especially in the area of mathematics and science (Blair, 2000); and (3) Teachers with greater subject area knowledge tend to ask higher level questions, involve students in the learning process, and allow more student-directed activities (Shellard & Protheroe, 2000).

Finally, in the area of teacher preparation, teaching experience differentiates those who have attained true-life experiences through classroom practice and time. These experienced teachers have the background from which to incorporate and organize their classroom into meaningful lessons. Teachers who are both effective and experienced are somewhat like efficiency experts who can do more in less time than novice teachers. Researchers have found that teachers develop from novices to experienced teachers at different time intervals. Therefore, the number of years teaching may not indicate that teachers were experts. The findings in this area report: (1) Teachers with more experience tend to have better planning skills, including a more hierarchical and organized structure in the presentation of their lessons (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001); (2) Experienced teachers

tend to know and understand their students' learning needs, learning styles, prerequisite skills, and interests more than the novice teacher (Kerrins & Cushing, 1998); and (3) Teachers with more than three years of experience are more effective than those with three years or fewer, but these differences seem to level off after five to eight years (Kerrins & Cushing, 1998).

Classroom Management

Effective teaching strategies must focus on classroom management skills. Doyle (1986) indicates that teachers effective in classroom management are those who use a democratic process in the area of student behavior. They actively involve students in the process of establishing and maintaining rules and routines. Doyle defined management as "the actions and strategies teachers use to solve the problem of order in classrooms" (p.397), rather than responses to disciplinary situations.

The use of effective teaching practices eliminates problems before they occur. This allows more time for instruction and the learning process. Effective teaching strategies keep students actively involved and leave less time for misbehavior. Teachers must be prepared for their students on a daily basis. Their classrooms should provide a productive environment where all students can reap optimal benefits.

Studies indicate that classroom management is an influential variable in teacher effectiveness. Investigations of student achievement, surveys of perceptions, and meta-analysis on a range of studies have all supported the notion that effective management is a major factor of effective teaching. Management skills include establishing routines and procedures to limit disruption, maintaining momentum and providing a variety in

instructional practices, while assessing and responding to students (Cotton, 1999; Shellard & Protheroe, 2000; Wong & Wong, 1998).

Classroom Instructional Practice

The final section focusing on effective teaching deals with classroom instructional practices. Instructional practices may include organizational skills related to classroom management: (1) Effective teachers establish daily routines and procedures (Wong & Wong, 1998); (2) Effective teachers have a keen awareness of all actions and activities in the classroom (Shellard & Protheroe, 2000); and (3) Effective class management skills include smooth transitions and continuity or momentum throughout the day (Cotton, 2000).

Effective teachers maintain high expectations for their students and choose strategies that best fit their students' learning styles. There must be time for adequate planning and preparation of materials. This allows teaching and learning to be the main focus in the classroom. Studies that have examined the importance of a focus on instruction in supporting student achievement, included the following findings and conclusions: (1) Effective teachers see consistency and organization in their classrooms as important because they allow the focus of time to be spent on teaching and learning (Cotton, 2000); (2) Effective teachers prioritize instruction and learning as the key focus of school and communicate enthusiasm and dedication to learning that students reflect in their own behavior and practice (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Berendt & Koski, 1999); and (3) Effective teachers reinforce their focus on instruction through their allotment of time to the teaching and learning process, and through their expectations of their students (Cotton, 2000).

In conclusion, effective teaching practices include the teacher's willingness to devote time and energy in their chosen profession. These teachers make a choice to be lifelong learners. It is this intrinsic desire that lends itself to continuous self-improvement. The final section of chapter two will focus on professional development and how it relates to effective teaching practices.

Professional Development

This section of chapter two examines professional development. The literature reports evidence that supports the effectiveness of professional development in teaching practices.

Professional development is the process by which competent teachers achieve higher competence and expand their understanding of self, role, context, and career (Duke & Stiggins, 1990). For those teachers who are already working, whether they are novice or experienced, professional development opportunities are necessary for improving their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers need to know what kinds of preservice and professional development training will help them be more effective in their profession. There are many components involved in professional development. Some examples include: yearlong, supervised internship; intensive mentoring; graduate-level, school-based courses; planned collegiality; and inquiry (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Much of the current research reports that professional development is a major factor in examining the gap between teacher preparation and standards-based reform. Educational reform movements have emphasized improvement of academic achievement for students. We have learned through research that student learning will be transformed only if teacher

classroom practices reflect high standards (Porter & Brophy, 1988). Research reports that much of the professional development being offered to teachers does not meet the challenges of the reform movement (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Hiebert, 1999; Lieberman, 1996; Little, 1993; Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

Professional Development Research Study

Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000), name six factors that have proven to be positive approaches to teacher effectiveness. The study, Designing Professional Development That Works; surveyed a nationally representative probability sample of more than 1,000 teachers who participated in professional development, which was sponsored in part by the U.S. Federal Government. The program was Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was funded at $335 million dollars in 1999. The study focused on developing the knowledge and skills of classroom teachers. By analyzing the survey data and studying the literature, they identified three structural features and three core features that set the foundation for and that characterize the processes that occur during professional development. This section will focus on the following components of the study: form, duration, participation, content focus, active learning, and coherence.

Form

Literature on professional development emphasizes the importance of changing its form. It suggested that traditional approaches are less effective than reform approaches. Reform activities could be a study group, teacher network, mentoring relationship or a teacher resource center. The traditional approaches were criticized for not allowing teachers the time, the activities, and the content needed for improving their knowledge and promoting

meaningful change in their classroom practice. In contrast, reform activities were considered more responsive to how teachers learn and have more influence on changing teaching practices.

Duration

Duration involves the amount of time participants spent in the activity and over what time span the activity occurred. Research from the study indicated that activities of longer duration have more subject-area content focus. This leads to more active learning. It also adds greater coherence with teachers' other experiences than do shorter activities (Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000).

Collective Participation

The results from the study found professional development activities that included collective participation on the part of teachers from the same department, subject or grade are more likely to engage in opportunities for active learning and are more likely to be involved with other teacher experiences. There were a number of advantages produced as a result of collective participation. Some included: enabling discussions among teachers involving concepts and problems that might occur during a staff development activity. Collective participation also allowed teachers the opportunity to integrate what they learned with other aspects of their instructional content; thereby, resulting in teachers from the same school or department more readily sharing materials, classes, or assessment requirements. A shared professional culture may also result from those who teach the same grade or subject through a common understanding of instructional goals, methods, problems, and solutions.

Content

The degree to which professional development focuses on content knowledge is directly related to teachers' reported increases in knowledge and skills. The findings from this study were consistent with other recent studies that document the importance of content (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Kennedy, 1998). Focus on content targeted a staff development activity on a particular subject-area or teaching method. It avoided generic methods or activities.

Active Learning

In this national study, teachers whose professional development included opportunities for active learning reported increased knowledge and skills and changed classroom practice. Active learning provides opportunities to observe and to be observed while teaching, planning curriculum, and to present, lead and write – for example, present a demonstration, lead a discussion or write an article. The active learning process encourages teachers to become more involved in meaningful discussion, planning, and practice as part of professional development activities. The findings from this study were consistent with other recent studies that document professional development activities (Lieberman, 1996; Loucks-Horsley, et. al., 1998).

Coherence

Coherence indicated the degree to which professional development experiences were part of an integrated program of teacher learning. Activities should be consistent with teacher goals, build on prior experiences or activities, and include follow up. Activities are

also coherent when they are in alignment with national, state, or district standards and assessments.

According to this study, the coherence of professional development with policies and other professional experiences is directly related to increased teacher knowledge and improved classroom practice. The findings of this area of the study were consistent with the literature.

The analysis by the authors estimated the relationship between the characteristics of professional development and teacher outcomes, school poverty level, percentage of minority students, school levels, teacher gender, certification, and years of experience. They hypothesized that by engaging teachers in active work, and by using a set of learning experiences, a professional development activity is very likely to enhance the knowledge and teaching skills of the participants; thereby improving overall classroom practice, which in turn, fulfills the goal of improved student learning.

Results from this study indicated that the majority of teachers (79%) participated in traditional forms of professional development; the median number of hours for an activity was 15, and most teachers (64%) participated in activities that lasted a week or less. Only twenty percent (20%) of teachers participated in activities that included collective participation and fifty-one percent (51%) of teachers participated in activities that emphasized content. In addition, most teachers (80%) participated in professional development, which was aligned with state standards, and was consistent with other goals (79%), and involved discussion with other teachers (73%). The number of teachers who

experienced professional development in all six characteristics of high quality professional development was a small amount.

The reported findings of this research document the benefits of professional development involved in the quality of teacher effectiveness. This information should help to answer the research question: Do kindergarten teachers who have implemented Great Expectations for a minimum of three years perceive changes in the quality of their effectiveness? If so, why or why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

Summary

There are many characteristics that distinguish effective teaching practices. This research study compared the literature focusing on the necessary components in effective teaching practices to the current practices of those being used by the participants in this study. Using what is known about professional development, character education, and the Great Expectations teaching model, schools could create learning environments that would benefit both the teacher and the student. It should challenge the current practices of school communities and encourage systemic change.

This chapter examined four areas of qualities related to effective teaching practices. They were: Great Expectations, character education, effective teaching practices, and professional development, all of which could be considered necessary components in successful or effective teaching practices. Data related to these areas were collected and analyzed. The results will be used to examine the perspectives of the five participants and to

see if they feel their effectiveness as a classroom teacher has changed as a result of using Great Expectations in their classroom for three or more years.

Chapter three will describe the design of the study. It will give an overview of case study and describe the population and sample. Chapter three will also explain the research design, data sources, and data analysis.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Introduction and Research Question

At the time of this research, the study of effective teaching continued to be an area of interest for researchers. The research indicated that content knowledge, teaching experience, and professional development played key roles in determining the quality of effectiveness in the classroom (Blair, 2000; Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fetler, 1999; Shellard & Protheroe, 2000; Wenglinsky, 2000). In addition, research indicated two of the most successful components occurred when teachers promoted a high level of enthusiasm and motivation for learning and a positive attitude toward teaching (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Rowan, Chiang & Miller, 1997).

These findings were consistent with the practices used by the Great Expectations program. Great Expectations is a teaching model for teachers and administrators. The program was developed in Oklahoma but had expanded to many other states. Great Expectations had received positive feedback from supporters such as the State Superintendent of Oklahoma and the Chancellor for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Many schools credited the Great Expectations program for assistance in the removal of a low performance or at risk status of their school system. The foundation of Great Expectations was currently taking steps to become a national program endorsed by the United States Department of Education.

The body of research related to Great Expectations was limited. A review of the literature did not identify any studies that examined how kindergarten teachers perceived the

effectiveness of the Great Expectations model in the classroom. The current study focused on kindergarten teachers' perceptions of changes in the quality of their effectiveness of teaching by addressing the following question: Do kindergarten teachers who have implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years perceive changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness? If so, why? If not, why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

This chapter describes the procedures used to conduct this study. The first section describes the population and sample of the study. The next section describes case study and phenomenology, the methodology used in the study. The last section explains the procedures used in the study.

Sample and Population

This case study took place in an early childhood center. The center was one unit of a rural school district in a area located in a southwestern state. According to the 2000 census the town's population was 15,691. This town had six primary through secondary schools with approximately 2,691 students and 165 teachers.

The early childhood center was a large one-story building. The average enrollment during the 2001 school year was 363 students. Many years before, the building was a primary school consisting of grades one through six. For the period of the study, it contained classes for grades pre-k, kindergarten, and a transitional grade. The school employed 23 full-time teachers, of which 22 had completed a master's degree. In addition, the school employed 42 people, including staff, aides, and the principal.

The student population included: 234 (64%) Caucasian students, 25 (7%) African American, 90 (25%) American Indian, 13 (4%) Hispanic, and one (less than 1%) Asian American student. According to the school records 255 (70%) of the 363 students were in the free or reduced lunch program. Nine (2%) students were in the ESL program and 30 (8%) students were in the special education program.

The participants in the study consisted of five kindergarten teachers. The participants were selected for the study based upon the following criteria: They had to have a valid certification in early childhood education; They must have taught in the same building for three or more years; and They must have had the required training and have implemented the Great Expectations model in their classroom for at least three years. The principal then pre-selected a number of teachers who met the criteria and whom she considered to be effective and supportive of professional development. Finally, she asked for volunteers who would be willing to participate, from that group of teachers. The sample included five females.

This school as well as the rest of the schools in the district had a close working partnership with the university in the same town. The school system placed many of the university's student teachers and many teacher candidates who were participating in field experiences. Therefore, many of the classroom teachers were accustomed to participating in and working with university projects.

The sample included five female teachers ranging in ages from 39-49 years of age. The five participants were Caucasian. Four of the five were currently married and one was divorced. Each of the participants had children. Teaching experience ranged from nine to19

years. The number of students per class ranged from 17-19. All five participants had completed their Masters degree in education.

The researcher conducted ongoing classroom observations in the school while managing supervisory visits for pre-service teachers. These observational data were not part of the study. It did, however, provide opportunities for the researcher to develop a greater understanding of the Great Expectations program and to be a participant and observer in the classroom. In addition, it helped to develop closer rapport with the participants in the study. This previous knowledge of the school and the program could have biased the researcher's view of the data. However, this relationship did provide greater interaction with the participants of the study.

The researcher was familiar with the school in the study both before and after the staff implemented the Great Expectations program. The researcher also had children in the building during the 1980s and had worked with student teachers in the building. The publicity and notoriety of the program in the community heightened the curiosity of the researcher to choose this program in this particular school as a case study. According to Stake (2000), the more the researcher has intrinsic interest in the case, the more the focus of study will be on the case's uniqueness, particular context, issues, and story.

In addition, the researcher attended and participated in one of the Great Expectations summer institutes. This was done in part to enhance the researcher's understanding of the program and to better understand the participants' perceptions. This was done after all data collection was completed.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was case study. A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event (Merriam, 1988, Stake, 1994). According to Stake (2000), case studies have become one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry. Identification of the case usually surrounds the specificities rather than the generalities associated with the topic. Further, as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used.

According to Merriam (1998) five types of qualitative studies are much more prevalent in education than others. These include: the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. These forms can all be distinguished apart from each other; however, they all share essential characteristics of qualitative research: (1) The goal of eliciting understanding and meaning; (2) The researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis; (3) The use of fieldwork; (4) An inductive orientation to analysis; and (5) Findings that are richly descriptive. This according to Merriam, (1998) summarizes the five types of qualitative research.

This study was a phenomenological case study, using phenomenology as the driving focus of the bounded system. Phenomenology is one of the variations of qualitative research method that attempts to describe the structures of experiences as they present themselves to consciousness. The method seeks to understand the meanings of events and interactions of ordinary people in particular situations. By emphasizing the subjective aspects of people's

behavior, phenomenology allows for an entry into the conceptual world of a participant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The process focuses on the contemplation of the mind as it performs the function of remembering, desiring, and perceiving certain phenomena. It is the meaning that the person gives to such thoughts that determine how he/she reacts to the experience. These rememberings with the abstract content of the act evolve into meaning. It is this process of understanding that causes an isolated act to have the impact upon a person that underpins the theory of phenomenology.

When phenomenology is used in qualitative research, it is best defined as a method of learning about another person by listening to descriptions of what their subjective world is like. By erasing all suppositions, the researcher attempts to understand the phenomena through the eyes of the participant. Phenomenology becomes the act of trying to experience the total reality of the consciousness of someone who experiences his/her world in a certain time and place. It is necessary that the researcher develop an attitude of silence so that understanding can be achieved (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998).

If the phenomenon the researcher is interested in studying is not intrinsically bounded, it is not a case. Phenomenology usually involves interviewing five-15 participants. Langenbach, Vaughn and Aagaard (1994) suggested that a researcher begin collecting phenomenological data by asking the question, "What does phenomenon mean?" The participants are encouraged to reflect upon his/her experiences through conversation or answering open-ended questions. The researcher tries to get the participant to give a short life history to tell his/her story. The researcher then identifies commonalities or themes

within the interview. A narrative develops, becoming part of the emergent design, which describes the patterns from the experience or phenomenon.

The case becomes a "bounded system" (Flood, as reported in Fals Borda, 1998). The bounded system is described as an assemblage of interacting things or parts into a functioning whole. For further clarification, the systems are social in nature, having human functions and purposes. A bounded system has spaces with recognizable edges between the inside and outside, with different functions occurring in different spaces. Examples might be: an organization, a specific program, a class or even a person (Handbook of Qualitative Research, 1992).

The research for this study was undertaken because the researcher wanted to better understand the perceptions of this particular case. The purpose was not theory building, but an intrinsic interest in the case. According to Stake, (2000) the majority of case studies are done by individuals who have an intrinsic interest in the case and little interest in the advancement of science.

Procedures

Data were collected in four ways—(1) interviews, (2) observations, (3) field notes and journal entries, and (4) follow-up discussions. A description of these methods will be discussed in chapter four.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oklahoma. In addition, a revision concerning the title and dates was obtained (see Appendix A). Next, the school principal where the study was to be conducted was contacted. A meeting was scheduled to discuss the

study and to obtain written permission from the building principal (see Appendix B). A second meeting was scheduled to meet the participants, discuss the study, and to obtain signatures for the informed consent documents (see Appendix C). Permission was also obtained from the office of Great Expectations to use excerpts from their training procedures and promotional materials (see Appendix D).

Participants agreed to audio taped interviews for the purpose of transcriptions with the understanding that they would have access to the tapes and would be allowed to make any changes they deemed necessary. Classroom observations, meetings, and individual interviews were scheduled at that time.

Each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym that they would use for the remainder of the study. Interviews were conducted in person at the school where the participants taught. Each interview began with a participant life history, which included personal, educational, and professional background information. A series of open-ended questions (see Appendix E) prepared prior to the interview were asked of each participant and lasted approximately one hour.

Following the interview process, each teacher was observed in the classroom setting for a minimum of three times. A different observation instrument was used for each recorded setting. A description of each instrument is given in the following section.

During the data collection process the researcher gathered field notes and journal entries and concluded with follow-up discussions with the participants.

Observation Instruments

Systematic observation involves observing and then recording the observed behavior into a format that can be studied at a later time. It usually involves various forms or instruments. Three different observation instruments were used in this study to collect data during the classroom observations. Observation instruments included: anecdotal records, frequency counts, and running records (see Appendix F). Following is a description of each instrument.

Anecdotal Record

The anecdotal record contained information including: (a) the observer, (b) the location, (c) the focus of observation, (d) the purpose of observation, (e) the date and time of observation, and (f) the descriptions of events with the understanding of later adding interpretations of the observations. The anecdotal record is divided into two distinct parts: facts and interpretation of the facts. Anecdotal records were kept for each participant, which aided in clarity of interpretation, usefulness, and validity.

Advantages of the anecdotal record.

1. Behavior is observed as it occurs in the natural setting of the classroom.
2. Data can be gathered unobtrusively, without involving those who are being observed.
3. The observer is not restricted in what to look for, and therefore, is free to record seemingly minor or unexpected behaviors that may be of significance later on.
4. The observer needs little or no special training.

Limitations of the anecdotal record.

1. The time required in maintaining and interpreting anecdotal reports may be

extensive when many reports are accumulating over time.

2. The objectivity of the "facts" in a record may be overly influenced by the past behavior of the person or persons being observed and/or the beliefs of the observer about the appropriateness of what is being observed.
3. Incidents recorded may be taken out of context or interpreted incorrectly due to an inadequate sampling of behavior, especially when records are not cumulative.
4. Narrative descriptions can be difficult to analyze and interpret when the behavior being observed is complex or has many different causes (home, school, or peers).

Frequency Count

The frequency count contained information regarding: (a) the observer, (b) the date and time of observation, (c) the location, (d) the person(s) being observed, (e) purpose of observation, (f) the frequency record, (g) notes and comments, (h) summary interpretations. The purpose of this instrument was for the researcher to record the frequency of a behavior's occurrence over a short period of time. The behavior must be overt and frequent (at least once every 15 minutes) to be a candidate for sampling (Irwin & Bushnell, 1994). The frequency count involved observing and recording a specific behavior of the participant during a forty-five minute class period. The instrument was used in the same manner for all participants.

Advantages of the frequency count report.

1. Instrument is objective and controlled because the behavior is specified and limited.

2. The report can be completed in a timely manner, so it is not time-consuming.
3. The instrument is efficient for observing more than one person or behavior in a setting.
4. A frequency count can provide quantitative results useful for statistical analysis.
5. It provides useful information on intervals and frequencies of behavior.

Limitations of the frequency count report.

1. The instrument is limited to observable behaviors that occur frequently.
2. There is no specific description of behavior, its causes, or results because it is more concerned with time (when or how frequently the behavior occurs).
3. It can possibly take behavior out of context and therefore may be biased.
4. It does not keep units of behavior intact because its principle concern is the time interval, not the behavior.
5. It is limited to observable behaviors that occur frequently.
6. It usually focuses on one type of behavior and thus may present a biased view.

Running Record

The running record contained information regarding: (a) the observer, (b) the date and time of observation, (c) the location, (d) purpose of the observation, (e) a description of the physical environment, (f) a description of activities, and (g) interpretations. This instrument gives a detailed narrative account of behavior recorded in a sequential manner as it takes place. As with the anecdotal record, the instrument is specifically divided into separate sections, one for the recorded behaviors and the other section for interpretations.

Advantages of the running record.

1. It is a rich, complete, and comprehensive record not limited to particular incidents.

2. It is open-ended, allowing the observer to record everything he or she sees, and not restricting the observations to a particular kind of behavior.
3. The running record does not require that the observer have special training and therefore, is particularly useful to the classroom teacher.

Limitations of the running record.

1. It is very time-consuming, which makes it difficult for the observer to find periods of uninterrupted time.
2. It is difficult to record everything for any length of time without missing important details.
3. The running record works best when observing an individual, but is very inefficient and difficult when observing a whole group.
4. Observers must keep themselves apart from the ones being observed, which is sometimes difficult in a classroom.

The third data component consisted of field notes and journal entries obtained by the researcher, and the final piece of data collection consisted of follow-up discussions with the participants. The discussions contained information linking all aspects of Great Expectations to effective teaching practices.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions and behaviors of five kindergarten teachers who have implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years. The questions asked during the study were meant to probe for meaning

and to create an awareness of changes in the effectiveness of teaching practices perceived by the participants in the study.

The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. For the purpose of this study each data set was coded separately. The responses from all the participants were analyzed looking for references both to the areas shown by the review of literature to be important in the area of effective teaching practices, and then looking for categories not noted in the literature. As the data were analyzed, the researcher also looked for other issues perceived by the participants to be important in effective teaching practices. All responses were coded for meaning, and then grouped into common categories. From the common categories of responses revealed in the analysis, theory can be formulated that could lead to an explanation of how these participants perceptions of their qualities of effective teaching have or have not changed in the past three years.

Because data were collected from multiple methods (interviews, observation tools, field notes and follow-up discussions), it was possible to compare responses triangulating the multiple sources of data. The data were studied looking for variables reported as important to qualities of effective teaching in the review of literature. The researcher was open to previous findings, elaborating on past research, opening previous findings to question, and reporting findings that varied from those already reported in the current research literature.

Summary

Because much of the current research has documented the importance of effective teaching practices and the role of professional development, it is important to learn what types of programs and methods have an impact on classroom teachers. This chapter

reviewed the process used to select this case study. The subjects to be included in the study were described and rationale was given for the methods and instruments that were used to collect the data. The procedures used for gathering and analyzing the data were explained and a brief explanation of case study was given. Chapter 4 will include the analysis and description of the data.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Study

This preliminary study was conducted to examine the perceptions of changes that may have occurred as a result of kindergarten teachers who implemented the Great Expectations teaching model. The teachers were from a school district located in a rural area in a southwestern state. The study was designed to answer the research question: Do kindergarten teachers who have implemented the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years perceive changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness? If so, why? If not, why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

Because there was a limited amount of published information related to the Great Expectations program the need presented itself to look at the history of the program from its beginnings to the possible future of a national expansion program. In addition, it is unclear how the Great Expectations program may have influenced teachers over time.

This chapter describes the analysis of the data and examines the context involving outside factors surrounding the study. Before the formal analysis of the data, the researcher felt that more information should be presented. This will provide the reader with a better understanding of other factors that had occurred during the implementation of Great Expectations in the school. These factors may or may not have had an impact or have changed the outcome of this study.

The chapter will then examine the analysis of the data derived from four different data sets. The primary data sets were the interviews and the follow up discussions. The field notes and journal entries were to collect data related to the sub question: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

Context of Study

This phenomenological case study focused on teacher perceptions of effective teaching practices resulting from the implementation of Great Expectations over a three-year time period. However, during that same time other things were occurring within the school in addition to Great Expectations. This section will examine other variables that may have had an impact on this school and the participants' perceptions involving their teaching effectiveness and the outcome of this study.

The research question asked if kindergarten teachers who had implemented Great Expectations for three or more years perceive changes in the quality of their effectiveness, and if so, why? If not, why not? If the kindergarten teachers perceive changes, the sub question to further explain the changes was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement?

The bounded system in this case examined the participants' perceptions surrounding the Great Expectations teaching method; however, it was important to consider other factors, which may also have caused changes to occur in the participants' teaching effectiveness.

This section examined other factors related to the school and or the participants. These included: school-wide factors, such as curriculum, policy, administration, technology, parental involvement, environmental factors, as well as, professional development and

collegiality. In addition, this section also examined student factors, such as, home environments, socioeconomic status, learning ability, and the Parents as Teachers program.

Through follow-up discussions with the participants, the researcher was able to determine a number of outside factors, which may or may not have been significant in determining the answer to the research question. All of these data were collected during the same time period as the other data analyzed in Chapter Four and were coded and analyzed separately.

School-wide Factors

This section examined school-wide factors such as implementation of curriculum and school policy. The participants had no input in implementation of these practices. According to the participants one of the most negative factors was the change in the length of time for the building to be open to parents. Although this policy was made to accommodate parents, it has proven to be too long for the children. The building was open and ready for students to be dropped off at 6:30 a.m. and remained open until after 5:30 p.m. until all of the children had been picked up.

The school provided breakfast, lunch and an after school snack. This school, as reported earlier, was an early childhood center with grades pre-kindergarten through transitional kindergarten. The regular school day lasted from 8:30 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. However, some of the children were there for ten or eleven hours a day. According to the participants this was too long for children to be at school and has proven to be a negative factor, in their opinion. In addition, the school hired additional workers for the before and after school programs. The school also offered summer school, "camps" for students, which

was a plus with parents but a negative factor for the participants. "These children ages four and five were here all day long and were here again during the summer. It is hard to motivate them when they were here all the time."

The participants in this school felt that although the administration is stable and is supportive in such programs as Great Expectations, it lacked consistency in other areas and that teachers had very little input in curriculum or school policy. The superintendent had been in the system for more than thirty years and the principal had been in the system for seven years.

During the three-year period from which data were collected this early childhood center began a four-year old program, which had proven to be a positive factor in many areas. The participants all agreed that those students who had been through the four-year old program show far more readiness skills than those who had not.

Technology was another area of positive growth in the school. Each classroom had at least one or more computers with an abundance of early childhood software. These were used primarily for the before and after-school programs. The researcher never observed them being used during regular instructional time. These computers and many other materials had been made possible to the school through a city grants foundation program. The participants and many other teachers in the building had teamed up to write fun and exciting grants, which had been funded through that program. "This program was exciting and motivated us to come up with new ideas. We worked together as a team and helped each other. It was a win-win situation for all of us."

Parental and community involvement had also increased over the past few years. Parents knew they were always welcome in the school. The school had an active P.T.O (parent, teacher, organization). The P.T.O. organized fundraisers and bought a variety of supplies for the school. The parents had helped raise awareness for communication and participation with the community as well. One program was called the "Buddy System" in which a parent or a community volunteer met with a particular child, at the same time each week to either read to or listen to a child read. This was a wonderful program according to the participants. Another successful program was "Fabulous Fridays." This program brought in community volunteers such as hospital workers, dentists, and other professional workers who explained and or demonstrated what they did.

The school had also implemented programs dealing with environmental factors such as safety programs. The fire department taught a unit during fire prevention week and the police department regularly sent officers for the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program.

Professional development and collegiality were two other areas that had received many positive comments. The participants agreed that the teachers in this building were very helpful and supportive of each other. They demonstrated the same respect to each other as they did to their students. This model is one that students picked up on and applied to other situations. The teachers in this school system were required to complete a master's degree within five years after they had begun teaching. However, they were given many opportunities to accomplish this goal.

Student Factors

This section examined student factors. These were factors in which the individual teacher had no control over such as the home environment, socioeconomic status, and learning ability.

All participants agreed that the socioeconomic status of their students had made a visible drop in the last five years. The parents seemed to be younger and less educated. There also seemed to be a decrease in the processing of thinking skills. This may have been due to more television, or video games. "We felt that parents were spending less time with their children. Parents don't sit and talk with these children or read stories to them like they used to." They felt that the children's basic needs were just adequately met. Everything was done on a hurry-up schedule. This had resulted in a lack of organizational skills. When the parents didn't follow through, their children didn't follow through either.

There were some very good things happening in this school such as, PAT (parents as teachers). That was an internationally known early childhood program that educated parents of newborn children through age 5. Many parents were willing to help but were just not capable of knowing how to help. This program was designed to aid in child development and school achievement through parent education and was accessible to all families. This not only raised the self-esteem and motivation level of the parents but the children as well.

There were probably many other factors that may have had an impact on the participants in this study. These were the ones that were discussed in the follow-up discussions. These factors may have had either a negative or positive impact on the participants and may or may not have been a factor in the outcome of this study.

Analysis of Data from Teacher Interviews

The interviews were the first component used in the data analysis. The interviews were conducted using a pre-selected list of open-ended questions (Appendix E). The interviews were conducted in the classroom setting. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. The data were examined for themes. Four major themes emerged under the participants' perceived experiences with the implementation of Great Expectations. These themes were: the strong points of the program, the weak points of the program, how the implementation of Great Expectations had changed the school community, and how parental involvement had changed as a result of the implementation of Great Expectations.

Strong Points of the Great Expectations Program

The five participants had similar responses in the area concerning strong points associated with the implementation of Great Expectations. All five participants agreed that the concept of teaching respect and responsibility was the leading strong point of the program in their opinion. The following quote by Lynn serves to confirm this belief:

> It is all about mutual respect. I see more and more children that just don't know the basics because they are not taught at home. Rather than fun, games, and entertainment we are going back to basic principles. Even children who are behind academically learn the words of the week and the quotes. It makes them feel proud and smart. It has raised the self-esteem of my students. They really look out for each other and encourage one another on to succeed.

In addition, Anne offered the following:

> I want my students to know that I respect them. I walk into my classroom every day feeling the pressure to do a better job. I have always tried to model good manners, but I am conscious of saying please and thank you more often. I realize that I do make a difference in their lives.

Another strong point of the program was the self-esteem of students. One example by Debbie was:

> I can see a big difference in my students. I tell them, "If you can't make a mistake, you can't make anything." I may call on a child who will say, "I don't know, but I would like to learn." That is a big life lesson.

The participants believed that Great Expectations raised the self-esteem of their students, all five participants agreed that Great Expectations teaches their students to keep trying and not to give up, four of the participants believed that Great Expectations teaches students to take risks and that making mistakes is not only okay but is a natural part of the learning process, and three of the five participants agreed they like the repetition and procedures connected with the program.

Weak Points of the Great Expectations Program

Every participant had the same response concerning the area of weak points involved with the program. All five participants agreed that the material from the workshops was completely over-whelming and included too much information to learn at one time. Anne said, "The only weak point of the program is the over-whelming amount of material. One

has to sort and work their way through it and use what fits best with their kids." There were no other weak points discussed by the participants.

Changes in the School Community as a Result of Great Expectations

During the interview process, the participants shared how Great Expectations had altered their school within the community. The five participants agreed that since the implementation of Great Expectations the teachers have become much more supportive of each other. They share ideas and materials that link their literature to applications used in teaching life principles. The participants felt that the morale among faculty was better as a result of having Great Expectations. The five participants agreed that they liked the routines and procedures associated with Great Expectations. They know the school operates on the same rules and procedures for everyone. The faculty felt that they are responsible for everyone in the school and not just their own students. An example given by Sue:

> It is so much easier when all the teachers are basically doing the same things, such as following hallway procedures. Everyone uses the same procedures throughout the school. Great Expectations teaches you to be a team player. Every teacher in our building can teach my children something. As a teacher in this building I know I can ask anyone for help. We all help and support each other. It has given us a foundation that just brings us all together.

Changes in Parental Involvement as a Result of Great Expectations

The participants identified ways in which the Great Expectations program had affected parental involvement in their school. Four of the five participants said they saw a difference in the attitude of parents when they bring their children to school. The parents

were coming into the classroom asking questions about the word of the week or the quotes by famous people. The parents said that they saw a big difference in the level of respect and responsibility in their children at home and wanted to know what they could do to continue this progress at home. The participants agreed that parents are visiting the classroom more often and are volunteering for programs such as the buddy system. This allowed parents a few minutes to read to children or to just listen to a child read. Parents were also volunteering more to help with things such as decorating the hallways using the materials from Great Expectations. Rebecca, had the following to say about parental involvement:

> Parental involvement has changed as a result of the Great Expectations program. We get the parents involved and explain the concept behind Great Expectations. We challenge the parents to help us by continuing and using the same process at home. The parents like it and say that they can see a big difference in the amount of responsibility the children use at home. The parents, like the rest of us have learned that you can't always blame someone else for making a bad choice. They are able to see how Great Expectations is carried over and applied to their daily lives.

In unanimous accordance, the participants agreed that the major factor related to Great Expectations and their teaching methods had been an increased awareness of respect between them and their students. They explained that they had expected respect from their students, but had not been aware of the changes that would occur when that respect was reciprocated. One example of this practice was demonstrated when students and teachers spoke in complete sentences and addressed one another by name, demonstrating mutual respect and common courtesy.

Classroom Observations and Results

Following the interview process, each teacher was observed teaching while using the Great Expectations program. The purpose of the observations was to collect data regarding the sub question that guided this study. The sub question was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement? The following section describes the data from the three observation instruments. The purpose of the classroom observations was to examine how the participants utilized the training and procedures obtained from the Great Expectations program and to code the data for patterns or themes. Behavioral data were gathered from each classroom observation. The behavioral data collected represents each participant's current optimal instructional practices. Each participant's data set served as an opportunity for a follow-up discussion. The follow-up discussions were designed to obtain responses to the behavioral observation data and to facilitate further discussions concerning each participant's perceptions about how Great Expectations has impacted their current teaching practices. The following is a brief description of the observation results:

Anecdotal Records

The purpose of the anecdotal record was to describe the events taking place in the classroom. The researcher focused this description on the behavior and teaching methods of the participant, as well as, the participant's interactions with the students. Upon further reflection, the researcher later deliberated on the observations and added interpretations and written comments. The data were then coded and analyzed for patterns of similarity. The following 10 categories depict those patterns: (1) class discussions of good choices/bad

choices and successes/failures, (2) respect and responsibility, (3) kindness – give and share examples, (4) compassion – give and share examples, (5) always try/never give up, (6) sharing celebrations, (7) using complete sentences, (8) challenging student to do more, (9) high levels of enthusiasm and motivation, and (10) cooperative learning.

Interpretations of the anecdotal records: The anecdotal record instrument provides a place for the date and time of the observation, a description of the event and a place for the observer to go back and write in interpretations. The description of events should be written in an objective form. When observing subjects it is important to record your information objectively. This should include only facts about what happened. The observer then has time to read the description of the event and summarize or put into his/her own words describing what happened.

All of the participants discussed students making good choices versus bad choices and they gave examples of each with applications. Each participant told her students that everyone makes a bad choice sometimes, even the teacher. The students discussed the word compassion and how it could be used in everyday lessons. One area of interest included the quote of the week, which was, love your neighbor. The teacher asked, "how can we show that we love our neighbor?" The children brainstormed all the different ways they could think of and then tied them to the word of the week.

The students worked together and helped one another. The word, success was used a number of times. The participants and students worked together to make sure that everyone was successful. The students were challenged and encouraged to always try and to never

give up. The students gave one another celebrations for positive strokes during instructional time, as well as, for doing something nice for someone else.

Frequency Counts

The frequency count instrument provides a place for recording the frequency of the activity being observed, a section for notes and comments and a section for summary interpretations. The purpose of the frequency count was to record the number of times a participant verbally praised or gave a positive response to students in a 30-minute time period. One tally mark was recorded each time the behavior was observed.

One common theme consistent with all participants included linking positive comments back to things the students had learned from Great Expectations. An example of this was, "I really like the way Susie is listening and ready for instructions. Is she showing kindness toward her neighbors? Yes, she is because she is showing us that she is ready to learn and to allow her neighbor the opportunity to learn. Thank you Susie."

The average number of positive comments was 32.4, while Anne gave the most positive comments with 75 and Rebecca gave the fewest with 12. One other commonality was that none of the participants used negative comments to their students with in the 30-minute observation period.

Running Records

The final classroom observation utilized a running record, which included a description of the physical environment, a list of activities completed during the time of the observation, how classroom management was handled, how instruction was presented and how the participant reacted to various encounters with students. The purpose of the running

record was to observe and record evidence and practice of the Great Expectations teaching model in the classroom during a 30-minute time period.

A physical description of the room was the first information recorded. There were six common descriptors from each of the participant's classroom. These included: (1) color-coded rooms, (2) the word of the week posted, (3) past words of the week posted, (4) the Magic Triad displayed, (5) the quote of the week posted, and (6) the school creed displayed. Five of the six items listed above are from the Great Expectations' program. The one that was not from Great Expectations was the color-coded classroom.

The second component of the running record included a description of the children's activities. The focus of the observation was the morning message time and was observed and recorded during the same 30-minute time frame for each participant. The morning message time was the focus of the observations in each classroom and was agreed upon due to scheduling and time constraints of the researcher. Components of the Great Expectations' program that all participants used were: (1) the pledge of allegiance to the United States and the Oklahoma flag, (2) discussion and application for the word of the week, (3) discussion and application for the quote of the week, and (4) door greeters for classmates and visitors. Many other items were discussed, such as the number of days in school, the days of the week, and the weather. These items were not necessarily part of the Great Expectations program.

Interpretations of the running record: All of the classrooms were quiet and cooperative during the morning routine. All students were actively involved during

instructional and transitional times. Each classroom was accustomed to visitors. The students did not acknowledge my presence in the room.

Results of the Field Notes and Journal Entries

As with the observations, field notes and journal entries were maintained to provide further data related to the sub question that guided this study. The sub question was: What are the elements of Great Expectations that are related to this improvement? These data were gathered during classroom observations and from subsequent visits into the school building. As reported earlier, the researcher was familiar with the school through various circumstances. The researcher was allowed to work in the building and in some of the participants' classrooms while supervising pre-service teachers, thus, giving the researcher a greater opportunity to become familiar with the participants and their teaching styles. Field notes and journal entries focused on information regarding participants' behavior and how the use of Great Expectations shaped their self-perceptions about the quality and effectiveness of their teaching. The data were separated and coded in order to create an individual profile of each participant. These data aided in the triangulation process and served to give each participant a voice in the development regarding clarity of individuality and perception.

The researcher found that each participant had a unique personality but the use of the Great Expectations training and methodology clearly came through in each of their classrooms and teaching practices. The following information will provide a brief description of each of the participants' dispositions. Lynn was a very competitive person and played to win. She had confidence in the ability of her students and challenged them with the

expectation of getting what she demanded. Ann was a no-nonsense person. She was very business-like in her expectations. She gave 110 percent to her students and expected the same in return. Debbie was a quiet and analytical thinker. The other teachers usually turned to her when they needed an answer. She was a leader in the school and provided encouragement to others including her students. Sue was a go-getter. She had a high energy level and had fun with her students. She provided activities that challenged the students in many ways while making learning fun. Rebecca had an outgoing robust personality. She displayed much confidence in her abilities as a teacher and had learned to expect more from her students. She was a defender of kids. Rebecca was the teacher who would take up for or come to the rescue of any child in the school.

While observing in the classrooms several themes emerged including: use of procedures, use of classic literature with linkage to life principles, expectations of mutual respect, actively involved in guiding student learning and display of appropriate and positive attitude and behavior.

Results of the Follow-Up Discussion

The final data component primarily reflected the participant's own perceptions of their teaching effectiveness. Upon completion of the interviews, observations, and field notes the researcher met with participants on an individual basis for follow-up discussions. These consisted of informal conversations dealing with what had previously been discussed and included anything the participants wanted to discuss further. The data collected from the follow up discussions related both to the research question and to the sub question. This data source provided an opportunity to both clarify points and expand on information from the

other data sets. These discussions took place in each of the participants' classrooms and provided closure to the data collection while allowing participants one last opportunity to discuss any facet of the study including their teaching effectiveness, the Great Expectations program, or their feelings toward further professional development. This was more of an open forum without pre-selected questions.

Three major themes emerged as a result of the analysis from the follow-up discussions with the participants. First, was a strong belief, by the participants, that they are a major factor concerning higher student achievement. The second theme consisted of the roles and responsibilities held by the participants regarding their teaching effectiveness, and the third theme centered on the participants agreement on the importance of continued professional development.

Student Achievement

Four of the five participants believed they hold the key to higher student achievement. Lynn responded:

> The Great Expectations program has empowered my students with the ability to be positive thinkers and to believe in themselves. It has given them the self-esteem that they needed. Many have not received it at home due to parental situations and their family life. I put up a big sign that says 'We are the World's Greatest Class,' I expect them to act like they are in the world's greatest class and as far as I am concerned, they are.

The increasing body of research related to effective teaching has reinforced the idea that specific characteristics and behaviors have a direct correlation to student achievement,

positive attitudes toward school, interest in learning, and other desirable outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In addition, research indicated that teachers' dedication and responsibility to their students are important components of the profession. Sources of evidence indicated a dual commitment to student learning and to personal learning has been found repeatedly in effective teaching practices (Blair, 2000; McBer, 2000).

The participants expressed a need to focus on student-centered practices. This puts students' personal and educational welfare at the center of all instructional and interactional activities. All participants agreed they believe that all children can learn and in order to accomplish this, they feel it is their responsibility to make that happen.

The participants agreed that using whole group instruction that is interwoven with small group instruction and/or individual help maximized their teacher/student interaction. This kind of interaction allowed them to give more individualized help to those needing the extra help to master a task and thereby succeed.

Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

The participants unanimously agreed that the implementation of Great Expectations practices became easier with the daily use of the program over several years. This was consistent with research dealing with developing classroom expertise. As the participants developed their expertise, they became more efficient at organizing and using their knowledge. Their knowledge became deeply integrated and the sequence of their knowledge building was absorbed. Indeed, "many experts forget what is easy and what is difficult" (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999, p.32).

The participants strongly agreed that the implementation and prolonged use of Great Expectations had changed their teaching philosophy. Again, consistent with the literature, the participants' beliefs and attitudes influenced how they approached their instructional practices as well as their classroom management skills. The following quote from Debbie relates to her beliefs:

> As a teacher, I can not look at these children and make a preconceived notion of what they can do. That is not my place. I do not have the right to limit them. I now know much of the modeling done by adults reflects back to the child. If I greet each child with a smile and a handshake, then they know they are loved and wanted. It reflects what kind of day we are both going to have.

Each participant agreed that they would not go back to their old style of teaching.

In addition, the participants indicated a belief that teacher-student interactions have long-term consequences and, although their goals for students included learning goals, they also included social and life goals. This reflected back to the practices and use of character education and how it was infiltrated throughout Great Expectations.

Professional Development

Four of the five participants agreed that they were committed to professional development even if it was on their own time and they were not compensated for it. They saw a strong commitment to professional development and sharing ideas in their building. They felt that this was a result of the implementation of Great Expectations. One example Anne provided was:

> Great Expectations has made me think about the process of my teaching. I have a new maturity in what I do. I am more interested in how to teach. I am not just teaching ABC's, but more about life and how to get along with other people. It really does make a difference for all of us.

The five participants agreed that the basic methodology training in the Great Expectations program was really not sufficient; that a refresher course was needed to reinforce the skills needed to adequately apply the instructional tenets. The additional training was needed to broaden their professional knowledge and skill in the research and instructional strategies and techniques.

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation (Merriam, 1998) the act of using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, was used to strengthen and add reliability as well as validity to this study. Results of analysis of the data from the participants were categorized and coded separately for each component. Commonalities between the participants were noted for later comparisons, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Commonalities in the Data

There were three common themes that emerged throughout all four data sets. These were: (1) The participants agreed that they believed it was their responsibility as teachers to ensure student success (included in that statement was their strong belief that all children can learn); (2) All participants agreed that their classroom management, content knowledge, and instructional practices had improved over the past three years, resulting in a more positive attitude and a change in their philosophy of teaching; and (3) The participants agreed they

had developed a stronger belief in the importance of professional development. These findings constitute a direct correlation due to the implementation and use of Great Expectations in the participant's classrooms.

Summary

Analysis of the data indicated results from the interviews, which included the strong points of the Great Expectations program, as they related to their teaching practices. The chapter also examined weak points of the Great Expectations program associated with the training process and application in the participants' classrooms. The following components detailed the participants' views on how the implementation of Great Expectations had changed their school community, and ways in which the implementation of Great Expectations had increased parental involvement in their school.

The next section of the chapter provided results from the classroom observations and the instruments used to collect the data. These included: anecdotal records, frequency counts, and running records indicating the use and practice of Great Expectations by the participants.

The third component discussed the use and results of data, which included, field notes and journal entries obtained at the school where the participants taught. Finally, the last component of the analyses results discussed the findings from follow-up discussions between the researcher and the participants. Results were given concerning, the participants' view of how their teaching practices affected student achievement, the teacher's roles and responsibilities, and professional development.

The final segment of this chapter discussed triangulation of the data. An explanation was given concerning how the data were analyzed for validation and listed the commonalities of the data.

Chapter five will include a discussion of the study. It will detail findings from the results and implications of the study. The chapter will also include recommendations for future research, a summary of the chapter, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter examines and discusses the findings regarding the changes of effective teaching practices as perceived by kindergarten teachers who have used the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years. The chapter also describes how these perceived changes compare to the literature related to effective teaching practices. The next section examines implications of the study; this section is followed by recommendations for further study, a summary of the chapter and conclusions of the study.

As noted earlier, the school described in the study was selected for several reasons. The researcher was familiar with the school both before and after the Great Expectations program was implemented. The publicity and notoriety of the Great Expectations program in the community heightened the intrinsic interest of the researcher. In addition, the researcher had provided in-service training and supervised student teachers at the school.

A phenomenological case study research design was employed. The rationale for a phenomenological study was used in order to describe the phenomenon from the perception of the individual or group's experiences. In this case, the phenomenon was the change in the quality of effective teaching practices as perceived by the participants over a three year time period.

The researcher gathered data through a variety of methods including: in-depth interviews, observations, field notes and journal entries, and follow-up discussions. The interviews were designed to obtain demographic, professional background, school responsibilities, and family background information. A participant profile was also

generated to gather further demographic and job-related information. The following four sections will compare the findings from this study with the literature related to the findings.

Interviews

Four themes emerged from the teacher interviews. These themes were strong points of the Great Expectations program, weak points of the Great Expectations program, changes in the school community and changes in parental involvement as a result of the Great Expectations program.

The results of the interviews and other data suggest that the implementation and continued usage of this program had changed the way in which all of the participants taught as well as what they taught. This resulted in the participants' perceptions about the quality of their teaching as being changed. Their basic philosophy of teaching was transformed along with their perceptions about the quality of their teaching effectiveness in the classroom as a direct result of the Great Expectations teaching model. The following statements are based on the findings from the interviews and have been made in relation to the research question posed in this study:

Each participant in this study experienced a feeling of rejuvenation and recommitment to teaching after attending the basic methodology course in Great Expectations. A number of factors interacted to aid in change. Interacting factors reported as contributing to change included the evidence of greater self-esteem in students, holding students accountable as a result of having higher expectations, and a new sense of mutual respect in the classroom between teacher and students.

These findings are consistent with the information found in the review of literature concerning teacher characteristics (McBer, 2000) and classroom instructional practices (Cotton, 2000). Research findings reported by McBer include attributes of effective teacher characteristics, which had an effect on student achievement. The teachers' characteristics were found to be:

1. Professionalism – challenge and support, confidence, creating trust, and respect for others.
2. Thinking – analytical thinking and conceptual thinking.
3. Planning and setting expectations – drive for improvement, information seeking, and initiative.
4. Leading – flexibility, holding people accountable, managing students, and passion for learning.
5. Relating to others – impact and influence, team working and understanding others.

Cotton identifies five attributes for instructional practice, which include:

1. Careful orientation to lessons
2. Clear and focused instruction
3. Effective questioning techniques
4. Feedback and reinforcement
5. Review and research

Great Expectations incorporates many of the same features as those identified by McBer and Cotton. They are interwoven throughout the teaching model and the 6 tenets:

1. All Children Can Learn

2. Climate of Mutual Respect
3. Building Self-Esteem
4. Teacher Attitude and Responsibility
5. High Expectations
6. Teacher Knowledge and Skill

Each participant in this study experienced an overwhelming feeling of frustration from the amount of material presented by the Great Expectations methodology course. Each individual had to realize that they could not begin to teach every component of material presented. The material had to be sorted through and used as it best fit in each individual's classroom. The participants used the same components for school-wide procedures but had to choose which materials they should start with in their own classroom and then increase the amount of material as they became more familiar with the program. This information was not found in the literature, but could be used for further study concerning the amount of material presented during professional development.

Each participant in this study experienced a greater sense of camaraderie and cohesiveness within their school community. The participants were able to develop a closer working relationship and had sensed an increase in personnel morale, all of which carries over into the classroom. The findings in this section were consistent with the literature related to professional development (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Porter & Brophy, 1988). Darling–Hammond suggests that there is growing evidence that professional development not only makes teachers feel better about their practice, but also provides challenges and gains for student learning. Porter and Brophy, report that effective teachers work

collaboratively with other staff members and are willing to share ideas and materials. In addition, they report that effective teachers must invest in their own education. Teachers model ways to learn and grow while serving as strong examples of lifelong learners while they continue to develop in professional ways.

Successful professional development strategies included both in the literature and with the participants were: (1) connected to and derived from teachers' work with students along with content knowledge and teaching methods; (2) supported by modeling and problem solving centered around specific problems; (3) collaborative involving a sharing of knowledge and materials among colleagues; and (4) experiential, engaging teachers in tasks of teaching, assessment, and observation that focused on the processes of learning and development (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, professional development strategies that succeed in the improvement of teaching, share several features, which tend to be: (1) experiential, engaging teachers in tasks of teaching, assessment, and observation that illuminate the processes of learning and development; (2) grounded in participants' questions, inquiry, and experimentation as well as research; (3) collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among other educators; (4) connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students along with examinations of subject matter and teaching methods; (5) sustained and intensive, supported by modeling, coaching, and problem solving dealing with specific problems of practice; and (6) connected to other aspects of school change.

Through professional development opportunities like Great Expectations, the participants developed a greater understanding and appreciation of successful teaching

practices. In addition, they learned what changes needed to be made within the system to promote and assure student success.

Each participant in this study saw an increase in parental involvement. There was evidence that the materials and practices from Great Expectations were being applied and carried over outside of the classroom. Parents were more involved and were requesting more information as to what they could do both at home and at school to motivate and reinforce the new skills learned as a result of the Great Expectations program. The findings concerning parental involvement were consistent with the literature presented by Great Expectations (Great Expectations Conceptual Framework) and with those pertaining to Character Education (Character Education Partnership, 1999).

Effective teaching practices have continued to be a topic of interest within the educational research community. Many educational researchers have focused their attention on examining these processes (Blair, 2000; Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fetler, 1999; Shellard & Protheroe, 2000; Wenglinsky, 2000). A number of these studies have focused on content knowledge, teaching experience, and professional development. Others have been more specific in focusing on areas such as high levels of enthusiasm, motivation for learning and a positive attitude toward teaching (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Rowan, Chiang & Miller, 1997).

The results of the interviews in this study were consistent with the literature specifically related to teacher characteristics and professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The findings corroborate the following: (1) High levels of teacher motivation contribute to high levels of student development; (2) The increasing body of

research related to effective teaching has reinforced the idea that specific teacher characteristics and behaviors have a direct correlation to student achievement, positive attitudes toward school, interest in learning, and other desirable outcomes; and (3) Research indicates that teachers' dedication and responsibility to their students are important components of the profession. (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Further sources of evidence indicate: (1) A dual commitment to student learning and to personal learning has been found repeatedly in effective teaching practices (Blair, 2000; McBer, 2000); and (2) A teacher's participation in graduate studies or other professional development indicates enthusiasm for learning and may be a source of motivation, which may result in higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). These sources of evidence are consistent with research involving the development of classroom expertise. As the participants developed their expertise, they became more efficient at organizing and use of knowledge. Their knowledge becomes deeply integrated and the sequence of their knowledge building is absorbed. Indeed, "many experts forget what is easy and what is difficult" (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999, p.32).

Observations

The participants were observed using three different observation instruments. These observation instruments included: anecdotal records, frequency counts, and running records. The purpose of the observations was to examine how the participants utilized the skills and procedures obtained from the Great Expectations teaching model and to code the data for patterns or themes. From the results of the observation instruments several themes emerged which included all participants teaching life principle skills. Life principles according to

Great Expectations are character aspects. These can be taught through literature, words of the week, poetry, quotes or any number of other ways. Teachers should always look for ways to incorporate them into lessons. Teachers are expected to discuss and model these skills and acknowledge when students use them. Examples of life principles are: commitment – keeping a promise or a pledge, compassion – ability to share another's feelings or ideas, and perseverance – ability to persist or continue striving to the end. The skills observed included: responsibility, compassion, commitment, and cooperation. These are fundamental skills, which fall under the umbrella of character education.

All participants were observed making a conscious effort to include verbal praise and include positive statements in their teaching and instruction. Two of the participants verbalized a much higher number of praises than did the other three. The participants had similar environments and procedures for their classrooms and morning routines. These descriptors were all consistent with Great Expectation practices.

Important issues in promoting effective teaching practices for the participants were found to be components directly related to character education studies (Bier, 2001) and teacher characteristics (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001). Bier reports that when teachers use character education practices, students consistently show positive change in a wide range including attitudes, feelings and behavior. These include: (1) conflict resolution skills; (2) trust in and respect for other; (3) positive interpersonal behavior in and out of the classroom; (4) academic motivation; (5) commitment to democratic values; and (6) increased self-esteem.

Cruickshank and Haefele (2001), reported findings in teacher characteristics to be: (1) Caring teachers who know their students can create relationships that enhance the learning process; and (2) Effective teachers consistently emphasize their love for children as a key element of their success. These findings were consistent with the participants using the Great Expectations teaching model, and the earlier research reported in the literature.

Field Notes and Journal Entries

The findings from field notes and journal entries resulted in a thick description. This adds more substance or a more detailed description of the phenomenon under study. The purpose of the field notes were to help the researcher to determine how closely the participants' experiences or situations matched the research reported in the literature, and to establish if the findings could be transferred. These data aided in the triangulation process and served to give each participant a voice in the development regarding clarity of individuality and perception.

The findings in these data helped the researcher to determine the usage of Great Expectations teaching methods, to what extent they were utilized, and evidence of effective teaching practices. These data were used to compare and contrast effective teaching practices from the review of literature. The researcher found evidence of: (1) use of character education, (2) commonalities in teacher characteristics, (3) commonalities in teacher preparation, (4) commonalities in classroom management, and (5) commonalities in classroom instructional practices. All of these teaching practices were consistent with the literature reported in chapter 2.

Other findings consistent with the practices utilized by the Great Expectations program and effective teaching practices included the following, which were true of all participants in the study:

1. Effective teachers display positive attitudes about life and learning.
2. Effective teachers do not make excuses for student outcomes. They hold their students responsible while also accepting responsibility for themselves.
3. The effective teacher believes all children can and want to learn.
4. Effective teachers use procedures to maintain smooth transitions and continuity of momentum.
5. The effective teacher demonstrates rules and procedures and is fair and consistent with discipline.
6. The effective teacher reinforces and reiterates the expectations for positive behavior at all times.
7. Effective teachers who prioritize instruction and learning as the focus of school communicate enthusiasm and dedication that students reflect in their own behavior and practice.
8. The effective teacher reinforces the importance of instruction, through their expectations for students' learning.
9. High expectations are identified as a key component of student success.
10. Teachers with more than three years of experience are more effective than those with three years or fewer.

Further findings from field notes and journal entries were also found to be consistent in areas including high levels of enthusiasm, motivation for learning, and a positive attitude toward teaching. These data concurred with previous research as reported in the review of literature (Blair, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000; McBer, 2000; Mitchell, 1998; Thomas & Montomery, 1998).

Follow-up Discussions

The final data set consisted of follow-up discussions with the five participants. The data were coded and analyzed. The results consisted of three common themes. These included the belief that: (1) Teacher performance directly related to student achievement; (2) Teacher roles and responsibilities had a direct correlation to the quality of teaching effectiveness; and (3) The importance of professional development related to the teacher's enthusiasm and motivation for learning.

These three themes were consistent with the literature based on examples such as: (1) Teacher performance directly related to student achievement – high levels of teacher motivation contributed to high levels of student achievement; (2) Teacher roles and responsibilities – enthusiasm for learning and for subject matter has been shown to be significant in student motivation, which is closely linked to student achievement; and (3) The importance of professional development – a teacher's participation in graduate studies indicated enthusiasm for learning and may have been a source of motivation, which may have resulted in higher student achievement.

The findings from the analysis were true for all five participants. There were no findings from the themes discussed that disagreed with the literature.

Implications

The data in this study supports the existing body of literature available on effective teaching practices and the limited published literature available on the Great Expectations program. The findings show that kindergarten teachers who have implemented Great Expectations for three or more years do see changes in the quality of their teaching effectiveness. Further, all participants agreed that the professional development component was an important and necessary aspect to their effective teaching practices. Therefore, schools should examine the possibility that teachers of all grade levels would benefit from this type of professional development and that students would benefit as well.

The participants also agreed that the character development lessons that were interwoven into the life principle skills were necessary for their own personal value system concerning effective teaching practices and that they hold themselves accountable for student learning much more so as a result of Great Expectations. Therefore, schools should consider the importance of character education and examine how it could be implemented into their curriculum. Another implication from the study is teacher preparation programs should be held more accountable in their preparation of in-service teachers in the area of character education.

The participants in this study felt that it was their responsibility to provide a variety of methods to ensure the success of their students. Finally, effective teachers, including the participants in this study, adopted the belief that all children can learn. The implications were that the Great Expectations program provided the necessary components in achieving greater success in the quality of effective teaching practices.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following section will identify recommendations for future research, which may serve to inform teacher education programs, the Great Expectations program, and teacher practices. A problem not adequately addressed in the literature or in this case study concerned the lack of theoretical framework surrounding the Great Expectations teaching model. A theory of education is a composite of systematic thinking or generalizations about schooling (Kneller, 1971). However, according to the office of Great Expectations, their teaching model was an eclectic approach to teaching that encompassed the very best of what is known about teaching today. Drawing from many learning theories, teachers do whatever it takes to teach students through integrated holistic curricula. If this is true, can their teaching methods be based on all of the following six philosophical camps – (1) Perennialism, (2) Progressivism, (3) Behaviorism, (4) Essentialism, (5) Existentialism, and (6) Social Reconstructionism? This is an area needing further investigation.

The data from the interviews, follow-up discussions, and previous research (Darling-Hammond, 1995), indicated the importance of professional development. One area discussed in this study was the overwhelming amount of material presented during the Great Expectations Methodology course. Further study might examine the amount of material presented and how this material could be broken down into smaller increments or offered to participants through an increased number of workshops.

The participants in this study indicated that more programs such as Great Expectations are needed in order to help teachers stay connected to other factors of school

change. The participants would like to see further study dealing with teacher input and school change.

Research reports that much of the professional development being offered to teachers does not meet the challenges of today's classrooms (Corcoran, 1995; Hiebert, 1999; Lieberman, 1996; and Little, 1993). In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2001, there is a need to further study what is necessary in order to prepare and place more qualified teachers in the classroom. Schools need to increase connections between teacher education programs, in-service workshops, community opportunities and what occurs in classrooms.

Another area that surfaced from this case study was the importance of the role of the principal in all facets of school life. The leadership role is vital to teachers and students alike. The literature presented evidence to support research that underscored the importance of the principal's role in implementing school reform (Hall, Hord, & Griffin, 1980). Principals are a key factor in determining the outcomes that foster change and character development in their schools. Therefore, future research should focus on how principals can foster systemic change through character education programs that could influence the teachers, students, and parents in any given school community.

While conducting this study, the researcher learned that schools interested in implementing the Great Expectations program should be aware of the time and effort involved in the training portion of the program. Schools wishing to implement this program should do a considerable amount of investigation beforehand and not rely on word of mouth from other principals or schools. There are different levels of commitment, including high,

medium, or low implementation; however; to be considered a Great Expectation school a great deal of training and commitment are involved.

Further study concerning the Great Expectations implementation is needed to determine achievement scores of students by the degree of implementation of Great Expectations, meaning high, medium or low. Also, to determine how the degree of implementation affects the perceptions of teachers regarding school change and/or individual changes in the quality of effective teaching.

Summary

This chapter examined and discussed the results and findings of this study. An overview of the study was presented, as well as an explanation of the methodology used in the study, followed by a discussion of the four data sets. Comparisons were made within the findings and the review of literature. Implications of the study were presented, along with recommendations for further study. The chapter will conclude with a summary-conclusion of this study: Changes in the Quality of Effective Teaching as Perceived by Kindergarten Teachers Using Great Expectations.

Conclusion

This study examined the perceptions of kindergarten teachers regarding the quality of their teaching effectiveness after the implementation of the Great Expectations teaching model for three or more years. The participants were clearly able to determine changes in their teaching effectiveness after implementing the Great Expectations teaching model for at least three years. The data sets corroborated and supported much of the research reported in the review of literature. The participants agreed on the importance of professional

development, content knowledge, and teaching experience. They further agreed that their knowledge and implementation of the Great Expectations program promoted a much higher level of enthusiasm for teaching, a renewed sense of motivation, and an improved attitude about their profession.

Evidence of other changes occurred as a result of implementing the Great Expectations teaching method. There were changes in the school as a community. A greater sense of school pride was evident from the appearance of the school building. There was a sense of camaraderie among the teachers and school staff that was not as evident before the implementation of Great Expectations. Also, there was a definite increase in parental involvement. Many parents asked what they could do at home to continue the Great Expectations ideas and philosophies. The participants could see evidence from the daily applications of the students that the character education, and life principles were working both in and out of their classrooms. The outcome of this study has found that the five kindergarten teachers who participated in this study perceive that the implementation of Great Expectations has indeed demonstrated a positive change in and has actually transformed the teaching practices of the participants in this study.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

December 12, 2002

Ms. Allene Warren
1027 E. 18th
Ada, OK 74820

SUBJECT: "Changes in the Quality of Effective Teaching as Perceived By Kindergarten Teachers Using Great Expectations (A Case Study)"

Dear Ms. Warren:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved the requested revision(s) to the subject protocol.

Please note that this approval is for the protocol and informed consent form initially approved by the Board on November 20, 2001, and the revision(s) included in your request dated November 25, 2002. If you wish to make other changes, you will need to submit a request for revision to this office for review.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 325-4757.

Sincerely yours,

Steven O'Geary

Steven O'Geary, Ph.D.
Director, Human Research Participant Protection
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board - Norman Campus (FWA #00003191)

JSO
FY2002-180

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB
Dr. Linda McKinney, Instructional Leadership & Academic Curriculum

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

November 20, 2001

Ms. Allene Warren
1027 E. 18th
Ada, OK 74820

Dear Ms. Warren:

Your research application, "Attitudinal Study of Philosophical Beliefs from Great Expectation Educators-A Case Study," has been reviewed according to the policies of the Institutional Review Board chaired by Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, and found to be exempt from the requirements for full board review. Your project is approved under the regulations of the University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Activities.

Should you wish to deviate from the described protocol, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for the changes. If the research is to extend beyond 12 months, you must contact this office, in writing, noting any changes or revisions in the protocol and/or informed consent form, and request an extension of this ruling.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Wyatt Sedwick

Susan Wyatt Sedwick, Ph.D.
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board

SWS:lk
FY2002-180

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, Institutional Review Board
Dr. Linda McKinney, Instructional Leadership & Academic Curriculum

APPENDIX B

Glenwood Early Childhood Center
825 West 10th
Ada, Oklahoma 74820
(580) 310-7283 • Fax (580) 310-7284
Cheryl Odom, Principal

November 2, 2001

Office of Research Administration
1000 Asp Avenue, Room 314
Norman, OK 73019-0430

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter comes to inform you that the following teachers and myself grant Mrs. Allene Warren permission to do her research study at our school site. The teachers involved in the study are: Cindy Brady, Donna Estes, Leslie Hamilton, LaDona Hill, and Janet Cearley. We are of the understanding that the title of this project is: *Attitudinal Study of Philosophical Beliefs from Great Expectation Educators...A Case Study.* Mrs. Warren will be meeting with the teachers to explain the process and to sign a consent form. We are excited about the possibilities of being able to help Mrs. Warren in this process.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 310-7283.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Odom

Cheryl Odom
Principal

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Document

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks; the alternatives to being in the study; and how your privacy will be protected. You have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____ **Yes, I agree to have my interviews audio-taped.**

_____ **No, I do not agree to have my interviews audio-taped.**

_____ _____

Signature of Person Consenting Date

APPENDIX D

NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Tahlequah • Muskogee • Broken Arrow • Tulsa

March 7, 2002

Ms. Allene Warren
Education Dept. Box G-7
East Central University
1100 E. 14th
Ada, OK 74820

Dear Ms. Warren,

Great Expectations is more than happy to grant permission for you to use excerpts from our training and promotional materials in your dissertation. Our only request is that you cite our documents as references, giving credit to Great Expectations for the use of the information.

We are delighted that you have discovered Great Expectations and the powerful impact it can have on teachers and ultimately students. It is truly character education in action.

On behalf of all at Great Expectations, we wish you well as you continue the process of completing your dissertation. Please send us a copy when it is complete.

If we may be of further service, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Durrett

Kathryn Durrett
Associate Director

Principals'

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

1. Give a short biographical background of family/professional information.
2. What do you feel you gained from attending the Great Expectations workshops?
3. How has the Great Expectations method of teaching changed your perspective of classroom teaching?
4. What do you consider to be some of the strong points of the Great Expectations teaching model?
5. What do you consider to be some of the weak points of the Great Expectations teaching model?
6. What are some differences you see in your school as a community after implementing the Great Expectations teaching model?
7. What are some things you personally have gained by implementing the Great Expectations teaching model in your classroom?
8. In what ways do you think different teaching methods can affect student achievement?
9. In what ways do you seek opportunities for continued learning?
10. What are some differences you see in your students overall school performance since the implementation of Great Expectations? (Compare performances of students before and after teaching with Great Expectations).

HB-4

APPENDIX F

Anecdotal Record Practice

Observer: _____ Location: _____

Focus of Observation: _____ Age(s) of Child(ren): _____

Purpose: _____

First Observation

Date: _____ Time: _____

Description of Event	Interpretations
(Continue on another sheet of paper)	

Second Observation

Date: _____ Time: _____

Description of Event	Interpretations
(Continue on another sheet of paper)	

(Continued on next page)

Third Observation

Date: _____ Time: _____

Description of Event	Interpretations
(Continue on another sheet of paper)	

Summary Interpretations

(Continue on another sheet of paper, if necessary)

Handbook for
Observing and Participating

HB-6

Frequency Count Practice

Observer: _____ Date: _____ Times: _____

Location: _____ Child: _____ Age: _____

Purpose: _____

Frequency Record

(One tally mark for each act.)

Notes and Comments

Summary Interpretations

Handbook for
Observing and Participating

HB-2

Running Record Practice

Observer: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Location: _____ **Age(s) of Child(ren):** _____

Purpose: _____

Description of the Physical Environment

Description of Child(ren)'s Activities	**Interpretations**
(Continue on another sheet of paper)	

Summary Interpretations

(Continue on another sheet of paper, if necessary)

APPENDIX G

Participant Profile Information

Name:(first name only)

Age:

Number of years teaching experience at Glenwood:

Number of years teaching experience total:

Number of students at Glenwood:

Number of students in your class:

Professional memberships:

Teaching schedule (amount of time spent in instruction per day):

Teaching demands and responsibilities during the school day:

School culture (how would you describe the faculty and administration concerning the Great Expectations program and what you do in your building)