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**SUCCESSFUL EMERGENT LITERACY HEAD START TEACHERS OF
URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS LIVING IN POVERTY**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

John Michael Holland,

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1995

Master of Teaching, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1997

Director: Dr. Michael Davis

Professor,

School of Education

Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, Virginia

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ABSTRACT

SUCCESSFUL EMERGENT LITERACY HEAD START TEACHERS OF URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS LIVING IN POVERTY

by John Michael Holland

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University 2012

Director: Dr. Michael Davis

Professor,

School of Education

This integrated methods study used a sequential explanatory design to explore the culturally relevant teaching beliefs of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The study utilized emergent literacy gain scores as a measure of success, a survey of culturally relevant teaching beliefs to describe variation in beliefs within the sample, and two rounds of interviews to explore the context of teacher agency with urban African American boys living in poverty. The four teachers interviewed expressed culturally relevant beliefs integral to their teaching practices. These beliefs were conveyed through descriptions of relationships with parents in and out of the classroom, through awareness

of the conditions and challenges of poverty in students' and parents' lives, and through close relationships with parents. The effect of conducting home visits on teachers' identities and the influence of the setting of Head Start on teachers' beliefs and agency were emergent themes in the interviews. The participants used language that seemed to indicate culturally relevant and warm demander approaches to understanding the relationship between student behavior and student engagement and in descriptions of the relationships with parents. The value of teachers' relationships with their students' parents was the most pronounced aspect of successful teaching in Head Start as expressed by the participants. The process of communication among parents, students, and teachers was described as important to student learning. The participants' expressed a variety of approaches to how they understood student behavior, boys' social emotional development, and classroom practices. These Head Start teachers described boys as more active than girls, as more aggressive than girls, and sometimes more challenged to express strong emotions with language than girls. This study provides some insight into the role that culturally relevant teaching beliefs play in Head Start teachers' successful practices.

Keywords: boys, Head Start, preschool, early childhood, emergent literacy, culturally relevant, warm demander, parent, teacher parent relationship, poverty, urban, success, mixed methods, sequential explanatory method

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Head Start classrooms are unique in U.S. school systems because they use risk factors such as level of family income and special education status as enrollment requirements. In traditional classrooms the neighborhood school structure of local school systems determine the socio-economic status (SES) of students and cultural make-up of classrooms. For many Head Start classrooms, the make-up of the neighborhood determines the location of the center (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). This targeted approach to providing comprehensive child development services to poor children and families creates a unique socio-cultural context in classrooms based on the characteristics, background, and experiences of the children in Head Start. When a Head Start teacher sits on a colorful carpet with 20 4-year-old children, that teacher is looking at children who likely already face challenges to their success (O'Brien, D'Elio, Vaden-Kiernan, Magee, Younoszai, Keane, Connell, & Hailey, 2002; Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Some challenges to emergent literacy development and school readiness include parental depression, exposure to violence, ethnicity, gender, and the affects of cumulative risk factors associated with poverty (O'Brien, et al., 2002; Berliner, 2009). These very same children bring to school potentially untapped strength, beauty, and power that can be a source of success if understood and applied to learning (Au, 2006; Boutte & Strickland, 2008). Urban African American boys living in poverty bring prior knowledge to school that is

valuable beyond its translation into literacy skills developed through participation in the dominant culture (Leafstedt, Richards, & Gerber, 2004; Zipin, 2009).

According to analysis of the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) (O'Brien, et. al, 2002), of the 20 students in an average Head Start classroom, seven (35%) children's mothers report being mildly (13%) or severely (16%) depressed. These parents are likely to report more problem behaviors and lower emergent literacy skills of their children, and they are twice as likely to spank their children. The children of severely depressed mothers score lower in early writing, book knowledge, letter recognition, and word decoding on the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement.

Families of Head Start students may be exposed to violence and crime. In an average Head Start classroom more than one (5%-7%) student may have family members who have been a victim of violent crime in their homes or neighborhoods (O'Brien, et al., 2002). Four students' (23%) family members may know a victim of a violent crime. More than six students' (32%) families may have witnessed a violent crime, three (17%) of them more than once. If all of the students in a Head Start classroom are African American, then eight students' (43.5%) families may have witnessed non-violent crime, two families (10.2%) may have been victims of violent crime in their neighborhoods, and two families (11.9%) have been victims of violent crime in their homes. Parents of Head Start students who have been exposed to violence report that their children are more aggressive, hyperactive, and withdrawn. These parents are also more likely to be depressed. These social-emotional developmental factors can obstruct emergent literacy development and school readiness (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In a predominately African American Head Start classroom, it is likely that five (27.6%) out of 20 students' families have had a family or household member arrested or charged with a

crime. Students whose families have been involved with the criminal justice system are more likely to have aggressive, hyperactive, or problem behaviors as reported by their teachers (O'Brien, et al., 2002). These students also score lower on cognitive, fine motor, and early literacy assessments (O'Brien, et al., 2002). In the FACES study African American children were found to demonstrate lower receptive vocabulary (Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Exposure to violence and crime showed a relationship to lower emergent literacy and school readiness skills (O'Brien, et al., 2002).

Boys in Head Start are more likely to be diagnosed with a speech and/or language impairment that could negatively affect the rate and quality of emergent literacy development (Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Boys have been found to demonstrate lower levels of letter-word identification than girls at the end of Head Start enrollment and higher levels of learning disability, incidence of behavior problems, and lower language skills (Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Boys with behavior problems are also more likely to demonstrate lower language skills than peers without behavior problems, a pattern not found in the language skills development of girls (Kaiser, Cai, Hancock, & Foster, 2002; Doctoroff, Greer, & Arnold, 2006).

In an average Head Start teacher's classroom, five students have more than four out of six risk factors to school success, including a single or absent parent, a high school drop out as head of home, a lack of full-time employment by caregiver or head of household, a family income below poverty, receiving welfare, and without health insurance (Evans, 2004; Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Teachers of students with multiple risk factors reported that students expressed internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors. Teachers reported boys with multiple risk factors, such as demonstrating diminished attention, impulse control, and organization, and difficulties with hyperactivity and sociability. Students with multiple risk

factors scored lower on assessments of early writing, book knowledge, letter recognition, word decoding, and concepts of print, expressive and receptive vocabulary.

These are just some of the experiences and characteristics of Head Start students, especially of boys, that could affect emergent literacy development and school readiness. It is within the context of poverty, culture, and children's experiences that Head Start teachers are expected to develop the emergent literacy skills of every student, no matter their backgrounds. It is a daunting task, but every year, some Head Start teachers successfully prepare poor urban African American boys for kindergarten through developing their emergent literacy (Whitehurst, Zevenbergen, Crone, Schultz, Velting, & Fischel, 1999; Bracken & Fischel, 2007).

This study explored how Head Start teachers' beliefs may be related to the results of their successful emergent literacy teaching practices through a survey and two rounds of interviews. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey (Love & Kruger, 2005) selected to describe variation in the participants' beliefs about culture was based on Ladson-Billings qualitative study of successful teachers of urban African American elementary school children (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). The survey instrument was chosen for its' specific application to the context of teacher agency with urban African American boys living in poverty considered in this study. It was developed to sample teachers of urban African American children with the intention of finding correlations between culturally relevant or assimilationist beliefs of elementary and middle school teachers' standardized student test scores of reading and math. The value of this instrument to the study was based on its' ability to discriminate culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs held by the participants as they related to urban African American boys living in poverty and their emergent literacy development. The survey provided a basis for the two rounds of interview questions and a way to check and recheck participants' teaching beliefs

as compared to what the survey described as culturally relevant and assimilationist teaching beliefs.

Delpit (2006) suggests that teachers who approach the task of educating other peoples' children with the mindset of the ethnographer may find their culturally relevant beliefs challenged or transformed by their experiences. In adopting a culturally relevant and ethnographic approach teachers acknowledge a learning ecology in which students and teachers learn and teach each other. Head Start teachers may be uniquely suited to an ethnographic approach to teaching because Head Start performance standards require teachers to conduct two home visits per year along with the usual two parent-teacher conferences implemented in elementary schools (Head Start, 2007). Teachers' engagement of families around the topic of student learning in their homes echoes the approach adopted by funds of knowledge researchers Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005). In the funds of knowledge approach researchers and teachers visit parents' homes and then meet in discussion groups to process their observations and design instruction for students (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Zipin, 2009).

In early childhood circles it is a commonly held belief that the parent is the child's first teacher (Powell & Diamond, 1995). This perspective assumes that parents should implement a home curriculum in line with the goals and aims later implemented in formal schooling. When this phrase is examined from an ethnographic perspective, the implications of its intent can change. The phrase acknowledges that when children enter school they have already learned a great deal within the family and community context that can be valued or dismissed by schools and teachers (Au, 2009).

A large body of research proposes that it is only in relying on students' and families' funds of knowledge that teachers of minority culture students can be successful (Buck &

Sylvester, 2005; Au, 2006; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Funds of knowledge are the culturally situated knowledge sets students develop before they enter school and often include knowledge and skills outside of the reach of standardized tests (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). This study qualitatively explored the culturally relevant teaching beliefs (CRTB) and practices of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty.

Parenting in any culture is a complex communication between immediate family, child, and community. Language development methods of parents and children vary across socio-economic and cultural distinctions (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hammer & Weiss, 1999). If teachers hope to effectively educate urban African American boys living in poverty in their first interaction with public schools, they must understand the parenting strategies their students have lived with since birth and accommodate these strategies into their teaching (Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2005). Wang, Bernas, and Eberhard (2005) assert that ways of learning are developed over time through interactions with family members, peers, and other adults in their communities. In honoring the funds of knowledge of urban African American boys living in poverty, teachers have the opportunity to support positive racial identification that can support school achievement of African American boys (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995; Perry, 2003). When teachers acknowledge that learning is culturally embedded, it follows that the best way to teach emergent literacy in one community may not transfer to another community with dissimilar culture.

Literacy development varies across cultures (Heath, 1983; Bloome, Katz, Wilson-Keenan, & Solsken, 2000; Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005; Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2005). Heath (1983) described the rich

language interactions present in African American children's homes that differed from the language interactions children encountered in school. The assumption that mainstream culture should be the model for emergent literacy development creates a deficit model for at-risk children's literacy development (Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005). African American mothers have been found to read stories differently than European American mothers and develop different but valuable emergent literacy skills through that reading (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005). African American children have been shown to demonstrate metalinguistic awareness in their use of African American English (AAE) across contexts (Delpit, 2006; Connor & Craig, 2006). In attempting to meet the needs of urban African American boys living in poverty, teachers may acknowledge and put to use the culture and knowledge of their students, especially in the preschool years (Wang, Bernas & Eberhard, 2005; Au, 2006; Delpit, 2006). The goals of this study were to explore the culturally relevant beliefs of successful Head Start teachers and to learn what these teachers say they do in their classrooms that make them successful.

Statement of the Problem

School failure is a process that takes years. For many urban African American boys living in poverty it begins the moment they enter kindergarten (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Barbarin, Bryant, McCandies, Burchinal, Early, Clifford, Pianta, & Howes, 2006). A growing body of knowledge has identified key areas of emergent literacy development that are predictive of future school success. These indicators include language development, phonological development, and letter identification (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Head Start is charged with developing these skills in the nation's most needy students. Emergent literacy development is a significant aspect of the multiple attitudes and skills children need for school readiness. These competencies

include physical health and motor development, social/emotional development, persistence and engagement with learning, language and literacy development, and knowledge and thinking skills (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

It is the responsibility of Head Start teachers to prepare at-risk students to be successful in kindergarten. While exemplary pre-k programs have demonstrated effectiveness in preparing children for kindergarten, typical preschool programs do not meet that responsibility (Magnuson, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2007; Zigler & Styfco, 1994). Edward Zigler, a former national director, researcher, and supporter of Head Start, has consistently, over the past 40 plus years, warned of over-simplifying the role and importance of Head Start to poor children. In speaking to Congress in 1990 Zigler stated, “Head Start is effective only when quality is high. ... Below a certain threshold of quality, the program is useless” (p. 49, Zigler & Styfco, 1993). To claim that low quality Head Start programs can produce gains in school readiness is to offer our neediest families false hope. This is why it is so important that Head Start teachers live up to the promises the program has made about students' emergent literacy development.

The transition from Head Start to public school settings is a major concern of the Head Start Act (2007). Increasing the language and literacy skills of Head Start children using scientifically based research specifically related to school readiness is a focus of the 2007 authorization. The importance of academics is laid out on the second page of the document in the statement of the purpose of the bill (Sec. 636) Sec. 636. [42 U.S.C. 9831].

It is the purpose of this subchapter to promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development—

(1) in a learning environment that supports children's growth in language, literacy,

mathematics, science, social and emotional functioning, creative arts, physical skills, and approaches to learning; and (2) through the provision to low-income children and their families of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services that are determined, based on family needs assessments, to be necessary (p. 2, Head Start Act, 2007).

Small gaps in emergent literacy development present in African American kindergartners can expand and manifest as lower levels of reading skill by first grade (Chatterji, 2006). Reading skills in first grade can predict their long-term success and influence the life trajectory of children, including achievement in high school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Children's overall cognitive abilities, as well as literacy skills, can be negatively affected by a slow or unsound emergent literacy foundation (Stanovich, 2008). This interrelated continuum of knowledge begins before school with the development of vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 1999). The importance of emergent literacy skills is relied on in first grade and beyond during the formalization of reading as students are expected to gain ever more complex understandings of language in its written and spoken forms (National Reading Panel, 2000).

The knowledge and skills gained in the early childhood years serve as a foundation for academic achievement in later years. Learning how successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers describe how they think about teaching urban African American boys was a primary goal of this study. There are two predominant perspectives on the issue. The first posits a mismatch between boys' biological development and the structures and processes of school (Gurian & Stevens, 2006; Sax, 2006). The second perspective refutes the idea that gender is a primary cause of boys' under-achievement and instead asserts that the problem is more related to culture, specifically African American boys and other boys of color (Alloway, 2007; Corbett, Hill, & St. Rose, 2008; Reichert & Hawley, 2010). Neither perspective encompasses the entirety

of the problem (Cleveland, 2011). This study adopts a third perspective as a frame to understand why some boys, especially urban African American boys living in poverty, struggle in school. It considers that some urban African American boys may have ways of learning that are in conflict with school expectations and when combined with gender expectations can lead boys to disengage from learning (Cleveland, 2011; Hanson & Dewing, 1990).

Boys have been described as relational learners (Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008, Reichert & Hawley, 2010). This study attempted to gain some insight into the nature of the teacher-child relational interaction through teachers' rich descriptions of how they successfully develop the emergent literacy of urban African American boys living in poverty.

There are some Head Start teachers, especially those whose classrooms are located in public schools, who are successfully preparing urban African American boys living in poverty for kindergarten (Barnett, 2002; Magnuson, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2007). This study hoped to shed light on how these teachers were able to help urban African American boys living in poverty become ready for kindergarten through the development of emergent literacy skills. It documents the voices of successful Head Start teachers in order to better understand what they believe and what they do that creates success for African American boys within the context of urban Head Start classrooms.

Rationale for Study of the Problem

At-risk 4-year-old boys come to school with less phonological awareness and are slower to learn new literacy skills than their more affluent peers. This gap is attributed to low levels of literacy in the home and less engagement around language and vocabulary development during the time from birth to 3-years-old (Hart & Risley, 1995; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti & Lonigan,

2008). This lack of language development leads to a lack of kindergarten readiness.

The futures of urban African American boys living in poverty may be adversely affected by a lack of emergent literacy skills developed in the early childhood years (Barbarin, Bryant, McCandies, Burchinal, Early, Clifford, Pianta, & Howes, 2006). Head Start teachers are key to the development of emergent literacy skills in their boy students. How Head Start teachers respond to their students' culture could be an important aspect of emergent literacy development especially related to school readiness (Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009). The effectiveness of Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty is crucial to these students' emergent literacy skills and life trajectories (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002).

This integrated methods study used quantitative data to identify successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. A survey of teachers' culturally relevant beliefs was used to describe the beliefs of teachers within the Head Start program and to determine if there is variation in beliefs within the sample of successful teachers. Finally, qualitative methods were used to explore these teachers' practices and their beliefs.

Statement of Purpose

This study explored if Head Start teachers' culturally relevant beliefs are a critical part of successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty, or if culturally relevant beliefs are tangential to successful Head Start teachers' practices. Head Start was created with the intention of overcoming the barriers to success poor children face through early intervention. As a program, Head Start has been successful in increasing students' vocabulary and increasing the quality of parents' relationships with the younger children in Head

Start (Puma et al., 2010); however, African American boys who have participated in the program often continue to fail in school or, more precisely, be failed by schools (Zigler & Styfco, 1994). African American boys have more trouble succeeding in the American public school system than any other children (Chatterji, 2006; Greene & Winters, 2004; Winton, Buysse, Zimmerman, & University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007; Vescio, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008). Family factors such as teen parenthood, level of parental education, and poverty can negatively influence the developing emergent literacy of at-risk boys (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002). In many cases the mountain of risk factors that contribute to the low levels of language development that African American boys face have proven too substantial to overcome in a child's Head Start experience (Zigler & Styfco, 1994). There are, however, some teachers in Head Start classrooms (Whitehurst, Zevenbergen, Crone, Schultz, Velting, & Fischel, 1999) who successfully develop African American boys' emergent literacy skills year after year.

As accountability for child outcomes in publicly funded pre-k has increased (Duncan, NAEYC Convention, 2009), formal and scripted reading curricula have replaced constructivist perspectives of emergent literacy development. This shift has occurred even though some research suggests that the quality of instruction is more important than fidelity to a scientifically based procedural literacy curriculum (Neuman, Copple & Bredekamp, 2000; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta, 2008). A study of three approaches to early childhood education by Marcon compared academic achievement in fourth-grade children who attended child-initiated, academically-directed, and combination preschools. Marcon found that boys do better academically over the long term and short term when their early learning experiences are child-initiated (Marcon, 2002). It is important to understand how teachers respond to the culture of

their students in order to better understand how they meet the challenges of developing emergent literacy skills of urban African American boys living in poverty. Delpit (2006) describes the role of teachers in explaining the language and expectations of the dominant culture while honoring the culture of the student. This approach was similar to the explicit emergent literacy instruction described to be effective with at-risk children (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008). The purpose of this study was to explore the complex interaction between culturally relevant teaching beliefs and the development of emergent literacy skills.

The study of emergent literacy development in the context of low income urban African American Head Start communities is an important research opportunity to explore more than a descriptive understanding of the realities of these teachers and students (Craig, Connor, & Washington, 2003). Critical race research suggests that it is an opportunity to discover new solutions to the social challenges of educating our most under-served students (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Delpit, 2006). Ladson-Billings (1995a) suggests that the study of successful teachers of African American children is necessary to address the complex social systems that create inequities in schools' outcomes. Teacher awareness of racial and gender biases can influence how teachers conceptualize and actualize their practices (Marcos, Sanchez, & Tellema, 2006). Reflections at core levels of beliefs can lead teachers to adopt culturally responsive practices that consider culture, including race, class, and gender in teacher-child interactions (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Gupta, 2006). This level of reflection shares many traits of good teaching but goes beyond traditional conceptions of effective practice (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) in how it engages students, builds on prior experiences, and strives for academic success (Brown, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching is the process of using students' backgrounds to the advantage of the student and classroom while simultaneously helping students to understand themselves (Au,

2006).

Even though Head Start teachers might like to change the conditions under which their students live, they cannot (Tileston & Darling, 2008). They can, however, change how they try to educate their students. Teachers may differentiate according to cultural differences of their students and of themselves. While poverty may determine many of a child's experiences, from a constructivist point of view, learning takes place in the same arena as culture; it happens in the social interactions among families, students, and teachers. Teachers may respond and individualize based on the effects of poverty, but they must differentiate instruction based on culture. This is why a teacher's practice of actively listening to what families and students bring to the construction of knowledge, based on their culture, as Delpit describes in *Other People's Children* (2006), is important to the successful teaching of at-risk children. How teachers understand their students' culture, along with its similarities and differences from their own culture, can be an important influence on classroom practice. Teacher self awareness can mitigate effectiveness in all aspects of instruction, from behavior management, to planning for instruction, to interpretation of formative, and summative assessments (Brown, 2002; Delpit, 2006).

It is difficult to disentangle teachers' understanding of culture from their professional practices. Culturally responsive teachers can seem eclectic in their approaches, but as Ladson-Billings points out, they become more alike when teachers' beliefs, intentions, and social organization of the classroom are examined (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). While there are numerous studies related to culturally responsive beliefs and teacher practice in preschool (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2010; Espiritu, Meier, Villazana-Price, & Wong, 2000; Ball & Pence, 1999), there is a gap in the research that does not consider Head Start teachers' culturally relevant beliefs,

especially with regard to the relationship between those beliefs and how successful teachers describe their practices (Love & Kruger, 2005).

Culture can affect teacher-child interactions in important ways. Heath, in *Ways with Words* (1983), highlights the numerous opportunities for failure within the simplest of interactions in an early childhood classroom. Heath described how teachers who give directions by asking questions can be expressing their own cultural norms for directions. When the child does not respond the way the teacher expects, the teacher may be surprised or think the child must be deficient (Delpit, 2006). Heath also described the rich and varied conceptual language constructs African American children bring to school. In Heath's study, the children of Trackton understand language through a variety of complex lenses including the emotional attachment between the speaker and listener, the intention of the communication aside from the words spoken, and story telling. Language for use in emotional attachment, subtle communication of intentions, and to tell stories may not be honored by schools and teachers that are struggling to develop traditional literacy skills needed for success in the dominant culture represented by public schools (Heath, 1983; Moll, Amaniti, Neffe, & Gonzalez, 1992; Delpit, 2006, Zipin, 2009).

Culture in this study was not a pseudonym for race (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Culture can be described as social class, or even the professional climate of a Head Start center. It could be that the teacher has been trained in a constructivist approach to child development that insists that children must be given the opportunity to think and make decisions. The effectiveness of this approach may be influenced by responsiveness of teachers to their students' culture. Delpit (2006) described the reflective process that could lead a teacher to culturally responsive teaching. Do teachers respond based on their own culture or the child's? Do teachers understand

themselves deeply enough to realize that a directive in the form of a question might be confusing? Can the student understand the intention of the communication without understanding the cultural framework of teachers? Have teachers explicitly described the structure of the interaction and taught the child to interpret their question as a direction? This simple interaction describes some of the ways teachers could be responsive in their practices. Interactions become even more difficult to interpret when academic content enters into the relationship of teacher and child communication. This study explored teachers' complex culturally relevant teaching beliefs and successful development of emergent literacy through an integrated methods comparative case study.

Literature Background

The plight of children living in poverty in America has been a focus of federal child welfare policy since before the turn of the 20th century. In post Civil War America, as the country became more industrialized, government took an active interest in families and the welfare of children (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler, 1989). Government concerns about child labor spurred federal regulations, but policies broadened during the first 50 years of the 20th century to include the general welfare of children in poverty (Auleta, 1969).

In 1965 Head Start was created as a comprehensive approach to early childhood education established by the federal government to fight poverty through comprehensive services to families and children. The program's goals were to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, nutritional, and psychological health of children living in poverty and, in doing so, to break the cycle of generational poverty that many children in poverty faced (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992; Zigler, 1995; Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler 1989). Since that time the program has been transformed with each new reauthorization. Focus on children's welfare has always been a part of

Head Start, but it has increasingly become concerned with academic achievement. The most recent bill focused on the school readiness of children, specifically addressing the language and literacy skills of Head Start children (Head Start Act, 2007).

The cognitive development of children living in poverty has been at the center of the Head Start effectiveness debate since rises in student Intelligence Quotient (IQ) were used as an indicator of program effectiveness in 1966 (Zigler, 1995). Zigler, eventually convinced Congress that increases in IQ points were not considered to be a valuable indicator of student cognitive gains. Zigler and others pointed out repeatedly that merely expecting Head Start students to do well and increasing children's sense of efficacy could increase student scores on the IQ test. However, how to reliably determine the effectiveness of Head Start has continued to be an issue (Aughinbaugh, 2001).

Head Start has been found effective in some respects but still faces criticism for not overcoming the risk factors it was designed to address. In the 2010 Head Start Impact Study, the program (Puma et al., 2010) was found to increase oral comprehension in 3-year-old students and vocabulary in 4-year-old students. Positive affects of Head Start on 3-year-old parent-child relationships imply the importance of Head Start in the comprehensive development of children, but these are not the types of gains that are easily used to justify the value of the program to increasing school readiness. Vocabulary is only one aspect of emergent literacy, and improving the parent-child relationship, while related to overall educational outcomes, does not necessarily translate to increased academic achievement (Berliner, 2006; Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). It is critical that research investigates the practices of effective Head Start teachers in order to discover how Head Start, as an intervention, can successfully meet all the needs of at-risk children including cognitive development and school readiness (Crone & Whitehurst, 1999).

Research indicates that teachers can and do play a role in the achievement of disadvantaged students (Tucker, Porter, Reinke, Herman, Ivery, & Mack, 2005; Konstantopoulos, 2009). Head Start teachers have been found to consider emergent literacy important even though their approaches to developing literacy skills differ (Hawken, Johnston, & McDonnell, 2005). The Head Start *Child Outcomes Framework*, a guideline for the implementation of Head Start performance standards related to child outcomes, has largely focused on emergent literacy skills including letter recognition, phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing, and alphabet knowledge (Head Start, 2003). Emergent literacy development is a focus of the Head Start performance standards (Head Start Act, 2007).

This study was largely an investigation of structural and interpersonal responses within the context of developing emergent literacy of urban African American boys. Head Start is a systemic policy intervention designed to address inequality of structural poverty through education and social services. Teachers' self-reported beliefs were an expression of how they saw themselves in relation to their students' culture. Finally, teachers' descriptions of their practices addressed the challenge of successfully developing their students' emergent literacy. This study investigated Head Start teachers' culturally relevant teaching beliefs and their application to successful emergent literacy development.

There is a great deal of research on the importance of teachers' positive relationships with children. Pianta and others (Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, & Morrison, 2008; Curby, LoCasale-Crouch, Konold, Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, & Barbarin, 2009) have investigated the importance of teacher-child interaction to early literacy development. Lonigan (Lonigan, 2004; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2010) points out the need

for instructing at-risk preschoolers in phonological skills. Additional studies describe the need for teachers to be reflective and culturally responsive in their practices (Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Studies that consider teacher-child interaction seldom address issues of teachers' response to race or class (Mendez, McDermott, & Fantuzzo, 2003). Studies of culturally responsive teaching have not focused on early grades or emergent literacy instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). This study addressed gaps in the research by exploring the practices of successful emergent literacy development of Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty, and the role of culturally responsive teaching and reflection in these Head Start teachers' practices.

Urban African American boys living in poverty are embedded in a context of risk. The underlying risk factor for these boys is poverty (Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998; Duncan, Ziol-Guest & Kalil, 2010). It is the factor that influences and amplifies all of the other risk factors. Urban neighborhoods are a risk factor because they are more likely to have higher crime rates, poor health conditions, neighborhood norms that reinforce risk factors, and limited opportunities (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Berliner 2009). Poverty is considered to influence the ability of communities to provide the education that students need because poor urban neighborhoods provide less substantial funding streams (Carey, 2004).

Most research supports that being African American is not necessarily an important influence on the likelihood of student success by itself (McDermott, Raley, & Seyer-Ochi. 2009; Fram, Miller-Cribbs, & Van Horn, 2007; Williams & Union Carbide Corp., 1972). However, when African American culture is combined with poverty, it becomes an important consideration, especially for teachers working in African American communities (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Tileston & Darling, 2008). While the effects of poverty are mostly outside of the

influence of teachers, how teachers understand the culture of their students can influence their effectiveness (Delpit, 2006).

Finally, there is research that suggests that one cognitive difference between boys and girls is the development of early language skills. Girls demonstrate earlier language use including expressive language, grammar, and vocabulary (Murray, Johnson, & Peters, 1990; Kimura, 1999). When the pattern of language development of boys is combined with cultural differences and the influence of poverty, the gap in emergent literacy skills can be significant.

Poverty affects all dimensions of child development including cognitive, physical, and social emotional development. Figure 1 shows the relationship of poverty to other risk factors. Poverty in this study was considered to be a structural aspect of society that influences the culture of students and teachers (Back, 1997; Gorski, 2008; Graham, 2009). Poverty contributes to less effective schools (Lee & Burkham, 2002), neighborhoods that lack literacy resources (Neuman & Celano, 2001), historically disadvantaged African American students' educational quality (Peske & Haycock, 2006), and slower development of language in boys than in girls (Bornstein, Haynes, Painter & Genevro, 2000; Dionne, Dale, Boivin & Plomin, 2003). The underlying structural poverty that the students in this study experience exacerbates the other risk factors that could be a combination of structural and cultural influences. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the relationship between risk factors influencing urban African American boys' poverty emergent literacy development.

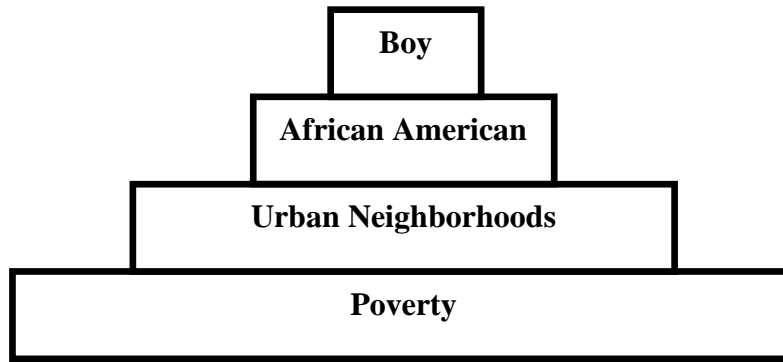


Figure 1. The relationship of risk factors for urban African American boys living in poverty.

Emergent literacy development is a critical aspect of school readiness (National Education Goals Panel, 1995). How Head Start teachers support emergent literacy development has been found to vary with teachers' beliefs (Hawken, Johnston, & McDonnell, 2005). This study explored variations in teachers' culturally relevant beliefs and their successful emergent literacy development practices. It considered if effective teachers' practices differ depending on their beliefs about culturally relevant teaching. What teachers believe about culture and literacy has been found to affect teachers' practice of emergent literacy development (Anders & Evans, 1994; Barbarin, Bryant, McCandies, Burchinal, Early, Clifford, Pianta, & Howes, 2006). This study used teachers' beliefs about culturally relevant teaching as a method for describing variation in a sample of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty.

The study of culturally relevant teachers and their practices is based on a number of sociologically oriented qualitative studies (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Heath, 1983; Au, 2006; Zhao, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Ware, 2006). Although culturally relevant teaching beliefs and practices have been described in detail through case study research (Howard, 2003, Ladson-Billings, 1995a), culturally relevant practices have seldom been correlated to actual scores on assessments (Love & Kruger, 2005). Studies of culturally relevant

teaching have not included the voices of Head Start teachers. While, numerous studies of Head Start and preschool have investigated culture as a factor in teacher-child interaction and students' achievement, these studies have not documented teachers' perspectives on their successful practices (Hindman, Skibbe, Miller & Zimmerman, 2009; Hawken, Johnston & McDonnell, 2005; Abbott-Shim, Lambert, & McCarty, 1998; Pigott, 1998). This study addressed a gap in the research by exploring the words of successful Head Start teachers as they described their practices, especially related to emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty.

Research Questions

1. How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty, vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?
2. How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?

Methodology

The study used a two-phase design to utilize quantitative data to inform qualitative data (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). In Phase I a two-step process was used to determine the population sample. Then, in Phase II, qualitative interviews were conducted based on the results of the analysis of the quantitative data collected in Phase I. Phase I included a survey of culturally relevant beliefs administered to the entire teaching staff of a Head Start program (Love & Kruger, 2005). Three years of Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004) scores were used to determine

trends of teacher success with urban African American boys living in poverty in the dimensions of Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness. The successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' responses to the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey were used to determine a sample of teachers interviewed using maximum variance as a rationale for decisions. The interview questions explored the domain of teacher practice based on Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey items found to be significant in the quantitative analysis.

Summary

Teaching in Head Start is high stakes when outcomes for children are the measure of success. At-risk children can benefit from teachers' successful practices in supporting emergent literacy (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001, 2003). Successful emergent literacy development is crucial to the long-term success of urban African American boys living in poverty. One goal of the study was to discover how much, if any, variation in culturally relevant beliefs was present in successful emergent literacy instruction with this particular sample and student population. By more fully understanding Head Start teachers' successful emergent literacy development practices of poor, urban, African American boys, the field may better understand why many Head Start boys enter kindergarten less ready than affluent peers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). In considering that all of the demographic risk factors besides poverty could be considered structural and/or cultural, it is worth investigating the culturally relevant teaching beliefs of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers. This study explored, compared, and contrasted teachers' culturally relevant beliefs, the results of teacher practice, and teachers' descriptions of what made them effective at developing the emergent literacy of poor, urban, African American boys.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides background related to successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys. Research indicates that urban African American boys living in poverty face particular challenges to their emergent literacy development and school success (Campbell, & Ramey, 1995; Magnuson, & Waldfogel, 2005). The relationship between emergent literacy and school success has been established through longitudinal research (Magnuson, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2007; Duncan et al., 2007). Successful emergent literacy development is crucial to Head Start boys' long-term success because many do not enter kindergarten with the necessary emergent literacy skills (Ludwig, & Phillips, 2008; Barnett, & Hustedt, 2005). Head Start teachers can increase the literacy skills of their at-risk students (Epstein, 1995; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006). However, some Head Start students continue to enter school under-prepared (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). This study explored successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' of urban African American boys living in poverty Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) and their descriptions of their practices that made them successful.

The literature review for this study utilized three main methods of computerized research. For each of the concepts included in the research questions, keyword sets were constructed. These keyword sets included teacher success, Head Start teachers literacy, emergent literacy,

poverty success, poverty urban African American boys, African American boys, culturally relevant, teacher beliefs, and African American literacy. Academic databases, Google search, journal articles, and references from valuable studies served as springboards for further research. These search terms were accessed in a cross search of relevant databases of peer-reviewed work, including Academic Search Complete, Education Search Complete, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and PsychINFO. When relevant, databases related to specific concepts were used to find sources. Some instances of this are the utilization of MEDLINE for research on prenatal cognitive development related to risk factors and boys' brain development differences. Social Work Abstracts were used to support research on family and parent influence before school. Urban Studies Abstracts offered support in understanding urban environments and Women's Studies International provided research related to qualitative interviewing techniques and risks. Keyword sets were explored for one to three hundred references, or until the end of references in the databases. As articles seemed relevant, their citations were collected in archived versions in Gmail and in Google Docs. During the course of reading articles in detail and writing, gaps in research were addressed through more specific keyword sets. Often detailed reading suggested important keywords or references that could be found in a cross search in the previously stated databases. When drawing on cited references in an article, the original study or paper was sought in the academic databases. When several references were made to a specific researcher in multiple articles, the scholar's work would be researched through author search in academic databases. This process yielded a deep understanding of the complex context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty.

This literature review consists of seven sections. The first section describes early

childhood education philosophy, theory, and history. The second section describes Head Start as an evolution of early childhood education, the nature of the program's goals to address poverty, and the relationship of school readiness efforts and emergent literacy to meeting those goals. The third section explains the role of culturally relevant teaching beliefs in teachers' practices. The fourth section describes the aspects of emergent literacy development. The fifth section describes the background literature related to structural versus cultural demographic risk factors of the students in Head Start classrooms. The sixth section describes in detail demographic risk factors and how they can negatively affect emergent literacy development of poor, urban, African American boys. The last section describes the methodology that will be employed to investigate the interaction between culturally relevant teaching beliefs, the results of teacher emergent literacy practice, and teachers' descriptions of what they do that makes them successful.

Early Childhood Education

The roots of early childhood education are found in shifts in philosophies and theories of human development, educational practices, and societal changes. Stages of human development have been recognized since ancient Greek times (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The idea of early childhood learning as distinct in human development is as old as the writings of Plato, who described procedures for raising children from birth to 2-years-old, and 2 to 5-years-old. However, the first descriptions of formal education outside of the home for children from 3 to 7 years old are found in the writing of John Amos Comenius. His work, *The School of Infancy*, which first appeared in 1628, described a play-based curriculum in which children should explore the materials of thought; including the stuff of geography and the natural world, and the symbols of thought; such as drawing, writing, and language development through discussion (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Monroe, 1893). Comenius also published the first picture book, *The*

Orbis Pictus, in 1658. Comenius believed education was necessary for young children to grow into good citizens.

Theories of child development have influenced the field of early childhood education throughout its history. As new developmental theories have gained favor, the field has adopted them with fervor and abandoned with scorn subsequent developmental theories and associated practices (Aldridge, Sexton, Goldman, Booker, & Werner 1997). The field has also supported and argued for competing theories simultaneously. Examples of developmental theories that have influenced early childhood education include the maturationist theory of Gesell in the early part of the 20th century. During the 1950s and 1960s, the behaviorism of Skinner was applied at the same time as the psychological theories of Freud and Erikson, and in the 1970s and 1980s, the constructivist theories of Piaget, followed closely by the socio-historical theories of Vygotsky, gained support (Aldridge, Sexton, Goldman, Booker, & Werner 1997).

Even though these theories have provided the field with a way to talk about child development, their usefulness to early childhood practice has been questioned. The relevance of educational theories based on the perspectives of White male psychologists to the experiences of early childhood teachers who are mostly female and non-White has led to some criticism of the dominant theories in the field (Aldridge, 1996). Lack of relevance combined with often temporally mismatched expectations for child development by caregivers not educated in human development leaves room for discussion of what matters about developmental theories to the practice of teaching young children (Furnham & Weir, 1996; Aldridge, 1996).

Current theories in child development that are enjoying some discussion and application are the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Aldridge, Sexton, Goldman, Booker, & Werner 1997), socio-cultural theories (Lee & Johnson, 2007), and the biodevelopmental framework

(Shonkoff, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theories assert that human development takes place within systems and subsystems that influence one another. He also suggested a scientific approach that would begin by treating aspects of the systems and subsystems as variables (1975). The socio-cultural perspective, based on Vygotsky's theories, considers the construction of knowledge to be socially embedded (Edwards, 2005; Phan, 2008; Davidson, 2010). This theory asserts that learning interventions that do not consider the cultural background of diverse student populations will continue to reinforce inequalities in the educational process (Davidson, 2010). Finally, the biodevelopmental framework proposed by Shonkoff (2010) attempts to consider ecological influences on human development along with those influences on brain development. It views the developing human as an organism that influences and is influenced by its environment at the biological level. This theory considers neurobiology and physiological development to affect the overall development of children, particularly children exposed to potential risk factors.

Humanitarianism has provided the guiding philosophy and theoretical background for early childhood education (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). In the late 1600s, John Locke wrote about sensible approaches to teaching young children. He suggested that children should play, gain understanding of simplified concepts, and be given the opportunity to make mistakes. The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in the mid-1700s further described the importance of educating young children to live a virtuous life and the role of active learning and struggle with real objects in a developmental context as critical to learning (Lines, 2009; Jonas, 2010). In the early 1800s Pestalozzi and Froebel implemented philosophical shifts described by Rousseau, to how young children were taught. In the late 1700s Pestalozzi, a philanthropist, developed a framework for teaching young children that supported social, emotional, and cognitive

development, that emphasized the importance of child development, and that relied on the family as the child's first teacher (Hewes, 1992; Henson, 2003; McKenna, 2010). He developed his framework through his own school that served abandoned and poor children situated on a farm in Switzerland. His ideas influenced Friedrich Froebel who is often considered the father of kindergarten and early childhood education.

Froebel pioneered the application of individualization, games, music, movement, and specially designed materials for learning (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). Froebel designed materials called “gifts” specifically for use in developing the whole child. These gifts were created to be employed in developing the cognitive skills as well as spiritual well being of young children. His schools meant to teach children based on their tendencies and interests and relied on mothers to be knowledgeable and provide insights into their children’s learning. He developed a teacher-training program to implement his ideas about teaching young children. Froebel's teacher education trained women to work in kindergartens where previously only men had become teachers in Germany.

In the late 1700s through 1850s, the Industrial Revolution changed the role of children in the family and in society. Before the Industrial Revolution, children could begin to support their family as their bodies matured through agrarian labor or trade work. The tending of young children's minds remained a moral and ethical question in which the benefit to the child and the family outweighed the moral benefit to the child (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). As factories spread across Europe and America, children and mothers became sources of cheap labor, with children working 12 to 16 hours a day in poor conditions (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). In response to harsh working conditions, Robert Owen in Scotland provided the first on-site daycare for mill workers, founding the British Infant School movement. In most cities working mothers left

children with family and neighbors forming a cottage industry of unregulated child-care and charity schools for poor children. The Factory Act of 1802, which limited child labor to 12 hours a day, began a history of policy interventions to alleviate the plight of poor children and setting a precedent for government intervention in the family.

Froebel's ideas and schools spread from Germany and greatly influenced the development of early childhood education in America through the establishment of kindergartens in America. The first, a German school in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1855, and the second, English in Boston, Massachusetts in 1860, were established by teachers trained by Froebel (Auleta, 1969). The first publicly funded kindergarten was established in Saint Louis in 1872 by its then Superintendent William T. Harris (Auleta, 1969; Saracho & Spodek, 2002). The kindergarten was taught in the manner of Froebel's kindergartens. The teaching was done solely in German, to meet the needs, according to Harris, in language and culture, of the poor immigrant students the school was established to serve. Following the American Civil War, kindergartens were established through charity organizations and spread throughout the United States. In the early part of the 20th century, the number of kindergartens increased. This was largely due to their success in preparing poor immigrant children for entry into public schools that were not prepared to serve these students. From 1890 through the end of World War I, kindergartens became politically useful as a way to Americanize immigrant children and became incorporated into the public school system (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Spodek & Saracho, 2004). The role of early childhood education in addressing social problems associated with poverty and culture continued after World War I through the end of World War II and the federal reforms that led to the creation of Head Start.

Head Start

Head Start is an approach to early childhood education established by the federal government to fight poverty through comprehensive services to families and children. These comprehensive services include health, nutrition, mental health, parent involvement, and education. The roots of child welfare policy in the progressive movements of post Civil War America and the increasing involvement of federal government in families are described by Phillips, Hartman, and Zigler (1989). In the early 1900s the confluence of increased scientific awareness of child development and the rapid industrialization of the country led to increased concern for child welfare. Before the 1890s most conceptions of childhood development were based on religion, philosophy, and literature (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler, 1989). Federal involvement in early childhood began with concern for child welfare pertaining to child labor. The White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1909 generated momentum for the establishment of the Children's Bureau in 1912. The bureaucratic focus of the organization was on the collection and analysis of data pertaining to children's health and development. In 1921 the Maternity and Infancy Act allocated federal funds to the creation of clinics for children and mothers. Aid to widowed mothers became a state-level concern that was included as Title IV of the 1935 Social Security Act. This provision still exists as the Aid to Families of Dependent Children Act.

The Community Facilities Act of 1941 supported World War II efforts by supporting day care centers for working mothers in the war effort. After the war, the bill was terminated with the expectation that mothers would go back to caring for children at home. Immediately following the war another mainstay of the federal support for child development was established. The National School Lunch Program of 1946 subsidized school lunches with surplus commodities.

These programs and policies serve as the precedent for the creation of the Head Start program. They also provide context for the Head Start program's comprehensive approach to service delivery. Maternal and child health have been consistently federally funded since the inception of the Children's Bureau under the Bureau of Commerce and Labor in 1912 and has remained part of Head Start funding even as the program has shifted its focus to school readiness and transition from home to school (Head Start Act, 2007).

Head Start has at its foundation the progressive social and education reforms of the late 19th century, but it is also an evolution in the history of early childhood education. While concern for the process of educating young children stretches back to the Greek period, since the Industrial Revolution early childhood education has been a social welfare issue (Auleta, 1969; Spodek & Saracho, 2004). The Industrial Revolution changed the nature of families and how they thought about caring for children (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). Increasingly, since the late 1800s children have spent more time learning outside of the home.

Early childhood classrooms have a history of being locally organized and funded around community need. The federal government adopted the same approach by funding community action programs to implement the Head Start program in the summer of 1965 (Zigler & Valentine, 1979). The federal government dispersed grants to local communities that demonstrated the interest and ability to provide services to children in poverty (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler 1989). This process is still a part of Head Start through the yearly consideration of local needs in the community assessment process described in the Head Start Act (2007).

Historically, most theories about early childhood curriculum and teaching supported play as the primary form of learning for young children (Spodek & Saracho, 2010). This view was

based on ideas espoused by Pestalozzi and Froebel that children would mature into productive adults if they were loved, engaged, and allowed to develop through play (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). This maturationist perspective was still present in the 1950s. Popular belief was that children had predetermined abilities that would emerge over time, but that intelligence was fixed (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler 1989; Spodek & Saracho, 2010). The adoption of Head Start as an intervention to ameliorate the affects of poverty placed early childhood programs in the new academic development framework. In this view, early childhood experiences were seen to further the potential academic development of a child. It was proposed that Head Start could increase at-risk children's IQ's (Zigler, 1995). While the pendulum has swung several times, most of the benefits of early childhood programs, especially for disadvantaged children, are couched in an academic understanding of the role of early childhood programs.

The role of Head Start teachers in the development of children's academic potential is crucial to the success of the at-risk children the program serves. Research indicates that teachers can and do play a role in the achievement of disadvantaged students (Tucker, Porter, Reinke, Herman, Ivery, & Mack, 2005; Konstantopoulos, 2009). Head Start teachers have been found to consider emergent literacy important even though their approaches to developing literacy skills differ (Hawken, Johnston, & McDonnell, 2005). The Head Start *Child Outcomes Framework*, a guideline for the implementation of Head Start performance standards related to child outcomes includes emergent literacy skills such as letter recognition, phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing, and alphabet knowledge (Head Start, 2003). Emergent literacy is a focus of Head Start as it includes language mandating its development in the Head Start performance standards and documentation of success in federal review procedures (Head Start Act, 2007).

Teachers' beliefs and views about literacy instruction have been shown to affect implementation of classroom practice (Vartuli, 1999; Fang, 1996; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). The importance of understanding the beliefs and views of successful Head Start teachers is underlined by findings of a national longitudinal study. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) found that even though Head Start produces gains in emergent literacy skills (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001, 2003), Head Start students still enter kindergarten less ready than the average student nationally (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). This means that even though at-risk students are given a head start, they still start out behind their peers.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs

This study attempted to shed light on how Head Start teachers understand and respond to their students' culture in the context of successful emergent literacy instruction. The specific challenges faced by poor, urban, African American children are not the same as those faced by middle-income, affluent, or poor African American children in rural and suburban settings. Although there may be cases of overlapping experiences in rural and suburban settings, or for affluent, moderate, or poor children, the experiences are not the same.

Many children develop emergent literacy skills through membership and participation in a literate society (Leafstedt, Richards & Gerber, 2004). Their early interactions with family and friends, observation and participation with their environment, and listening to and participating with stories, provide children with the emergent literacy experiences that are foundational to literacy development. However, some children are at risk of developing necessary emergent literacy skills when they live in poverty or lack oral language development in the early years (Leafstedt, Richards & Gerber, 2004). There is a relationship between children's social

backgrounds in terms of family structure, home environment, neighborhood qualities, and socioeconomic resources, and children's emergent literacy development before entering kindergarten. Children's culture, as reflected in the norms and behaviors associated with the social circumstances of at-risk children, can affect emergent reading readiness (Barbarin, Bryant, McCandies, Burchinal, Early, Clifford, Pianta, & Howes, 2006). Diverse student backgrounds that can place them at-risk for emergent literacy development suggest the importance of culturally responsive teaching. What teachers believe about literacy and culture will affect their classroom practices (Anders & Evans, 1994).

Literacy is embedded in our everyday lives from the labels on clothes and food to information on computers and television. Sociocultural theory considers the importance of the relationship between literacy and culture (Flood & Anders, 2005). Teachers who acknowledge, incorporate, and use their student's culture to their students' benefit are culturally responsive (Au, 2006).

In the literature, the term culturally relevant often refers to beliefs about teaching while culturally responsive refers to teachers' practices (Love & Kruger, 2005; Irvine, 2010). As compared in Figure 2 culturally responsive teachers have been described in a variety of ways that differ slightly in their connotations.

Term	Perspective
Culturally Appropriate	Teacher practice should be based on the culture of students, but it is not always necessary for positive outcomes (Zhao, 2007).
Culturally Relevant	Learning differs across cultures, and, when teachers base their practices on their students, they are effective (Groulx, & Silva, 2010; Irvine, 2010).
Culturally Aware	Incorporates teacher awareness of their own cultures in relationship to their students' culture (Walker-Dalhouse, & Dalhouse, 2006).
Multicultural	Values and affirms all cultures as important in the classroom and society (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Obiakor, 2009).
Warm Demanders	A culturally responsive approach to educating African American children based on a culturally embedded ethic of care (Ware, 2006).
Dreamkeepers	Effective teachers of poor African American students based on a combination of culturally relevant teaching beliefs and practices (Ladson-Billings, 1994a).

Figure 2. Descriptions of terminology related to culturally relevant teaching beliefs.

These terms include culturally appropriate (Zhao, 2007), culturally relevant (Groulx & Silva, 2010), culturally aware (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006), multicultural (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Obiakor, 2009), warm demanders (Ware, 2006), and Dreamkeepers (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). Culturally responsive teaching makes learning more meaningful to students by using

students' own backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences as the basis for learning (Guthrie, & Wigfield, 2000; Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, & Drake-Clark, 2010). Teacher actions based on culturally relevant teaching beliefs include their expressions of confidence that students will meet high expectations. These teachers also tend to use active learning and attempt to develop group knowledge through incorporating student perspectives (Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, & Drake-Clark, 2010). Teachers' practices include their use of small groups and pairs, their incorporation of students' experiences into curriculum, and their connections with parents and the community to support student learning (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Obiakor, 2009). A successful, culturally responsive literacy teacher helps the students understand themselves as they increase literacy skills (Au, 2006).

When African American children living in urban settings come to school, they face additional challenges to their language and literacy development. In a study of 63 African American children attending Head Start and state-funded early childhood programs, Connor and Craig (2006) discovered that the way children used African American English (AAE) influenced their emergent literacy development. AAE is a dialect of English often spoken in the homes of poor, urban, African American boys (Connor & Craig, 2006). This dialect differs from Standard American English, the dialect used predominately in schools and books, both structurally and phonologically (Craig & Washington, 1994). AAE uses a subject-object structure that is closely related to translations of Eastern African languages into English (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). Phonologically, AAE often drops or substitutes phonemes at the beginning and ends of certain words (Pearson, Velleman, Bryant, & Charko, 2009).

Through an examination of emergent literacy skills of preschoolers who did and did not use AAE, Connor and Craig found that students did better on the emergent literacy post test

when they either did not use AAE as much as their peers or they used AAE more than their peers. Students who used AAE with moderate frequency had the lowest emergent literacy scores. Students in the preschool study who used a mix of AAE or Standard American English (SAE) without regard to context scored lower on the emergent literacy skills assessment.

This finding suggests that code-switching, a practice some researchers encourage teachers to use to develop African American students' language skills in high school (Wheeler, 2005), is already evident in some African American preschoolers. Code-switching is the context dependent practice of using SAE and AAE in classroom communication while simultaneously making the context and use of each explicit to students. This study highlights the role of teacher-child interactions around language and the importance of teacher understanding of the relevant value of AAE to emergent literacy development. In Connor and Craig's study, the culture of students, as reflected through use of AAE, was shown to positively affect literacy development if the students' culture was strong, but floundered if students did not have a firm grasp of AAE or SAE. This suggests the benefit of teacher culturally relevant beliefs and practices about student culture to preschool literacy development.

Interactions between teachers and students have become a focal point of early childhood research. In addressing differences between teachers' and students' cultures, Saft and Pianta (2001) found that sex and gender had a relationship to conflict. In a study of the interaction between teachers' and students' cultures, teachers experienced more conflict with students that were different from them in factors such as sex and race. African American teachers experienced less conflict with Black students, and White teachers experienced less conflict with Caucasian students. The female teachers experienced less conflict with girl students. This study points to the importance of teachers' cultural self-awareness to preschool children's academic and social

achievement.

There is a substantial body of research into teachers culturally relevant teaching beliefs of African American children living in poverty (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, Ladson-Billings, 1995; Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, & Drake-Clark, 2010). Rather than focusing on cross-cultural awareness of teachers, this research focuses on the specific culture of African American children. It is based on the assertion that teachers of African American students should be studied with the intention of discovering better ways of educating at-risk children because they are a historically underserved population in the American educational system. In *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, (2006) Delpit described the problems associated with a lack of culturally relevant teaching beliefs. She depicts inequities that have continued in the educational system since the original publication of the book in 1996. Delpit also outlines how knowledge is constructed within a world view. According to this perspective, it is within the specific world view of poor, urban African American boys that Head Start teachers must help students gain the emergent literacy knowledge and skills they will need for future success.

In *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (1994) Ladson-Billings' research documents the beliefs, practices, and culture of successful teachers. The concept of the Head Start teacher as a Dreamkeeper was a foundation of this study. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey developed by Love and Kruger (2005) that this study employed was based on common traits of successful teachers of African American students described in *The Dreamkeepers*. These traits included beliefs about the profession of teaching as giving back to the community and that teaching is more of an art than a skill. Dreamkeepers are concerned with connecting students to the curriculum, the community, and

themselves. These successful teachers see the classroom as a community of learners in which both teachers and students learn and teach, and that all members of the community are responsible for each others' learning. This view is similar to beliefs about the classroom being structured as a family. Dreamkeepers see knowledge as socio-culturally constructed and that it should be approached critically in order to empower student participation in society.

Ladson-Billings (1994) presents two perspectives utilized by teachers in their practices. The culturally relevant perspective is explained as positive and beneficial to students, while the assimilationist perspective is described as negative and detrimental to student learning. The CRTB survey, which did not assign value judgments to each perspective, found correlations to student achievement in reading and math for several assimilationist beliefs. This study adopts a similar non-value based view of teacher beliefs as it considers that both perspectives could exist within the same teacher. The focus of culturally relevant teaching beliefs as described by Ladson-Billings (1994a) is on honoring and strengthening students' sense of self, culture, and community. The assimilationist perspective as Ladson-Billings (1994a) described it seems to share traits of traditional conceptions of teaching described in teacher-directed preschool practices examined in Marcon (2002). The culturally relevant teacher practices described by Ladson-Billings share qualities similar to the child-directed approaches also described as developmentally appropriate (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000; Harlin, 2010a). It is with these shared qualities in mind that this study explored teaching beliefs and high quality teacher-child interactions found to support effective emergent literacy instruction in a non-judgmental manner as participants were asked to explain both their culturally relevant beliefs and their assimilationist beliefs in the qualitative phase of the study (Love & Kruger, 2005; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta, 2008).

Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy is defined as an approach to understanding literacy development that views the development of literacy skills along a continuum from early experiences with sounds, print, and language, to reading. It considers aspects of literacy such as reading, writing, and language to develop at the same time and to be interrelated (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; National Education Goals Panel, 1999). There seem to be opposing perspectives on how best to support at-risk students' emergent literacy development. One research perspective supports the role of teacher-child interaction in emergent literacy development. Another research perspective supports the role of explicit instruction literacy skills in emergent literacy development. Emergent literacy is typically considered to develop over time during the pre-school years and as such is of particular importance to Head Start teachers. This study explored these perspectives through successful teachers' descriptions of their practices.

In one body of research, teacher-child interaction is considered the most important factor in the development of children's early literacy skills. This approach accounts for the link between social emotional development, teacher-child interaction, and early literacy. In a longitudinal study that identified predictors of children's developmental trajectories, researchers found that students of teachers with higher levels of teacher-child interaction were more likely to be on track in literacy development by first grade. Students who were on track in first grade were more likely to be on track in third and fifth grade (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002). The affect of parental education, nursery school attendance, and parental work history are considered as proximal factors in early literacy development (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002). Children's emergent literacy development can significantly impact the trajectory of learning through second grade and beyond (Whitehurst, Zevenbergen,

Crone, Schultz, Velting, & Fischel, 1999; Stanovich, 2008; National Reading Panel, 2000).

In attempting to understand the role of teachers in preschool children's emergent literacy development, Connor, Morrison, and Slominski (2006) videotaped teacher-child interactions to determine what types of interactions produced gains in certain areas of emergent literacy development. The researchers found considerable variability in teacher practices. While Marcon (2002) and others (Connor, Morrison, & Slominski, 2006) have focused on comparing direct instruction, child initiated, and blended frameworks of classroom structure, this study asserts that in the complex preschool classroom all three approaches can be used with variable effects on emergent literacy development. The researchers found that teacher and teacher-child activities produced gains in letter and word recognition, while child-initiated activities produced gains in vocabulary development. Small-group instruction was found to be more valuable than whole-class instruction to letter and word recognition skill development. Child-initiated activities varied in effectiveness with some of the variation depending on a child's level of vocabulary upon entering school.

It is clear that teachers' perceptions of literacy development can affect student emergent literacy development (McMahon, Richmond, & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998; Taylor-Strout, 2008). Some researchers assert that direct instruction, especially with at-risk children is necessary for effective emergent literacy development (Leafstedt, Richards & Gerber, 2004). Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan, and Colton, (2003) describe the importance of natural interactions with text and story, mediated by knowledgeable adults, as effective in developing at-risk students' emergent literacy. The researchers also assert that these natural interactions are not enough for at-risk children. The study, based on the rationale that these at-risk students must gain emergent literacy skills quickly, before formal reading instruction begins, and that these students have not

gained necessary emergent literacy skills naturally, implemented a highly structured emergent literacy intervention. The curriculum, focused on explicit emergent literacy skills, consisted of 12 30-minute small group sessions. Each session included a name writing activity, an alphabet activity, and a phonological awareness activity. A comparison intervention included a shared story reading and retelling. The study found that the explicit approach produced larger gains in emergent literacy development related to the assessed skills, including alphabet knowledge, print awareness, name writing, phonological segmentation, and rhyme production. It is important to note that the study did not include a measure of vocabulary knowledge.

In a nationally representative survey of Head Start teachers' views and practices of emergent literacy, Hawken, Johnston, and McDonnell (2005) indicated that Head Start teachers preferred arranging classrooms and experiences related to literacy so that students choose to engage with literacy materials. Teachers in this study reported using shared book reading and arrangement of classroom materials to support emergent literacy development. Teachers reported less use of direct instruction in phonological awareness in emergent literacy development (Hawken, Johnston, & McDonnell, 2005). These findings point to the need to determine if successful Head Start teachers beliefs about literacy are similar to those of less successful teachers (Leafstedt, Richards, & Gerber, 2004; Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan, & Colton, 2003).

According to the Hawken, Johnston, and McDonnell (2005) study, Head Start teachers appear to be stuck in a dated understanding of how best to develop emergent literacy. Perceptions about how best to develop early literacy has changed over the course of the last 20 years as emergent literacy research has explored the various aspects of emergent literacy development (Dickinson, 2002). In the 1980s the teacher's role was primarily to create

opportunities for engagement with literacy. Since the late 1990s this perspective has changed to include the importance of explicit instruction in phonological awareness to at-risk students (Leafstedt, Richards, & Gerber, 2004). This study will attempt to understand how successful Head Start teachers of urban, African American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant beliefs, vary their practices related to emergent literacy development.

The successful emergent literacy development of at-risk children is complex. The field contains several competing perspectives that can seem to be oppositional (Connor, Morrison, & Slominski, 2006; Marcon, 2002). At-risk children may need more focused instruction of emergent literacy skills, however, child-centered approaches to literacy have been found to produce gains in language development. Focused, direct intervention approaches have been found to produce more gains in letter and word recognition (Connor, Morrison, & Slominski, 2006). Head Start teachers' successful emergent literacy development of poor, urban African American boys within these competing perspectives and the role of culture in those interactions will be explored through qualitative interviews.

Structural vs. Cultural Influences

The first step in understanding if there is a relationship between culturally relevant teaching beliefs and successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty by Head Start teachers is to discriminate aspects of the problem that are structural or cultural. To determine if poverty is a culture, it is necessary to consider economic theory. The theoretical framework used to understand poverty and economics helped to determine if poverty could be termed a culture. According to Blank's (2003) theoretical framework for understanding poverty, if poverty is considered to be a function of politics and society, it is a structural aspect of society. If poverty is considered to be a function of individual

choices, it could be considered a culture according to Hofstede and McCrae's (2004) definition of culture as socially collective in nature, invisible but evident in behaviors, and true for some but not all members of a culture.

In this study, poverty was considered a structural aspect of society (Rank, Hong-Sik, & Hirschl, 2003) that served to amplify and create the structural and cultural aspects of risk that successful teacher of urban African American boys in poverty must overcome. Without poverty the other cultural contexts of these students' lives would not necessarily affect emergent literacy achievement even though poverty is generally associated with many other factors that are considered to put children at risk, including low parental education and residing in unsafe neighborhoods (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Lohrfink, 2006; Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). It is the interaction between the structural aspects of poverty and the structural and cultural factors present in early childhood development, families, neighborhoods, race, and gender that suggest there may be a relationship between culturally relevant teaching beliefs and Head Start teachers' successful emergent literacy development of poor, urban African American boys.

Poverty has its greatest influence when experienced early in life and it is considered to be the strongest predictor of student long-term success (Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010; Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Liaw, & Duncan, 1995). The effects of poverty can often be confounded with other demographic descriptors such as race and living in an urban environment. Some researchers consider the behaviors and responses to experiences poor children and families express to be a reflection of a culture (Harrington, 1997; Cuthrell, Stapleton, & Ledford, 2010). Others consider these responses to be the attempts of children and families living in poverty to make sense of structural challenges in their lives (Back, 1997; Gorski, 2008, Graham, 2009).

This relationship between poverty and early childhood, especially in urban environments, supports framing poverty as a structural influence on Head Start students' lives.

Racial identity is a social construction and constitutes a cultural distinction. Any possible biological racial differences, such as a biological propensity towards hyper-tension (Betancourt & López, 1993), are not relevant to the variables in this study, teachers' culturally relevant beliefs and emergent literacy development. Race is not considered a structural influence in this study because racial identity is a cultural process participated in by both external society and internal interactions among the members of a group and those outside of a particular group (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995). There is history of disenfranchisement towards African Americans in the city that is the setting for this study (Betancourt & López, 1993; Winston, 2009). Racial identity can be reinforced by structural aspects of society such as politically supported institutional racism (Swick & Brown, 1994). Race in this study is framed as a social construction that is influenced by structural influences such as politics, society, and poverty (Rank, Hong-Sik, & Hirschl, 2003). While the effects of poverty are a primary, structural influence on urban African American boys' living in poverty emergent literacy development, culture cannot be separated from poverty because of the presence of shared broad and local history (Betancourt & López, 1993). There are cultural variables present in the lives of poor, urban, African American children that affect emergent literacy and should be included in a study of factors affecting successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers. These factors include family structure, communication methods, and social organization (Betancourt & López, 1993). In order to describe the culture of Head Start teachers' students, the social contexts that students must traverse while enrolled in school will be discussed in the following sections, including families, schools, and neighborhoods (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991). Finally, the culture and biology of

boys' development will be considered. Head Start boys' emergent literacy development may differ from girls because boys' brain function as it relates to language development develops differently than in girls (Burman, Bitan, & Booth 2008). When boys' differing brain development is combined with cultural expectations for at-risk African American boys, slight emergent literacy differences could be accentuated (Ready, Logerfo, Burkam, & Lee, 2005).

In the following section poverty as a structural influence on child development will be explored. The following sections will describe the influential structural/cultural risk factors on emergent literacy development including the urban environment, African American culture, and students' gender. Teachers must reconcile the influence of each demographic factor on their students and their practices.

Poverty

The effects of poverty on child development and learning are well documented (Burney, & Beilke, 2008; Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron, & Shonkoff, 2006, Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). The influence of financial instability and poverty on the long-term ability of children to be successful learners has been studied through multiple lenses including neurobiology, sociology, psychology, economics, and medicine. Poverty impacts how children develop in utero and how early experiences develop trajectories for long-term success (Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). Head Start was created to address the affects of poverty on children's early life experiences and school success (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler 1989) .

How to support the emergent literacy development of children living in poverty is a growing problem. The number of children who were born into poverty each year since 2000 has increased. Of 25 million children in the United States in 2009, 22%, or approximately 5 million lived in poverty. An additional 11.1 million children lived in low-income families. In America,

minority children under age six are more likely to be poor than White children. While 64% of Black children under age six are living in poverty, 30% of White children younger than six live in poverty (Wight & Chau, 2009). The disproportionate distribution of poverty among minority populations demands increased awareness of how best to meet the child development needs of children outside of the dominate culture. This is especially true for Head Start because it enrolls more minorities than White, Asian, Native American, or Alaskan Native students. In 2006 Head Start reported enrolling (Levinson, 2007) approximately 900,000 three and four year old children. These students were predominately minority with 34.9% Hispanic, 32.7% Non-Hispanic African American, and 23.5% White (West, Tarullo, Aikens, & Husley, 2008).

Poverty is the risk factor that underlies all of the other risk factors students of Head Start teachers face. The effects of poverty as an isolated condition as well as an influential condition on urban neighborhoods, African American families, and boys will be considered in this section. Poverty, especially in early childhood, has more influence over a child's life prospects than any other risk factor (Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998, Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). Children born into poor, minority, single-parent families of low-level education are at risk for school failure (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). The social background factors linked to low levels of cognitive ability in kindergarten, including race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, and family background, are also linked to poverty. Poverty is the single demographic factor that shows the strongest relationship to school failure (Rouse & Fantuzzo, 2009).

Early childhood is a sensitive time to the effects of poverty on the long-term life prospects of children. Multidisciplinary research has proven particularly useful in understanding the development of disadvantaged children and its relationship to later success. Research has shown

that poverty, especially in the earliest years, impacts the trajectory of child development for the rest of their lives (Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron, & Shonkoff, 2006, Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). The cognitive abilities and social emotional competence of children has its roots in the earliest interactions children have with their mothers, families, and teachers. Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron and Shonkoff (2006) found that children's long-term cognitive and social development is subject to the influence of poverty in the earliest years. Their study, *Economic, Neurobiological, and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America's Future Workforce*, found that children grow up in environments that can positively or negatively impact their long-term economic capacity as adults. The researchers assert that investments in early childhood interventions for disadvantaged children would develop human capital that would benefit all society.

The complex interaction between brain development and social background were examined in a landmark study, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. In it Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) found the complex interaction between the social environment and children's brain development to be direct, continuous, and to begin before birth. The social environment of children living in poverty encompasses diverse influences. The range of influences includes children's interactions with mothers, caregivers, and extended family to neighborhood expectations on long-term success. Factors that affect brain development include the central nervous system health and functioning as well as prenatal factors such as the mother's health, nutrition, drug exposure and environmental toxins. The effects of poverty on brain development impact such diverse outcomes as long-term health to a child's capacity for empathy. These affects, beginning in prenatal development and extending through early childhood, suggest the importance of early childhood to the long-term prospects of

children. Risk factors associated with poverty that can affect academic success include pre-natal and natal influences, quality of medical care, nutrition, family stresses, and neighborhood influences (Leroy & Symes 2001). These risk factors can affect brain development, school attendance, language development, and behavior (Berliner, 2009). Family income, family structure, parent education, family size, and home ownership also affect emergent literacy development (Moore, Vandivere, & Redd, 2006). Poverty is a critical influence on a child's chance for school success, and it increases children's likelihood of attending lower quality schools than their affluent peers (Lee & Burkam, 2002).

The effects of poverty create an unstable foundation for children as they take their first steps into society, first into neighborhoods, and then into their schools. The next section will consider the cultural environment of students' homes, neighborhoods, and schools. For Head Start children, the teacher may represent the first significant interaction with an adult beyond the immediate family (Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). The school represents an aspect of a local community but, through policy and cultural implications of curricula and school processes, also represents a child's first interaction with broader society. The teacher can play a pivotal role as a bridge between the family setting and society (Hirsto, 2010). How Head Start teachers respond to the culture of their students may affect their students achievement in their classroom and beyond (Konstantopoulos, 2009). This transition can be particularly important in poor, urban neighborhoods where differences between how a child has been raised and academic expectations can be striking (D'Elio, O'Brien, & Younoszai, 2003).

Urban Neighborhoods

Poor, urban African American children face risk factors to early literacy and academic success associated with the experiences inherent to families, schools, and neighborhoods in poor

urban environments. After controlling for levels of poverty, children attending urban schools are more likely to come from single-parent families and to transfer to different schools than peers in suburban or rural schools (Lipman, 1996). It is not clear if high poverty urban neighborhoods are a cause of low early literacy achievement because the affects of neighborhoods are difficult to disentangle from the effects of poverty (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004). What is certain is that the social systems within which children live affect their literacy development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In the early years family influences are most important to early literacy development. Differences in school qualities matter more to early literacy after students begin formal schooling (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). Schools with predominately low socioeconomic populations, in unsafe neighborhoods, and with fewer resources have been found to produce slower gains in early literacy achievement (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

Child development from birth to school age is influenced by structural and cultural factors that begin with the mother-child relationship and, over time, expand outwards to include family members, neighbors, neighborhoods, classrooms, schools, and communities (D'Elio, O'Brien, & Younoszai, 2003; Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010). Poor, urban neighborhoods can be stressful places to live because families experience the effects of crime, lack of social connection, physical decay, social disorder, violence, and unemployment (Ewart & Suchday, 2002; D'Elio, O'Brien, & Younoszai, 2003). These stress factors can be chronic, which can lead to poor health for families. Stress in mothers can affect brain development prenatally and in young children (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Low levels of stress in mothers have been linked to adaptive biological and psychological behaviors in children (Graignic-Philippe, & Tordjman, 2009; Lazinski, Shea, & Steiner, 2008). However, high levels of stress or major depression, especially during the 20th through the 30th

week of pregnancy, can lead women to produce higher levels of hormones linked to premature birth and low birth weight, compromised cognitive development, and emotional and behavioral disturbances in later life (Weinstock, 2007; Lazinski, Shea, & Steiner, 2008). High levels of stress and/or major depression while pregnant is linked to anxiety in children and the over-production of cortisol, a hormone produced by the adrenal pituitary gland and associated with emotional regulation (Essex, Klein, Cho, & Kalin, 2002; Ouellet-Morin, I., Boivin, M., Dionne, G., Lupien, S., Arseneault, L., Barr, R., et al., 2008). In a study of 560 children and mothers from prenatal through 4.5 years-old found that children whose mothers experienced high levels of stress while their children were infants produced more cortisol as preschoolers (Essex, Klein, Cho, & Kalin, 2002). Children with high levels of cortisol at 4.5 years-old were more likely to exhibit dysfunctional internalizing and externalizing behaviors in first grade. Cortisol is also linked to memory and emotional regulation, fetal organ growth, and immune system development (Ruiz & Avant, 2005). Mothers' production of hormones that affect the development of the hippocampus may negatively affect the cognitive development of children whose mothers experience anxiety, stress, and depression while pregnant (Ruiz & Avant, 2005).

The effects of poor urban neighborhoods do not go unchecked in homes. Mothers and families can protect children from the effects of urban environments on children's social emotional and cognitive development. However, the chronic nature of urban environmental stress on families can still produce externalizing behaviors, such as anger and attention issues, in children (Plybon & Kliever, 2001). While most research has focused on the negative effects of urban neighborhoods on families and children, studies have also found that African American families living in poor, urban environments are resilient and capable of success (Jarrett, 1998; McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson, & Futrell, 1998; Burley, Barnard-Brak, Marbley, & Deason,

2010). Urban families develop in children a rich and varied knowledge base that is capable of supporting children's success (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The interaction between Head Start teachers and the lifeworld of children can lead to emergent literacy successes (Culatta, Kovarsky, Theodore, Franklin, & Timler, 2003).

Moll and others (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Delpit, 2006) suggest that when teachers interact with children and families in an ethnographic context, they can find multiple points of connection and deeper understanding of their students that can lead them to teach children using students' cultural and linguistic strengths. The importance of home visits, parent conferences, and parent involvement, combined with the young age of students creates an ethnographic context for teaching practice unique to Head Start (Lin & Bates, 2010). This context of teachers interacting with families in their homes and over time enables teachers to observe parents interacting with students in their home environments. Head Start teachers of children whose families experience the day-to-day stresses related to living in urban environments while simultaneously stepping into those environments themselves through home visits, could cause teachers to adopt culturally relevant beliefs that might inform emergent literacy development practices.

Neighborhoods can support or inhibit literacy development. The result is that children in low-income neighborhoods have less access to environmental print than their more affluent peers (Neuman & Celano, 2001). In adopting an ecological approach to understanding literacy, Neuman and Celano (2001) differentiate what aspects of low-income and middle-income communities affect literacy development. The structural differences in communities that affect families' access to print and emergent literacy development were described. The importance of print resources in family, school, and neighborhood contexts are important to the emergent

literacy development of children. The function, importance, and availability of print are influenced by community structures and beliefs. One example of differences in access in poor, urban communities is the affect of the agrarian school calendar on literacy potential in communities. The traditional 9-month school calendar shuts off access to literacy resources during the summer months for poor children because libraries and book stores are less likely to be located in these neighborhoods (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1998). Neighborhoods have an impact on literacy development that can be moderated by parents' level of education (Dyson, 2010). However, students in low SES communities visit libraries and bookstores less often than more affluent peers, interact with computers less and television more. Low SES kindergarten students lose literacy skills over the summer, while middle and high-SES students experience gains in literacy skills (Burkam, Ready, Lee, & LoGerfo 2004).

Head Start plays a role in countering family risk factors associated with poor, urban families. Hubbs-Tait, Culp, Huey, Culp, Starost, and Hare, (2002) provide evidence that students whose families are the most at risk benefit in emergent literacy development by simply attending Head Start. Children living in families with the most severe adult caregiver risk factors, such as low intellectual engagement, low incomes, and depression, benefit the most from regular attendance.

The poor urban neighborhoods where some African American boys live add an additional layer of challenge to their school success. Whether it is due to real or imagined feelings of social exclusion from schools (Lareau, & Hovart, 1999), lack of environmental print (Neuman, & Celano, 2001), or affects of stress on social emotional and cognitive development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), the urban environment plays a role in the emergent literacy development of poor, urban, African American boys. The manner in which Head Start teachers understand their

students' backgrounds related to families and neighborhoods could influence their teaching beliefs and subsequently successful development of poor, urban, African American boys' emergent literacy skills.

African American Culture

This section considers the culture of African American children educated in urban Head Start programs related to school success. The persistent underachievement of African American boys is a legacy of systemic structural and cultural discrimination in American society that could affect emergent literacy development (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). African American children are a historically disadvantaged population in the U.S. school system (Hirschman & Lee 2005). When students' race is considered in conjunction with low socioeconomic level, students' chances for success can be affected. Inequity exists before children come to school (Lee & Burkham, 2002), and the larger the gap at school entry, the harder it is to close. (Rhode Island Kids Count, 2005). Gaps in cognitive ability and school readiness between Black and White children can increase over time (Phillips, Crouse, & Ralph 1998). The 2008, 9-year-old (fourth grade) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows a statistically significant lower average reading scale score for African American boys than all other subgroups of boys and girls, including White, African American, Hispanic, and Other (NCES, 2008).

The literature that has developed due to America's historically inequitable system has roots in public resistance to equitable schooling (Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, & Drake-Clark, 2010). Woodson first wrote of the mis-education of African American children more than 75 years ago. (Woodson, 1933). Some of the practices delineated in that book are still occurring today (Hammond, Hoover, & McPhail, 2005), including the lack of presence of African Americans in curriculum and the teaching of African American students by young and

novice teachers (Peske & Haycock, & Education Trust, 2006). The culturally relevant approach to resolving these issues remain the same as first posited by Woodson (Delpit, 2006). Woodson wrote in 1933, (p.7) "It is merely a matter of exercising common sense in approaching people through their environment in order to deal with conditions as they are rather than as you would like to see them or imagine that they are."

School readiness of African American children has been explored as a reason for their continued failure in our public schools. Young children must navigate numerous social, physical, and cognitive risk factors associated with poverty as well as negotiate a school culture that may not welcome them (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lightfoot, 1978). In some ways African American children face difficulties in becoming ready for school as a reflection of more African American children living in poverty and the influence of historical and institutional racism. African American children attend poorer schools, in poorer communities, where poor health and poor life prospects are the norm (Swick & Brown, 1994).

While being African American does not in itself place a child at risk of school failure, it is important to consider the relationship between African American culture, especially of students living in poverty, and school achievement. Some researchers have suggested that African American culture is not conducive to academic achievement (McWhorter, 2000) or that African American youth culture is oppositional and disengages from educational settings (Ogbu, 1986). Gosa and Alexander (2007) in *Family (Dis)Advantage and the Educational Prospects of Better Off African American Youth: How Race Still Matters* report that even students from affluent middle-class families face challenges to their academic achievement. Ogbu (2003), in a study of a middle-class African American community, found that Blacks still trailed Whites in academic achievement, including enrolling in advanced placement and honors courses. Poverty

may well be the single most important factor in a child's school success (Manuel, 2004). However, poverty is not the only factor, as evidenced by African American students fairing poorly even when poverty is not a factor. America's history of inequitable treatment of African Americans as well as more recent evidence of persistent achievement gap between African American boys and their multiracial peers supports the need for continued study of incidents of educational success. Examples of this success include the successful use of engagement versus disengagement teaching strategies (Wiggan, 2008); the Harlem Children's Zone, which has shown promise in supporting African American children living in poverty in a birth-to-college approach (Austin, Lemon, & Leer, 2005); and the work of Hilliard, who has urged educators to examine and critique inequality in core ideologies underlying the teaching and learning process in order to strengthen the educational system (Lemons-Smith, 2008). This study of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers explores similar territory as previous studies of educational success of African American students. The context explored is the emergent literacy success of poor, urban, African American boys within Head Start classrooms.

The interaction affects of urban environments and African American culture are less pronounced in early childhood. These children are still mostly embedded within the home, but as has been discussed, resources, school culture, and teacher attitudes still play a part in emergent literacy development of African American children related to children's home culture and racial/ethnic identification. These can be caused by family perceptions of schools as well as teacher/school perceptions of students and families.

Boys

The potential role of gender in students' educational outcomes is a complex issue. While there are significant differences in outcomes between the African American boys and their peers

from all other demographic and cultural backgrounds on national assessments of reading (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008), reasons for these differences are fuzzy. The issue is unclear because gender has both biological and cultural characteristics that can influence learning and achievement (Cleveland, 2011). Competing perspectives support seemingly opposing reasons for boys' underachievement. These competing terms will be described as the biological perspective and the cultural perspective. This study of urban African American boys living in poverty adopted a blend of these two perspectives and hopes to honor the complexity of the influences on boys' emergent literacy development.

Biological Perspective on Boys' Learning Differences

Researchers of the biological perspective propose that there is a crisis in boys' achievement primarily related to a mismatch between the way schools operate and the way boys learn (Gurian & Stevens, 2006; Sax, 2006). This perspective applies brain research to understanding differences in achievement between boys and girls. While there are differences between the brain development of boys and girls, these differences are not necessarily reflected as dichotomously as proponents of this perspective would like to see in achievement data (Cleveland, 2011). There are however many boys, especially boys living in high poverty, urban environments, from minority backgrounds that do struggle in school.

As science has evolved to include graphic representations of brain functioning through Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), so have perceptions of the importance of biology in educational differences (Aizenstein, MacDonald, Stenger, Nebes, Larson, Ursu, et al. 2000). Boys' brains have been found to develop differently than girls in the womb (Sax, 2006). While there is substantial descriptive evidence that there is greater gap in level of educational attainment for African American boys and girls than in other cultures, there is little evidence for

why that gap exists (Hawkins, 1996; Marks, 2008; Welch & Sigelman, 1989). Some have suggested that in adolescence African American youths adopt stereotypical views of their own potential (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 1998). Understanding the differences in development of boys and girls based on biological differences and cultural influence, as opposed to gender stereotypes, is an important distinction to make in understanding how the emergent literacy of boys develops in early childhood settings.

The argument about the roles of gender in educational achievement has oscillated between the nature and nurture arguments since the very beginning of its emergence as an aspect of education's role in creating a more equitable society (Weatherly, 1923). In the past 20 years the debate over whether gender plays a role in academic success has escalated. In 1996, the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Education issued a pamphlet decrying the falsehoods and damage of stereotypes about boys and girls (Campbell & Storo, 1996). Since that time continued biological research using functional magnetic resonance imaging on both humans and animal subjects has provided new insights into the field. Some researchers have focused on the neurological differences between boys and girls with new information from brain scan technology emerging to clarify differences in boys and girls development previously considered to be cultural (Burman, Bitan, & Booth, 2008). Biological differences and physical development that could affect boys' school success include evidence that girls hear midrange sound twice as well as boys (Elliot, 1971) and the earlier development of girls' language skills (Burman, Bitan, & Booth, 2008).

One way to address the issue of understanding boys' development without falling into the trap of perpetuating stereotypes is to explore differences in brain development. Research suggests that different parts of the brain develop at different rates for boys and girls. Parts of the

brain that process language, writing, and recognition of faces develop sooner in girls than in boys. The parts of the brain responsible for visual tracking and reasoning related to mechanics and space develop sooner in boys. Girls' brains have also been found to process experiences with more of the brain than boys, with boys using specific parts of the brain for specific processes (Giedd et al., 1999). This evidence suggests that differences related to development of parts of the brain may account for differences in rates of emergent literacy development for boys.

Many aspects of child development are likely not affected by a child's sex, including mathematical problem solving, science at younger ages, and story comprehension (Hyde, 2007; Bryce, & Blown, 2007). However, research suggests that language development is affected by biological differences in brain development (Ellison & Nelson, 2009; Brizendine & Allen, 2010). Differences between the language development of boys and girls begins as early as 2-years-old with girls' expressive language and grammar developing earlier than boys (Bornstein, Haynes, Painter, & Genevro, 2000; Dionne, Dale, Boivin, & Plomin, 2003). Neurologists have noted the larger flow of blood in women's brains between the left and right halves of the cerebral cortex as a possible explanation for sex-related differences in cognitive processing (Gur & Gur, 1990; Reiss, Abrams, Singer, & Ross, 1996). Girls are also more likely to express themselves verbally earlier than boys (Murray, Johnson, & Peters, 1990; Kimura, 1999). This evidence from the emerging field of neuropsychology suggests that Head Start teachers' awareness of differences in language development of boys and girls could affect boys emergent literacy development (Sax, 2006; Gunzelmann, & Connell, 2006).

It is important for teachers to exercise caution in using evidence of brain development in addressing learning differences. Often scientific findings are used out of context to support reasons for adjusting teaching practice without clear evidence that changes in practices address

differences in cognitive development (Newkirk, 2005). However, differences in language processing and development that can affect classroom processes do exist, especially during the time of emergent literacy development. How boys' and girls' brains process language and perceptual tasks was explored by Burman, Bitan, and Booth (2008), who found that parts of the brain associated with language processing were activated differently in boys and girls. The study found that boys processed language tasks with different parts of their brains than girls. When challenged with language activities, parts of the brain associated with linguistic function were more active in girls than boys. Girls' activation across brain hemispheres was stronger than boys'. The study does not necessarily suggest that these differences persist into adulthood. Burman, Bitan and Booth (2008) assert that traditional thoughts about girls' cognitive and social emotional development occurring at a different rate than boys' has some biological merit. This study is important because it suggests teachers' responses to sex differences in language development in the early years could affect the trajectory of reading development of boys when exacerbated by cultural differences.

Cultural Perspective on Boys' Learning Differences

As opposed to the biological perspective previously described, there is also a cultural perspective which asserts that it is only groups of boys from typically urban and minority backgrounds, living in poverty, who demonstrate a lack of achievement in reading that should be the focus of research. Cleveland (2011) describes her attempts to understand and apply these two perspectives to the research problem in her book, *Teaching Boys Who Struggle in School*. In it she describes how she decided, after realizing that there was no way to justify the two perspectives, to adopt a pragmatic approach to understanding the problem of boys who struggle with school. Cleveland talked to practitioners, administrators, and parents about boys who

struggle in school. These differences are specific to at-risk boys and could, as Cleveland suggests, be attributed to cultural differences reflected in the dominant learning styles typical of at-risk boys. However, if this were the case, there would be just as many at-risk girls struggling in school, in the same ways, as at-risk boys. Following this logic Cleveland asserted that there must be a third operant involved. She arrived at the conflict between the learning styles that might struggle in a formal school setting combined with the influence of gender culture on boys' development. This practical approach to understanding why boys struggle in school, including the biological, cultural, learning style, and gender influences, will be explored in the following section along, with how these factors relate to emergent literacy development.

Children enter school with different levels of readiness. This is true for children of differing levels of SES as well as for girls and boys. Ready, Logerfo, Burkam, and Lee (2005) found that girls entered kindergarten with slightly higher levels of literacy development than their male peers. The study, based on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort of 1998-1999, used a nationally representative sample of children and teachers to discover and explore differences in academic achievement and social emotional and learning development. In the study girls left kindergarten having made more progress than their male peers in emergent literacy development. Ready, Logerfo, Burkam, and Lee (2005) suggested that these differences could be attributed to differences in approaches to learning and social emotional development between boys and girls. Teachers reported that girls were more likely to use constructive learning approaches, demonstrate self-control, and use productive social skills. Girls were also less likely to demonstrate external behavior problems (aggression) or internal behaviors (sadness/withdraw) than boys. The link between differential brain development, language development, and boys' social emotional development points to a connection between

academic achievement in Head Start boys and teachers' perceptions of boys. Ready, Logerfo, Burkam, and Lee (2005) found that girls seem to experience more success in kindergarten literacy development than boys. The study attributed this result to boys' less-developed approaches to learning and social emotional development or to teachers' perceptions of these traits. Boys had a wide range of literacy achievement as well as a wider range of behavioral competency than girls. Finally, boys were more likely to be identified in the poor range of behavior than girls, as reported by their teachers. All of these findings suggest that boys as well as their teachers participate in a process that produces fewer literacy gains for boys than girls. The researchers suggest that focusing the development of boys' approaches to learning and social emotional development can lead to better literacy outcomes for boys.

Boys bring to school with them rich experiences that inform how they relate to schooling, teachers, and their peers. When teachers embrace the strengths of these experiences in their practices it can transform how they teach (Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008, Reichert & Hawley, 2010). In an international study of boys' schools that included narratives from teachers and students, Riechert and Hawley (2010) found a powerful clue to understanding the difference between successful and unsuccessful teachers of boys. They found that when content or process of learning were not working with boys they disengaged from the process. Teachers who were attuned to this disengagement adjusted their practices. The result of this adjustment on the learning experience is that (p. 37, Reichert & Hawley, 2010) "boys tend to elicit the pedagogy they need." Riechert and Hawley also found that there could be barriers to this reciprocal process. Factors that could inhibit this adjustment of teacher practice included contradictory responses from boys and girls during a lesson, lack of empathy on the part of the teacher or insistence on use of prescribed methods, state-mandated protocols, school culture

lacking openness to student-teacher dynamic relationships, family or community factors such as risk and stress that dampen students' ability to learn. These factors echo the triadic reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1997) adopted by this study. Finally, Riechert and Hawley describe the role of "transitivity" (p.39) in effective learning for boys. Transitivity is an element of the learning process that moves the lesson along, "the motor activity or the adrenal boost of competing or the power of an unexpected surprise," so that student interest is carried away with the learning. This combination of reciprocal teaching and transitive process could be a key to understanding the practices of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty.

Classroom culture can play a role in boys' development by promoting, encouraging, and condoning both positive and negative perceptions and behaviors (Ready, Logerfo, Burkam, & Lee, 2005; Harlin, 2010b). In school, these translate into different expectations for student achievement for boys and girls. Teachers and families have been shown to play a role in affirming or denying the social culture of boys (Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008; Reichert & Hawley, 2010). Differences in expectations for African American boys' educational achievement is supported by evidence that fewer African American males enter post secondary education (Greene & Winters, 2004; Wood, Kaplan, & McLoyd, 2007).

African American boys bring to school with them strengths that enable them to negotiate the cultural dissonance between the European American culture and their identities as African American males within the context of academic success (Stinson, 2011). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that conflict between African American cultural identity and the dominant White culture leads to academic difficulties that cause African American males to reject their own identity in order to become academically successful. In *When the "Burden of Acting White" is*

Not a Burden: School Success and African American Male Students Stinson (2011) utilizes ethnographic interviews with successful African American males in their 20s to find out how they respond to the theories of cultural conflict posited by Fordham and Ogbu (1986). In describing the experience of "racelessness" (p. 46, Stinson, 2011) one of the participants described his experience this way:

I seem to think the opposite kind of way, in that, not that I am necessarily having to carry the banner for my race, but it feels good to me to know that I am accomplishing things, and I am accomplishing things as an African American male. I don't feel the need to separate the two, nor do I want to separate the two, because it makes me feel good. ...So many [African Americans], even at the law school, the staff in the law school, the custodial staff, to all types of support staff, they all provide so much encouragement, to not only me, but I see it happening to the other African American students. There just seems to be a lot of pride that they all take in seeing us do well. So I definitely don't think that it is necessary to adopt a raceless persona to be successful; I view it in the complete opposite light. (Interview 3) (p. 51-52, Stinson, 2011).

The participants' counter-stories describe a cultural negotiation in which participants demonstrate agency to "accommodate, reconfigure, or resist" (p. 45, Stinson, 2011) cultural perceptions and expectations related to success. While these issues of identity may not be pressing for the young boys in Head Start classrooms, these ideas may influence how teachers interact with their African American boy students.

Children are able to discriminate gender differences as early as 2-years-old (Kohlberg, 1966; Kohlberg & Ullian, 1974; Sandnabba, & Ahlberg, 1999). Children's ability to discriminate gender can lead to adoption of roles related to perceptions and expectations of gender. Freeman's

(2007) study of children's perceptions of gender-typed toys and parents' beliefs about gender-typed toys explored the role of culture in children's perceptions of gender. In the study of thirteen 3-year-olds and thirteen 5-year-olds, children of both sexes sorted boy and girl toys and were questioned if parents would approve or disapprove of their play with the opposite gender toys. Sorting along stereotypical lines increased in older children. Children indicated parental approval along same sex lines, mothers approving of girls playing with girl toys and vice versa even though parents indicated a lack of support for gender-stereotyped play. This discrimination can also play out in literacy development (Shegar & Weninger, 2010). As preschool boys interweave their experiences with popular culture into their classroom experiences, a unique space for literacy development can be created within responsive classrooms. Boys can begin to understand text and incorporate this understanding into their reading and writing. Teachers who are responsive to this content interest of Head Start boys can capitalize on this cultural fund of knowledge in their classrooms (Shegar & Weninger, 2010; Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008; Reichert & Hawley, 2010; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Zipin, 2009). This study highlights the complex role that culture plays in the development of children's attitudes towards social construction of gender roles (Castelli, Zogmaister, & Tomelleri, 2009). It also lends support to culture's influence on gender role development beyond the direct influence of parents to include families, peers, neighbors, and media.

The affect of gender role perceptions in preschoolers becomes more complicated in urban neighborhoods where violence exists and adult males are expected to be tough, hard, and streetwise (Achenbach, 1991). Boys' social emotional development in neighborhoods where perceptions of masculinity conflict with how children should act in schools causes internal conflict (Pollack, 1999). In a study of preschool behavior problems in violent neighborhoods,

Randolph, Koblinsky, Beemer, Roberts, and Letiecq (2000) compared Head Start boys' and girls' behaviors. They found African American Head Start children living in violent neighborhoods were more likely to exhibit externalizing and total behavior problems than the comparative norm on the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991). Boys in the study were more likely to exhibit internalizing behaviors than girls. Randolph, Koblinsky, Beemer, Roberts, and Letiecq (2000) suggested that preschool boys can perceive pressure to become hardened and that some parents may become overly protective against these pressures. The study also pointed out that boys' awareness of violence in their communities, and against other males in particular, may contribute to internalizing fear. This reaction by African American Head Start boys to the culture of their violent neighborhoods suggests that these neighborhoods may hamper social emotional development and boys' ability to form supportive connections with peers, teachers, and community adults.

As teachers try to meet the developmental needs of boys, they must grapple with conflicting purposes of schooling and teaching to acculturate children into the broader society while still respecting boys' individual differences (Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008). Some researchers assert that it is critical that teachers attempt to understand the unique development of at-risk boys in the context of the classroom and school culture that favors girls' processes of learning (Gurian & Stevens, 2006; Gunzelmann & Connell, 2006). There may also be conflict between at-risk boys' learning styles, teacher and societal expectations in regards to male identity, and the role of biological factors in young boys' emergent literacy development. Current research suggests that strong relationships between teachers and their students can mediate these conflicts but that teachers must consider the influence of their own identities on how they build relationships with their students. (Saft &

Pianta, 2001; Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, & Murray, 2008). While gender may be the least influential risk factor in the study of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty, it cannot be ignored, especially when all of the other structural and cultural risk factors have been stacked up first.

Summary

Poverty, as a structural risk factor, affects so many aspects of child development that it can, in isolation in the early years, negatively affect the trajectory of a child's development. Urban environments, with their lack of resources, detrimental environmental factors, and lack of support for literacy development, can serve to isolate poor families and aggravate the affects of poverty even when families are resilient. The sociological affects of a history of discrimination on African American families in America cannot be ignored. Race/ethnicity is not considered a risk factor distinct from any of the other risk factors, but history and educational results bear witness that a child born African American in America can face difficulties that children of other cultures may not have to overcome. Finally, boys, whether considered physiologically or culturally, enter school less prepared than their female peers, and some never catch up. When being male is combined with being African American, factors that affect literacy development can be amplified by poverty and urban neighborhoods.

The risk factors that Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys must overcome to develop their emergent literacy is staggering. While the effects of cumulative risk factors can seem insurmountable, each risk factor that can be addressed decreases the power of the group of risk factors to negatively impact children's lives (Appleyard, Egeland, Van Dulmen, & Sroufe, 2005). Head Start teachers cannot change a child's level of poverty, but they can meet the needs children living in poverty lack, by helping children and families to get medical and

dental care, welcoming parents into classrooms, being responsive to students' backgrounds including race/ethnicity, organizing classrooms to account for differing approaches to learning and social emotional development and creating classrooms where poor, urban, African American boys can learn. The next section will describe the context of the sample related to Head Start, emergent literacy development, and culturally relevant teaching beliefs.

Methodology

The goal of this study was to help explain if culturally relevant beliefs are an important aspect of emergent literacy instruction or if culturally relevant beliefs are tangential to the successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. This sequential explanatory design (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006) used a constructivist approach (Magoon, 1977; Denzin, & Lincoln, 2005) to understand what Head Start teachers do in their classrooms to create successful emergent literacy outcomes for poor, urban, African American boys. The methodology used two phases of data collection and analysis. The process is sequential because the data collection in the first quantitative phase of the study informed the implementation of the second, qualitative phase of the study (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). The first phase used performance-based emergent literacy assessment to identify a sample of successful emergent literacy teachers. A Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) inventory was used to select participants and inform semi-structured interview questions. Interview questions asked in the second phase of the study were based on participants' responses to survey items and served to explain their beliefs in more detail. This methodology investigated successful Head Start emergent literacy teachers with different culturally relevant teaching beliefs perspectives on how they were able to create positive emergent literacy outcomes for poor, urban, African American boys. The quantitative

data informed the first interview by serving as the basis for follow-up questions in the semi-structured interview. In the second interview both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized. In these interviews the researcher asked participants to clarify statements from the first interview that were not congruent with the participants' statements on the survey. The researcher also incorporated questions about participant-provided materials, culturally relevant teaching beliefs, and emergent literacy practice. The quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated again in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data through comparison and juxtaposition. Finally, the results and discussion synthesized the data from both phases of the study.

The methodology for this study is best explained using Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory model. In Bandura's theory there are three dimensions of influences on the social cognitive context that influence one another. Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the context in this study defined as the agency of the Head Start teacher in creating successful emergent literacy outcomes for urban African American boys in poverty.

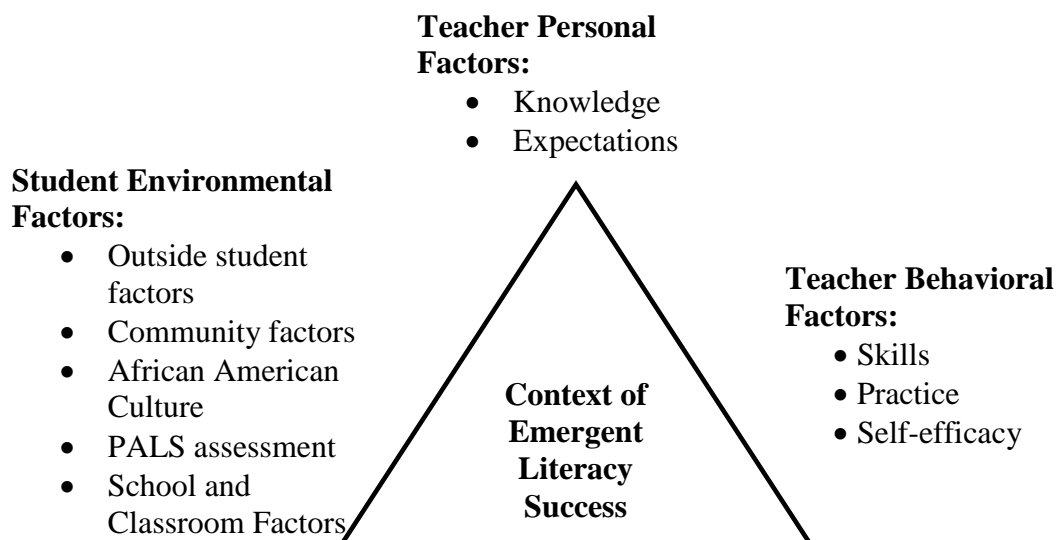


Figure 3. Representation of Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory applied to the context of

successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys.

Bandura defined agency as "... to intentionally make things happen by one's actions." (p. 2, 2001). The context is defined as the consequence of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1997). The three points of the triad are the person, in this case the teacher and his/her beliefs, the behavior, which is the practice of the teacher, and the environment or situation which are the students themselves and the dimensions of emergent literacy assessed by the PALS assessment. Each of the points of the triad can reciprocally influence the others.

The organization of the methodology for this study was intended to isolate specific dimensions of each point of the reciprocal triad that could prove valuable to understanding the context of successful teaching practice. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey delineates dimensions of teachers' beliefs about the culture of the specific students they teach. This isolates the CRTB of the agent in the context. The PALS assessment described one part of the environment that could influence teacher practice and belief. The focus on poor, urban, African American boys further defines the environment. The behaviors, skills, and self efficacy that make up teacher behavior were explored through the qualitative interviews (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The context of teacher agency was defined through the multiple methods approach.

The complex interaction between teachers' culturally relevant teaching beliefs and successful development of emergent reading skills was explored through comparison and juxtaposition. This study used a sequential explanatory design (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). This design appeared to be especially useful in the study of excellence. In a study of teaching practices in excellent British child-care centers, Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2004) used a sequential mixed-methods design. The study used a combination of quantitatively purposeful

and maximum variance sampling strategies to determine the sample. The study used a data set that had determined a rating for 141 child-care centers. The researchers then determined a sample of settings that exhibited a rating of good (68% confidence) to excellent (95% confidence). From that sample a variety of child-care settings was selected. The selection of participating settings was conducted by an independent researcher who was not involved in the qualitative interviews or analysis. This permitted the field researchers to conduct the research blind to the previously conducted quantitative sampling methods. The qualitative phase of research was conducted by previously assigned researchers who had established relationships with the participants in the child-care settings over a period of 1-3 years prior to the study. Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva found that balance in teacher-directed and child-initiated approaches were evident in excellent child-care settings. The quality and frequency of teacher-initiated activities had a direct correlation to high levels of cognitive development. The study also found that in effective child-care settings teachers and children engaged in the co-construction of learning. Differences in the qualities of activities were found between good and excellent preschools. In excellent centers highly cognitively challenging activities were determined to have taken place because adults extended an activity in which a child was already engaged. The coded observations and interviews also showed that excellent settings had a higher proportion of co-constructive activities and instructional activities than good settings. There was also less monitoring of interactions, fewer low-medium level cognitive challenges and more high cognitive interactions in excellent child-care settings.

The Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva study provided a model for the study of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers. The design of the Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva study enabled the researchers to determine qualitative differences between good and excellent child-

care settings in England. The combination of purposeful quantitative sample selection was adopted by sampling successful teachers for interviews about their teaching practices. While the Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva study ensured variance by selecting from a variety of child-care settings, this study used the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey to sample teachers with divergent responses to survey items. The qualitative researchers in the Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva study were kept blind to the results of the qualitative analysis in order not to influence what the researchers might find in their observations and interviews. The Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva researchers had also previously established relationships with the adults in the child-care settings based on trust. A similar approach was used in keeping the qualitative data blind to the researcher before the first-round of interviews to help determine how successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers with different beliefs varied in their approaches to teaching.

In a comparative cross-case study of teachers' perceptions of the difficulties involved with teaching boys, Raider-Roth, Albert, Bircann-Barkey, Gidseg, and Murray (2008) created a professional development study group with teachers that focused on exploring teachers' relationships with boys they teach. Over the course of a year, each of eight teachers presented an in-depth description of one boy in his/her class per study group session. These sessions were recorded and transcribed. Transcripts from these study group sessions, along with individual interviews and examples of teachers' writings, were later analyzed by the researchers to understand the complex relationship between teachers and boys in their efforts to promote their students' academic success. Two major findings were that teachers encountered internal tensions between seeing boys as individuals and the teachers' roles in helping boys to acculturate or assimilate into society. The second tension was between teachers' sense of self in relation to the boys they taught. These tensions were discovered through the use of an analysis tool that

considered what teachers said and did not say during the study groups. The use of repeated listening and organizing of qualitative data into I, we, and they statements helped the researchers to uncover teachers' sense of self in relation to the boys they taught. The findings of this study suggests the influence of the teacher's identity on classroom relationships, an aspect of teaching important in the culturally relevant teaching perspective but not fully explored in early childhood or emergent literacy research.

Two dimensions of emergent literacy development assessed by the PALS Pre-K were measured (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). The two dimensions were Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness. The use of emergent literacy scores from several cohorts of children provided a more reliable indicator that a teacher was successful with the poor, urban, African American students and not with a particular class of students. The PALS was developed as an instrument to be used for early identification of reading difficulty. As such, cut-scores were established to assist teachers in determining which students were in need of interventions to support their emergent reading readiness. This instrument is a state-supported assessment that provides some indication of the quality of early literacy services provided by publicly funded pre-k programs. The PALS Pre-K is the primary accountability measure for program effectiveness of publicly funded pre-k programs in Virginia. The Joint Legislative and Review Commission of the Virginia General Assembly cited the PALS Pre-K scores of the Virginia Preschool Initiative as an indicator of program quality (Rotz, Bearse, Rest, & Sarte, JLARC, 2007). The initiative was established in 1997 to support the development and implementation of a reading readiness instrument to support early identification and intervention efforts.

In Virginia the role of the Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is that of

accountability measure of preschool quality. The role of standards in Virginia's educational accountability system has evolved to include clear standards and age appropriate assessments for all grades, PK-12. The implication of this accountability model is that every child can meet high academic standards "if" they start school ready. Virginia has acknowledged that currently up to 49% of kindergartners have difficulty with the transition into school (Virginia, 2005). The different levels of readiness are the result of language experiences in the home, the quality and effectiveness of child-care, and in the prenatal care of mothers. Urban African American boys in poverty start school less ready than all of their peers. Inequities in the educational system, stemming from factors beyond the influence of schools, can be influenced by Head Start teacher practices that address the root causes of children's lack of readiness for school success including diverse families, communities, and schools (Rhode Island Kids Count, 2005).

A survey of culturally relevant teaching beliefs was also used in selecting participants. Many studies have not found a relationship between academic achievement and teacher cultural awareness (Love & Kruger, 2005). However, it could be possible that in generating a stratified sample using the structure of the PALS three levels of phonological awareness, a correlation will be found between these two variables. PALS scores were considered a dependent variable in this study. The survey was used to explore the range of teacher beliefs about culture that successful teachers hold. Finally, teacher interviews explored teachers' beliefs about what made them effective in emergent literacy development along with teachers' perceptions of culture and culturally responsive teaching.

Head Start teachers can have an important influence on the academic achievement of poor, urban, African American boys (Tucker, Porter, Reinke, Herman, Ivery, & Mack, 2005) just as they can contribute to the disengagement of these students from school (Guerra, Attar, &

Weissberg, 1997). Teachers' sense of efficacy at the successful teaching of at-risk boys has been determined to be a consistent indicator of effectiveness. This sense of efficacy is also an aspect of culturally responsive teaching as described by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) in *The Dreamkeepers*. Ladson-Billings described a number of effective teachers of African American children. The practices and beliefs of the teachers provided a framework for understanding culturally relevant teaching beliefs. The studies the book was based on found that effective teachers of African American children showed differences in practices or teaching styles but similarities in beliefs and practices around the social organization of their classrooms and engagement with students' communities.

Each of the methods for collecting data was necessary to the process of investigating the context of teacher agency. The quantitative phase of the study was used to arrive at a sample of participants. The PALS scores described effectiveness, the teacher beliefs survey described variance within the sample, and the interviews explored the participants' perspectives. The qualitative interview phase took priority in this study because it was crucial to the study's ability to explore the context of successful emergent literacy development. Pajares (1992) suggested that belief inventories, such as the Culturally Responsive Teacher Beliefs survey used in this study, in combination with qualitative interviews, can provide insight into teacher beliefs especially when complex and inconsistent beliefs are present. The consistency of teacher beliefs with classroom practice is an area of research that is debated in the literature because teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices can be inconsistent (Fang, 1996). This study attempted to account for possible inconsistency in teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices through sampling successful teachers according to gain scores over three years on a valid and reliable measure of emergent reading readiness.

The content and structure of this study relate to current studies in emergent literacy and culturally responsive teaching. In a mixed methods study of early literacy practices, Culatta, Kovarsky, Theodore, Franklin and Timler, (2003) used quantitative and qualitative methods to document an intervention designed to teach Head Start children rhyming and letter naming. Quantitative methods were used to evaluate the overall success of the intervention, while qualitative methods involving observation of rhyming and letter instructional activities as conversational turns in the lifeworld of the classroom were observed. In this study lifeworld refers to the values, beliefs, and personal histories of children and teachers that inform and present themselves in the social interactions of the classroom. This study highlighted an approach to understanding literacy development that acknowledges the high context- and culture-dependent nature of language and literacy instruction.

Summary

The study of Head Start teacher beliefs has been present since Head Start's inception. In Head Start the role of teachers' beliefs is considered to be an important influence on classroom quality and student outcomes (Harvey, White, Prather, Alter, & Hoffmeister, 1965; Emmerich, 1973; McCarty, Abbott-Shim, & Lambert, 1998; Pigott, 1998 Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak, & Johnson, 2001; Hawken, Johnson, & McDonnell, 2005; Hindman & Wasik, 2008). Recently the study of Head Start teachers' beliefs has turned to the study of teachers' beliefs and views of literacy development. This study adopted the viewpoint that teachers hold theories and beliefs about literacy that guide their decisions (DeFord, 1983; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). Rather than attempting to understand Head Start teachers' beliefs and practices through a lens of predetermined effective practices that support emergent literacy development as Hawken, Johnson, and McDonnell did (2005), this study asked teachers to describe what they do that they

believe successfully develops the emergent literacy of the African American boys in their classrooms.

Definitions

Culture: In this study, culture was the social context within which teachers and students interacted. It is present in individual, small group, and whole class interactions. Culture is also an influence on classrooms, schools, neighborhoods and society. Hofstede and McCrae (2004) describe culture as a social construction that is collective in nature, invisible but evident in behaviors, and true for some but not all members of a culture. For example, although racial identity is a social construction, it is a process participated in by both external society and internal interactions among the members of a group and those outside of the group (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995).

Culturally Relevant Teaching: Teachers who use a culturally relevant approach to teaching acknowledge, incorporate, and use their students' culture to their students' benefit (Au, 2009). This approach has many names in the research literature. The survey used in the study was meant to describe culturally relevant teaching beliefs that affect student achievement (Love & Kruger, 2005; Groulx, & Silva, 2010). Specifically, the survey explored teachers' beliefs about dominant vs. minority culture in predominately African American schools. Culturally relevant teaching makes learning more meaningful to students by using students' own backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences as the basis for learning (Guthrie, & Wigfield, 2000). Other terms encountered in the literature include culturally appropriate (Zhao, 2007), culturally aware (Walker-Dalhouse, & Dalhouse, 2006), multicultural (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Obiakor, 2009), warm demanders (Ware, 2006), and Dreamkeepers (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Emergent Literacy: Emergent literacy is an approach to understanding literacy

development that views the development of literacy skills along a continuum from infant and toddler experiences with sounds, print, and language to reading. It considers aspects of literacy such as reading, writing, and language to develop at the same time and to be interrelated (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; National Education Goals Panel, 1999).

Head Start: Head Start is an early childhood social service program established by the federal government in 1965 to fight poverty through comprehensive services to families and children (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler, 1989).

Head Start Teacher: An adult responsible for the development and care for children enrolled in a Head Start program. Teachers plan, implement, and assess school readiness curriculum including, emergent literacy, math, science, problem solving, approaches to learning. Teachers maintain healthy learning environments, support social emotional development, and encourage parent involvement. By September 2013, 50% of Head Start programs' teachers must hold a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or related degree with relevant experience (Head Start Act, 2007).

Poverty: Head Start uses federal poverty guidelines issued by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services to determine eligibility for enrollment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Head Start students' families must earn less than 125% of the poverty level (Head Start Act, 2007) in order to qualify for the program. Poverty is the demographic factor with the strongest influence over a child's life prospects (Brooks-Gunn, Britto, & Brady, 1999; Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998, Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). Children who live in poverty are likely

to attend lower quality schools than their affluent peers (Lee & Burkam, 2002), and it is the demographic factor that shows the strongest relationship to school failure (Rouse, & Fantuzzo, 2009). Risk factors associated with poverty that can affect academic success include prenatal and natal influences, quality of medical care, nutrition, family stresses, and neighborhood influences (Leroy & Symes, 2001).

School readiness: This study used the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services definition of school readiness. It states, school readiness is “a multi-faceted phenomenon comprising five developmental domains that are important to the child’s readiness for school: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language usage and emerging literacy, and cognition and general knowledge.” (p.3, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

Successful: Teachers in this study were termed successful if, over three years, their total African American boy students demonstrated gains that placed them in the top 33% of the sample according to Z-score gain, effect size, and statistical significance in the Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness (Townsend & Konold, 2010) dimensions of Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (Innvernizzi, Sullivan, Meier & Swank, 2004).

Teacher agency: Teacher agency according to Bandura’s social cognitive theory is a teacher’s ability “to intentionally make things happen by one’s actions.”

Urban: The U.S. Census describes urban as areas that have population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and are adjacent or surrounding areas with a population density of at least 500 people per square mile (U.S. Census, 2009). The setting for this study is a Head Start program in a mid-size South Eastern city. All participants in the study teach in

centers located within urban city limits.

Warm demander: A pedagogical approach associated with teaching African American children in which knowledge of students' culture and unconditional positive regard for students well being are combined. These teachers are authoritative and insist on high academic achievement and behavior that enables all students to learn. Clear expectations with appropriate disciplinary methods are utilized to alter misbehavior by students. Care is at the forefront of all interactions with students (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to help explain if Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) are important to successful emergent literacy instruction of urban African American boys living in poverty, or if CRTB are tangential to successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. An integrated methods approach was used to answer the research questions. In this study, neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone (Green, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989) could sufficiently describe the context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. Phase I was the quantitative phase of the study. Phase II was the qualitative phase.

In Phase I, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening was used to help describe a purposeful sample of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004; Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Also, in Phase I, the CRTB survey was used to discriminate culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs expressed by the entire sample of Head Start teachers and assisted in describing variation of beliefs within the sample pool. Phase II explained some of the results of the quantitative data collected in Phase I while exploring the perspectives and beliefs of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers. Phase II consisted of two rounds of interviews with the same four participants. The first interview included general questions based on dimensions of CRTB with follow-up questions

derived from CRTB statements shown to have divergent responses from the group of interview participants. The second-round interview included questions that utilized qualitative data from the first interview, teacher-made products provided by participants included lesson plans, pictures of classrooms, etc., and comparisons of participant first-round interview responses to survey responses. Quantitative and qualitative data were combined in construction of second-round interview questions in the analysis section and in the discussion section of the study. When integrated, the quantitative descriptions of successful teachers, along with their divergent beliefs, and the qualitative descriptions how teachers view their successful practices, were used to paint more vibrant picture of the research problem.

Setting

The setting of this study is a mid-sized Southeastern, urban city. The school system serves approximately 24,000 students, 21,000 of which are African American (U.S. Census, 2009). The majority of the school system's students (80%) qualify for free or reduced lunch. The Head Start program selected in this study has been in continuous operation, as a grantee of the local school board, since 1967. In accordance with school board policies, all Head Start teachers whose classrooms are in the public schools are expected to be certified to teach by the state department of education. There were 32 such classrooms in this public school district setting. Each classroom was staffed by one state-certified teacher and one instructional assistant. The program also included 16 child-care partner sites. The child-care partner classrooms are directed by child-care center directors, and the teachers in these sites are employed by the child-care center. There is one teacher and one assistant in these classrooms. These teachers are not necessarily certified to teach in the state. Child-care teachers all possess a Child Development Associate degree or a Bachelors degree. All instructional assistants hold or are in the process of

earning a Child Development Associate degree. A Head Start classroom may serve up to 20, 3- and 4-year-old students per classroom if the majority (51%) of the students are older than 4-years-old. However, the program generally enrolls 19 4-year-old students per classroom.

Head Start centers are located in communities based on analysis of community needs. Sites are primarily located in the most economically depressed areas of the city. This Head Start program served 784 3- and 4-year-old children. The ethnic make-up of the program was 92% African American, 6% Latino, 1% Caucasian and 1% other ethnicities. One hundred percent of the students enrolled in Head Start qualified for free lunch. In compliance with the Head Start Act (2007), 100% of the program's families are below the financial qualification cut-off of 130% of the federal poverty level. A family is considered to be living in poverty if its annual yearly income is less than \$22,050 for a family of four (Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). The Head Start program also enrolls and identifies exceptional education students. The Head Start Act (2007) requires that 10% of the student population served by a Head Start program be identified as exceptional education or students with special needs.

Target Population and Sample

The target population of this study was successful Head Start teachers of 4-year-old African American boys. The objective of identifying successful teachers was supported by considering each teacher's PALS scores over several years (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). By including at least three years of scores, the data were used to reflect a trend in teacher effectiveness as opposed to the individual scores of a particular class or individual students. Teacher success was determined using gain, effect size, and statistical significance. Covariance was controlled through use of multiple methods that address different threats to reliability. The covariance of student prior emergent literacy knowledge was controlled for through the use of

gain scores for African American boys in dimensions of Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness. This gain was derived from a teacher mean gain score of students as described by Townsend and Konold (2010). Teachers were ranked by the Z-score percent gain of African American boys in the two dimensions of emergent literacy. A Cohen's *d* calculation controlled for the covariance of the number of boys in each class. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) using each of the dimensions of emergent literacy determined statistically significant differences between teachers' success. Post hoc analysis determined which teachers had statistically significant differences in mean. In taking these steps to control for covariance through multiple measures, teachers were termed successful with reasonable confidence.

Recruitment of participants occurred through contact with the public school system in which the program was based and the Head Start program administration. Criteria for selection of participants included (1) three years worth of PALS data linked to the teacher and (2) work in a classroom that administers the PALS to at least 50% of its students. A total of 32 teachers in the Head Start program met these criteria. The interview participants were to be selected based on the need to maximize variation in sampling in order to explore differences between teachers' beliefs about culturally relevant teaching and their descriptions of classroom practices (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). As described in chapter four, this step in the purposeful sampling methodology was not fully utilized. However, the interview participants did respond to the survey with some variation that was later explored in Phase II. Interview participant qualification for the study was determined by successful PALS scores over three years. Decisions on participant selection were based on placing in the top 33% of participant scores using three different ways of understanding the dimensions of the emergent literacy described by the PALS.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?

This question implies the explanatory nature of the study. The CRTB survey generated the quantitative data used to describe the variety of culturally relevant teaching beliefs held by the sample of Head Start teachers. The survey was also used to discriminate the divergent CRTB responses of the interview participants and the content of questions asked in the interview. This quantitative question used archival PALS data collected by the Head Start program in the study as the measure of emergent literacy success. It proposed that there may be a relationship between culturally relevant teaching beliefs and successful emergent literacy teaching. Data collected and analyzed in answering RQ1 determined the sample participants of RQ2 and informed the interview questions. Teachers were selected based on placing in the top 33% of boys' scores in the Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness dimensions of emergent literacy, as measured by PALS scores. Participants included four teachers in the top 20th percentile of teachers with divergent CRTB responses who agreed to be interviewed (Brown, 1991; Callahan, 1995).

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?

This question explored successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' divergent beliefs in relation to their teaching practices. It applied a triadic reciprocal causation model to understanding success by controlling for two aspects of the teaching context triad. The

environment was addressed in selection of Head Start teachers with successful boys' PALS scores. The beliefs of the participants as defined by the CRTB responses provide the independent variable. Finally, participants' views about their successful practices is the dependant variable. Semi-structured interview data were integrated with quantitative data for a comparative case study of the participants' perspectives.

Research Design

This study used a two-phase, integrated methods, comparative case study design (Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006) that was sequential and explanatory (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). The data documented the context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The flow chart below describes the quantitative and qualitative methods, processes, and data collected (see Figure 4).

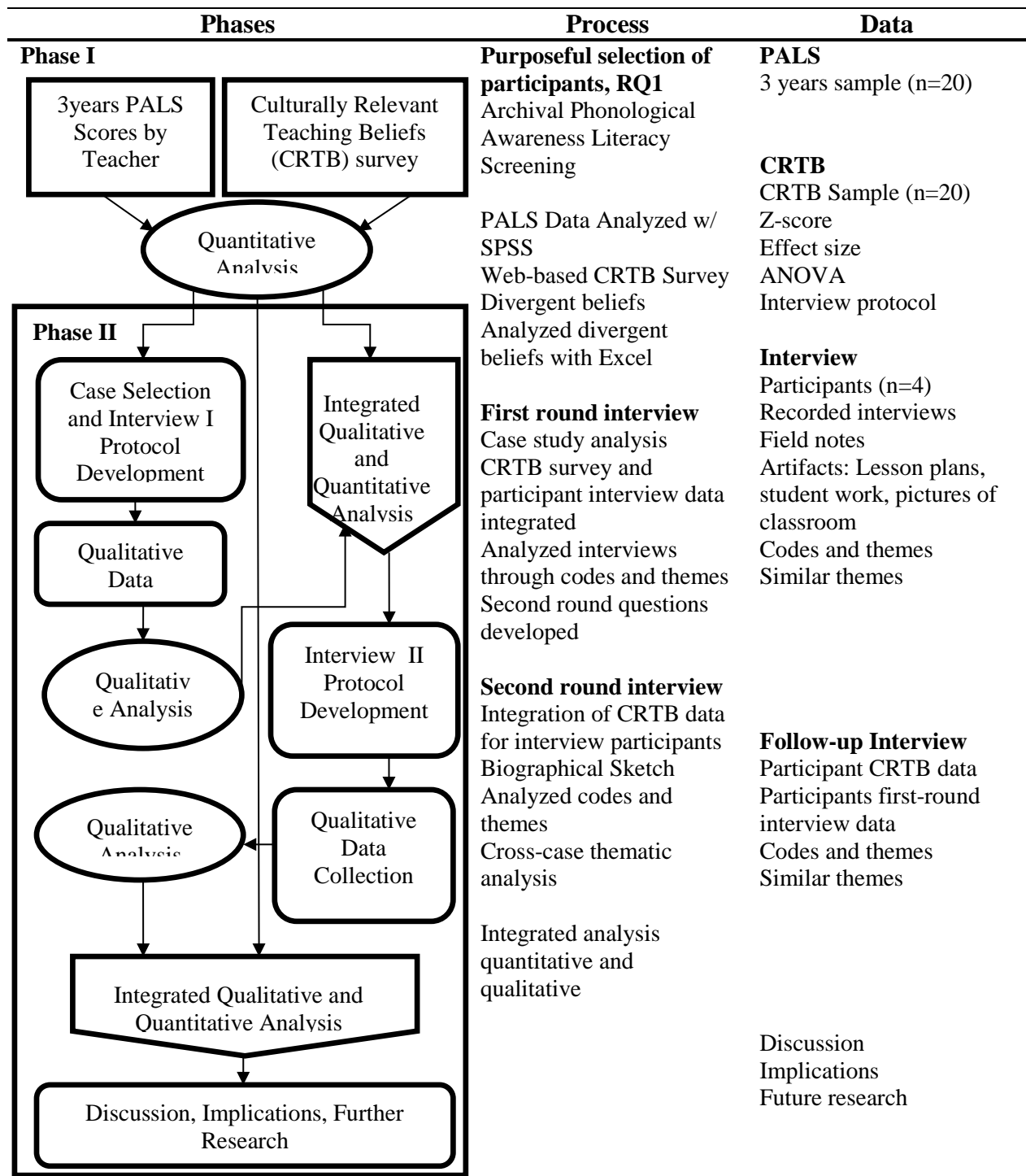


Figure 4. Visual representation of the sequential explanatory mixed methods study design, based on Ivankova and Stick (p. 98, 2006).

The order and process of data collection, from quantitative data to qualitative data, was necessary to answer the research questions. Phase I of the study identified the sample of

successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty based on three years of PALS data. Phase I also described teachers based on their responses to a survey of culturally relevant teaching beliefs. The use of student gain data over three years, in combination with culturally relevant teaching belief data to identify participants \, was meant to connect teacher success to teacher beliefs before asking teachers about how their thoughts on success with boys.

The qualitative interviews asked teachers to describe their beliefs and practices about teaching. Questions asked during the interview included prompts such as, "What is happening in your classroom when you are really teaching well?", "How do you understand or address your students' backgrounds in your teaching?", and "What does it feel like to be a boy in your class?" These questions served the inquiry by focusing on what teachers did and thought about their students' experiences. Themes that related to questions in the CRTB survey were reexamined in the follow-up interview. Based on the first-round interview, follow-up questions were developed for the second interview, such as "Have you ever helped a parent meet a basic need of a child you were teaching?", "When you think about the behavior in your classroom how is student behavior related to learning?", and "Have you noticed any patterns in how boys and girls experience stress, anger, or frustration?" As the interviewee answered, responses that echoed the data reflected in the CRTB survey served as the basis for expansion questions. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared and juxtaposed in the findings, discussion, implications, and future research sections of the study.

Phase I combined three years of boys' emergent literacy growth scores on an accountability tool currently utilized to help teachers understand student emergent literacy development, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, (PALS) (Invernizzi, Sullivan,

Meier, & Swank, 2004). In addition, participants completed an online survey of Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) (Love & Kruger, 2005). Using the quantitative data from Phase I, interview participants who qualified into the study through successful PALS scores and using maximum variation principle as a rationale (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) were contacted to be interviewed in Phase II of the study.

Phase II consisted of two rounds of semi-structured interviews. Participants' responses to the CRTB survey were used to describe variation in beliefs of Head Start teachers in the total sample. CRTB survey responses were also used to define follow-up questions in first-round interviews. In second-round interviews, participants' CRTB responses were compared to interview responses from the first interview. Clarification of puzzling interview responses and CRTB responses were sought from participants. Participants were asked if they would like to provide archival materials, such as lesson plans, teacher products, and pictures of classrooms, to reflect teacher practice and to enrich the interview process.

Upon completion of the first-round of interviews, a preliminary analysis based on field notes, artifacts, and interviews was completed. A memorandum was written to the principal investigator and methodologist that described participants' culturally relevant beliefs and their likely identity based on comparison of the CRTB survey and the interview analysis. After the first-round of interviews, the researcher received the participants' responses to the survey of cultural awareness. Interviews and survey responses were compared. A second memorandum describing congruence and puzzles based on the comparison of the interview participants' CRTB survey data and interview responses was completed. Inconsistencies and puzzles presented by CRTB responses and interview data were the focus of follow-up interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared and analyzed in the construction of the second interview protocol

and subsequent analysis of the data.

Pilot

A pilot study was undertaken to ensure that moving the survey from a paper to an online version did not interfere with the reliability and validity of the survey. The implementation of the three-stage consent process was also piloted. The first two stages followed the online survey. The pilot was conducted with a population of pre-k teachers in a state-funded early childhood program located in the same city as the study sample. Randomly selected participants were contacted after implementation to provide feedback on the survey and consent process.

In Love and Kruger's (2005) study, teachers in five kindergarten through fifth grade urban elementary schools and one urban middle school were surveyed. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to explore the CRTB survey results. In Love and Kruger's study exploratory factor analysis revealed six dimensions of CRTB. These dimensions include teachers' beliefs about the construction of knowledge, beliefs about students' race, ethnicity, and culture, beliefs about social relations in and beyond the classroom, beliefs about the teaching profession, and beliefs about students' strengths and needs. The sample size was too small to conduct exploratory factor analysis using the Guttman (1954) varimax rotation or Cattell's scree requirement. The small sample size also prevented the use of Cronbach's alpha to determine internal relationships between survey items.

The pilot was sent via email to preschool teachers from the state preschool program. The pilot was implemented twice. The first pilot was sent to 40 participants and seven emails were returned. There were no respondents to the first pilot. The second survey was implemented with 47 recipients. Four teachers responded to the online survey. Two teachers did not consent to the survey process, and two teachers completed the survey but did not provide an email contact in

the consent process to indicate a desire to be interviewed in the qualitative phase of the study. Three randomly selected recipients of the survey were contacted after the survey implementation to find out if they had received the survey or had any difficulty accessing the survey. All three teachers indicated they had received the survey but had chosen not to complete it because it was intended for Head Start teachers and not teachers in the program in which they were employed. This interference with the implementation of the pilot survey was resolved in the implementation of the study survey.

Two respondents completed the pilot survey. Both teachers were female aged 45-55 years. The two teachers differed on other personal characteristics. In order to simplify the description of the results of the survey these teachers will be described as Teacher A and Teacher B. Teacher A indicated she was Black or African American, had 10-15 years teaching experience in Head Start, 10-15 years of experience teaching, and had earned a graduate degree. Teacher B indicated she was White, had 20-25 years of experience teaching Head Start, had taught for 26 or more years, and had earned a Bachelor's degree plus additional graduate classes.

The pilot teachers differed in their responses to the survey on 24 of the 46 questions. Of the 24 differential responses there were six responses in which the respondents' answers differed in the intensity. For example, Teacher A indicated she "Strongly Agreed" with the statement "1E. One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts." while Teacher B indicated she "Agreed" with the statement. Of the remaining responses, six responses were directionally different. One teacher indicated agreement or strong agreement with the culturally relevant perspective while the other indicated agreement or strong agreement with the assimilationist perspective. Twelve responses differed because one respondent indicated an opinion and the other indicated

"Undecided" or "No Answer".

Analysis beyond a simple comparison was limited by the sample response. Although no statistical measures could be used to determine the goodness of fit for the described dimensions in the pilot study, there was one important finding in the analysis of the pilot responses. The majority of the responses in each of the dimensions of CRTB were culturally relevant. In one dimension though, social relations in and beyond the classroom, responses were evenly distributed between culturally relevant items that valued the culture of students in teaching practices and assimilationist responses which expected the student to conform to the school setting and processes.

The pilot study included implementation of the semi-structured interview questions with one teacher selected through convenience sampling. The pilot participant was a preschool teacher who taught 4-year-old students in a public school setting similar to the teachers who made up the study sample. Data from this pilot are not part of the final study or its results. The researcher reflected on the process of interviewing and collaborated with the peer reviewer and committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions.

Institutional Review Board

An application for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was submitted to Virginia Commonwealth University and the local educational agency's IRB. All required consent forms were completed, and protocols were followed. After approval was received from the IRB, the study began.

The process of informed consent may be an insufficient descriptor of the risks inherent to research conducted in a place of work shared by the interviewer and interviewee. To strengthen the process of informed consent and minimize coercion risks to the participant, three-stages of

informed consent were included (Malone, 2003). This process enabled the participant to decide whether to participate in the interview after learning the identity of the researcher. The methodology for participant selection is based on Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva's (2004) study of high quality preschool centers in England. The researchers were kept blind to the quantitative data of the study. The qualitative phase of the study was conducted by researchers who had previously established relationships, over one to three years, with the participating high quality child-care centers. The researcher was then provided by the third-party with the numerical identification numbers of the prime candidates for interview to include up to eight teachers. Participants were contacted by a third-party peer reviewer in descending order of qualification until six participants were secured.

Phase I data collection was conducted through a web-based survey. Email addresses were obtained from the Head Start program, and the survey was delivered electronically by a third-party. A priming email was sent the week before the survey was available. The survey was hosted on Inquisite.com, an online survey hosting website. Participants were emailed the survey web address. In order to control for potentially low response rate of a web-based survey, a process modified from Dillman's (2007) protocol was used. Participants were sent email reminders five and 10 days following the release of the survey in a two-phase follow-up process (Dillman, 2007). The last email restated the importance of the respondents' completion of the survey. In the first stage of consent, the participants was asked if they agreed to complete a survey of their culturally relevant teaching beliefs. The survey items were randomly presented to participants in order to prevent bias. The survey consisted of 48 statements about culturally relevant or assimilationist perspectives on teaching. Following the survey, participants were asked for demographic information. Finally, participants were presented the second stage of

consent.

In the second stage of the consent process, participants were asked if they were willing to be contacted by a third-party peer reviewer, an employee of a local university, who assisted in the completion of the study. If participants agreed to being contacted, they were asked to submit their names and emails. This stage of consent did not imply that the respondent agreed to being interviewed, only to being contacted by the peer reviewer. Identifying information was removed from the PALS scores and CRTB survey responses by the peer reviewer before analysis of the data by the researcher.

The researcher received from the peer reviewer anonymous data with 6-digit identification numbers (ID) to represent names of participants. The ID numbers were unique within each data set used in analysis of the cultural survey data and PALS data. The analysis served in construction of the semi-structured interview protocol. After the first-round of interviews was conducted, the researcher received the CRTB responses, but never received the raw PALS scores linked by name to participants. Participants were contacted by the peer reviewer. Upon contact by the peer reviewer, participants were informed that the interview consisted of questions about their teaching practices. The peer reviewer also informed the participant of the identity of the researcher and secured participant agreement. From these possible participants, teachers who represented divergent CRTB responses to survey items were contacted by the peer reviewer for potential interviews.

In the third stage of informed consent, participants were asked if they were willing to be interviewed by the researcher, a child development specialist in the Head Start organization in which they are employed. Participants received a biography of the interviewer and a more detailed explanation of the interview process including time required and choices of location

available to the participants. If the participant agreed to being interviewed by the researcher, the third-party peer reviewer provided the participant's contact information to the researcher. Permission to record interviews was secured before the researcher and participants met and confirmed before the interview session begins.

Phase I Instrumentation

This study integrated two qualitative measures in its design. The first, the PALS, served as way to sample successful teachers. The PALS was used to identify successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers. The second, the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey, provided a way to discriminate participants based on their culturally relevant beliefs and informed the development of the first and second-round interview questions and analysis. The technical analysis of each measure is described below.

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)

The data collected in this study represents three aspects of what occurs in the complex interactions between successful Head Start teachers and urban African American boys living in poverty. A pragmatic approach to data collection used the results of an emergent literacy screening, responses to the CRTB survey and teachers' descriptions of what makes them successful to create a picture of successful Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The study used the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screenings (PALS), a performance-based assessment of students' emergent literacy development, as a measure to describe successful teacher agency (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004, Bandura, 2001). The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screenings were developed by the University of Virginia through a grant to support the Early Intervention Reading Initiative, a state-wide early literacy intervention implemented by Virginia. The PALS-PreK intended use is for educators to

understand children's emerging literacy development. Gains in PALS scores represent the results of teacher agency and Head Start boys' learning.

The PALS-PreK was designed to provide information that leads practitioners to consider student emergent literacy achievement through the lens of struggling development, emergent development, and benchmark development. Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, and Swank (2004), the developers of the instrument, recommend caution in ascribing predictive power to the PALS-PreK because of the naturally uneven development of emergent literacy in early childhood and because the PALS-PreK was developed to support practitioners. However, a study cited in the PALS-PreK technical manual examined the predictive validity of the instrument. A discriminant function analysis of the PALS-PreK in relation to the PALS-K and PALS 1-3 found a relationship between the instruments. The PALS-K and PALS 1-3 were developed as screening tools to identify students in need of intervention beyond classroom instruction. In the discriminant analysis study the PALS-PreK accurately classified 86.5% of children found by the PALS-K to need either additional literacy instruction (i.e. tutoring) or not need additional literacy instruction outside of normal classroom instruction (Invernizzi et al. 2004). The PALS-PreK further accurately classified 75.3% of children on the PALS 1-3 (Invernizzi, et al. 2004). In both analyses the accuracy of the prediction was related to successful emergent literacy development, higher PALS-PreK scores suggested a positive outcome. Children with higher PALS-PreK scores were more likely to achieve PALS benchmarks in kindergarten and first grade (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004).

Although emergent literacy develops in young children at inconsistent rates over the period of early childhood (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004), the developers of the PALS instrument have attempted to describe a range of emergent

literacy skills that provides some indication of future literacy development. Using statistical means, the developers of the PALS-PreK determined spring developmental ranges. These ranges were determined using data from the first PALS-PreK, pilot studies, and longitudinal studies that consider the relationship of the PALS-PreK to student performance on the PALS-K and PALS 1-3 (Invernizzi, et al., 2004). In determining the PALS-PreK spring developmental ranges, Invernizzi et al. (2004) examined student performance on the PALS 1-3 to determine which students were identified as reading successfully in first grade. These students' scores were then divided into quartiles. Students' PALS-PreK scores in the bottom quartile of students reading successfully in first grade had been used to describe the emerging ranges on PALS-PreK assessments. When students' PALS-PreK spring scores fell into the struggling range, they were less likely to be reading successfully in first grade. Students whose PALS scores were in the benchmark range were most likely reading successfully in first grade. Through the computation of weighted gain scores in Alphabet Awareness and Print and Phonological Awareness (Townsend & Konold, 2010), teachers whose boys' gain scores are not mostly in the benchmark range, especially in Alphabet knowledge subtasks, did not qualify for the study.

While it may not be prudent to use the PALS-PreK to predict the individual emergent literacy potential of a child, it might be reasonable to consider it an effective way to describe teacher agency in developing emergent literacy. The predictive ability of the PALS-PreK is increased with higher scores. This study assumes that when a Head Start teacher consistently enables student gains in emergent literacy as evidenced by the PALS, especially when those gains are from struggling to benchmark ranges, a teacher has created a successful context for students. In order to increase the likelihood that a teacher recruited into the study actually is a successful emergent literacy Head Start teacher, weighted student gains in the Alphabet

Awareness and Print and Phonological Awareness dimensions (Townsend & Konold, 2010) described by the PALS were used in the participant selection process.

Procedures

The goal of Phase I of the study was to identify a purposeful sample of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys. The PALS data in this study were considered to be the result of teachers' agency. Data were collected through the solicitation of three years of Spring PALS scores from the Head Start program represented in the study and the PALS office. Students' identifying characteristics, except for the race/ethnicity and gender of students, were removed.

Data Analysis

The PALS assessment samples were taken from eight areas of phonological and emergent literacy development, including name writing, upper-case and lower-case letter identification, letter sounds, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness. The PALS is particularly useful as a predictor of early reading ability, as alphabet knowledge, due to its strong reliability and validity in measuring the domain of emergent literacy, makes up the bulk of the assessment (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The PALS technical manual provided guidance for the use of PALS scores. The alphabet tasks in the assessment make up the bulk of item-level information. In the alphabet knowledge subtasks students identified upper-case and lower-case letters. If a student could name more than 16 letters, they moved on to the lower-case letters. In the technical manual a crosstab analysis of results of the PALS pilot study showed that students who could name nine or more lower-case letters could also produce some letter sounds (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004).

Townsend and Konold (2010) conducted exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory

factor analysis on state-reported PALS scores. They found that the PALS describes two distinct dimensions of emergent literacy, Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness (see Table 1). The upper-case alphabet, the lowercase alphabet, and letter sounds tasks load onto the Alphabet Knowledge dimension. The letter sounds, name writing, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness load onto the Print and Phonological Awareness dimension. The letter sounds task loads onto both tasks. These dimensions were used to derive weighted scores for boys by teacher.

Table 1. Weighted Dimensions of Emergent Literacy

Alphabet Knowledge	Weight	Print and Phonological Awareness	Weight
Upper-case Letter Recognition	1.00	Name Writing	.167
Lower-case Letter Recognition	.727	Beginning Sounds	.199
Letter Sounds	.375	Letter Sounds	.375
		Rhyme Awareness	.157
		Print and Phonological Awareness	.136
		Nursery Rhymes	.078

The table above describes the relationship of PALS subtasks to Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness dimensions of emergent literacy as drawn from Townsend and Konold (2010). This figure describes the weights to be used to determine teacher mean scores.

The classroom mean scores for African American boys were analyzed to measure success in three separate ways. The first measure of success identified teachers whose African American boys experienced the greatest gain compared to the sample mean (Z-score) from fall to spring over three years. The second measure of success identified teachers that produced the greatest

spring effect size gain as a percentile ranking as described by a Cohen's d calculation (Cohen, J. 1992). The third measure identified teachers that generated statistically significant differences in mean gain from their peers in classroom scores for African American boys.

These three analyses compared the top 33% of teachers within each measure considered eligible for the study. Teachers who appeared within all three measures were considered prime candidates. Eligible teachers in two of the three measures were also considered candidates. Final selection of participants was determined through analysis of the CRTB responses of the eligible teachers. Items with bimodal distribution were identified, and candidates whose responses represented the greatest variation within these items were contacted for participation in Phase II of the study. Participants were contacted in descending order of success from highest to lowest rank as described by the measures of success and according to usefulness in providing variation of CRTB item responses. The final group of participants included four teachers, with a variety of culturally relevant teaching beliefs, who were partially determined to be successful based on the Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness dimensions of the PALS for African American boys.

Reliability and Validity

The PALS was developed as a tool to assist educators in the early identification and prevention of reading problems. The tasks completed in the PALS by students were based on previously developed assessments of emergent literacy. Its procedures were developed based on developmentally appropriate practices in the assessment of emergent literacy and psycho-educational research. The tasks were developed and field tested through several pilot studies. Tasks were revised, and reliability estimates were determined and compared to previous iterations of the instrument. The seven tasks included in the PALS are reliable indicators of later

reading readiness (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). During the pilot phase, data were examined for internal consistency and inter-rater reliability. Cronbach's alpha and Guttman split-half analysis revealed a high range of internal consistency. The range for the Cronbach's alpha was .77- .93. The range for the Guttman split-half was .71-.94. Both analyses are considered to be within the acceptable range. The inter-rater reliability is considered to be nearly perfect with all items producing Pearson correlations of .99. Reliability assessments were conducted by race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Cronbach's alpha produced consistent coefficients to the whole group.

Content validity

The PALS maintains a high degree of validity as a measure of emergent literacy. The content validity of the PALS is assured through several means. The PALS was developed consistent with research literature (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). The literature describes two types of phonological awareness including beginning sound awareness and rhyme awareness (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Beginning sound awareness is represented by the Beginning Sound task and Letter Sound task of the PALS. Rhyme awareness is represented in the Rhyme Awareness task and Nursery Rhyme task of the instrument.

The procedure for the Alphabet Knowledge section is made up of students' naming upper-case letters, lower-case letters, and letter sounds. The letter identification tasks sample student knowledge of all 26 letters and so represent the whole of the dimension, although the leveled structure of the procedure for the task leaves potential gaps in measurement. If a student could identify more than 16 upper-case letters, they moved on to the lower-case letters. It is possible that a student could know fewer upper-case letters than lower-case letters and not be

permitted to demonstrate that knowledge on the assessment. The next step in the Alphabet Knowledge procedure also leaves room for misunderstanding of student knowledge. Students must recognize nine lower-case letters to move on to the letter sound task (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). A crosstab analysis of results of the PALS-PreK pilot study showed that students who could name nine or more lower-case letters could also produce some letter sounds. (Invernizzi, et al., 2004). This procedure could cause a student not to be assessed on letter sound knowledge because of a weakness in letter identification ability. The PALS-Prek was reviewed once at its inception in 2000 and once at its revision in 2004 by emergent literacy expert advisory panels (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004).

Construct validity

The construct validity in the pilot study was examined through factor analysis. This analysis produced a single factor in the sample with an eigenvalue of 2.9. This is sufficient evidence that the PALS measures the construct of emergent literacy (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). However, Townsend and Konold's (2010) study determined there were two dimensions measured by the PALS, Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness.

Criterion-related validity

Concurrent criterion validity was examined through comparison to three external measures of literacy including *The Test of Awareness of Language Segments (TALS)*, *the Child Observation Record (COR)*, and *The Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-3)* (Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004). The PALS maintains a wide range of concurrent validity with accepted emergent literacy and early reading measures.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Survey

The goal of this phase of the study was to describe divergence in teacher beliefs about culturally relevant teaching of urban African American students within the sample of successful teachers. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey used in this study was based on a broad range of research into successful teachers of poor, urban, African American students (Delpit, 2006; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001; Murrell, 1993; Willis, 1995). Specifically, it is based on the qualitative case studies of Ladson-Billings (1994) who described these types of teachers as Dreamkeepers.

The survey was modified to provide for additional explanatory interviews based on its results. Modifications included identifying demographic information of the participants and placing the survey online. Love and Kruger (2005), the developers of the survey, suggest that the instrument be revised in order to better represent the factors associated with successful teachers of urban, African American students by revising and/or deleting some of the items. Test-retest reliability was established through the multiple study structure used in *Teacher Beliefs and Student Achievement in Urban Schools Serving African American Students* (Love & Kruger, 2005).

Procedures

The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey was chosen because it specifically addressed the beliefs of academically successful teachers of urban African American students living in poverty. It classified teachers' beliefs about the culture of the students they teach within a particular context, the historically underserved poor, urban, African American students, as opposed to a cross-cultural awareness of diversity. The technique used to collect these data was an online survey that used statements of beliefs with agreement or disagreement measured on a

5-point Likert scale. The survey represented teachers' self-reported beliefs about culturally relevant teaching.

The survey was divided into three sections. The first, statements of beliefs, has a 5-point Likert-type scale that described the six domains identified in the survey of cultural beliefs. The six domains included teachers' beliefs about knowledge, students' race, ethnicity and culture, social relations in and beyond the classroom, teaching as a profession, teaching practice, and students' strengths and needs. These dimensions were explored through 5 to 12 statements. Statements are considered representative of either culturally relevant or assimilationist beliefs. Level of agreement or disagreement with the statements provided the numeric data used in the analysis. The second section was a questionnaire of demographic variables including teacher background, experience, and training. Lastly, in the second stage of informed consent, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted for an interview regarding their teaching.

Data Analysis

The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey data were analyzed for internal consistency using *Cronbach's alpha* (Love & Kruger, 2005). Descriptive statistics by demographic variables were run in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The target sample's CRTB responses were analyzed for divergent beliefs. Up to 12 divergent beliefs found within the total sample were used in selecting the successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers to be interviewed. These same response items served as the basis of follow-up questions asked in the qualitative phase of the study. Participants were contacted for interviews in descending order, from highest to lowest, of dimensions of emergent literacy. The teacher with the highest Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness score and the highest

CRTB score was contacted by the peer reviewer first. Next, the participant with the highest Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness score but the lowest CRTB classification score was contacted. This procedure was used to sort the four successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty by divergent beliefs but similarly high emergent literacy outcomes for boys.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the culturally relevant beliefs survey was investigated through a pilot study. The content validity of the survey is supported by the majority of research into successful teachers of poor, urban, African American students (Delpit, 2006; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001; Murrell, 1993; Willis, 1995). This survey was developed based on the characteristics of successful teachers of urban, African American students described in Ladson-Billings' *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. Ladson-Billings' research described teachers as having a teaching style that is based on culturally relevant beliefs or a teaching style based on beliefs that African American students should assimilate into society.

The original survey study attempted to identify culturally relevant beliefs that correlated with academic gains in elementary schools. The range of internal consistency of the instrument as it was used in the study was less than adequate ($\alpha = .75$). The internal consistency for items associated with culturally relevant beliefs was higher (.80) than for the assimilationist beliefs (.72). The polarized understanding of culturally relevant beliefs represented in the study combined with the typical errors associated with participant self-report, including answering questions in socially acceptable ways, could be an influence on the less than adequate reliability coefficient. However, the application of the CRTB within this study was more adequate because

it provided a way to discriminate beliefs of the participants and a rationale for the interview process.

Phase II: Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative question (RQ2) explored how four Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, described what makes them successful. It elicited the participants' explanation of their successful practices, especially related to their culturally relevant teaching beliefs. The technique to produce data was face-to-face semi-structured interviews of teachers. Two rounds of interviews were conducted.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The interviews used a semi-structured format (see Appendix C, p.347) with core questions developed before hand and follow-up questions asked during the interviews. The first-round interviews were based on the CRTB dimensions of culturally relevant teaching. Data and analysis of the CRTB for the total program informed follow-up questions asked in the first-round interview. The second-round interview incorporated core questions based on analysis of the first-round interviews, comparison of the first-round interviews and the participants' CRTB responses, and individual follow-up questions based on the participants' responses to both forms of data.

Interview I

The researcher asked five interview questions (Appendix C, p. 345) that focused on teachers' descriptions of their practices related to culturally relevant teaching beliefs. Follow-up questions were asked based on items from the CRTB survey that yielded divergent responses for the entire sample. During the first-round interview, how participants responded to the items on the culturally relevant beliefs survey was not known to the researcher. This enabled the researcher to ask questions about teacher practice related to culturally relevant beliefs, in a

neutral, non-leading manner that was unbiased by the CRTB responses. The beliefs of participants emerged through teachers' descriptions of how they came to teach in Head Start, what learning looked like in their classrooms, how teachers viewed the lives of their students, and their sense of efficacy in teaching urban African American boys living in poverty. Participants were informed that the interview would be transcribed verbatim from the digitally recorded archive and were given the opportunity to review and correct their answers as transcribed. The interviews of participants lasted between one and two hours. Participants were asked to provide examples of teacher products, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, or anonymous examples of student work, for the second-round interview.

Interview I Data Analysis

Preliminary analysis was completed based on first-round interviews. A sketch of each of the participants was completed, including hypotheses about their CRTB responses on the survey. After receiving the participants' responses to the CRTB survey, additional analysis was conducted based on the new data. Instances of agreement and puzzlement responses based on the combination of interview data and CRTB responses were compiled into a memorandum. The researcher consulted with the principal investigator (PI), methodologist, and peer reviewer to determine second-round interview questions. A set of core questions were constructed along with follow-up questions specific to the participants to clarify answers to first-round interview questions and CRTB responses.

Interview II

In the second-round of interviews, teachers were asked to expand on or explain their responses on the survey compared to their responses to the first interview. Questions to the participant were specific with the intention of understanding their perspectives and included

discussion of any teacher products, lesson plans, teaching materials, or anonymous student work supplied by the participant.

Interview II Data Analysis

Analysis of the data collected during this interview was compared and contrasted with teachers' responses to the first-round interview questions. Data was examined through an affinity diagram (Winchip, 2001) to explore the relative importance of themes to the participants. Cross-case comparative analysis explored similarities and differences between participants' discussion of culturally relevant teaching beliefs.

The analysis included the following steps: (1) reviewed and commented on each interview and wrote memos concerning each case along with connections to other cases; (2) data were coded using a naturalistic approach; (3) themes emerged from collecting and analyzing codes; (4) connecting themes were developed; and (5) a biographical sketch was described for each case and informed the cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2002). A visual representation of emerging themes was developed. When applicable, the analysis of the qualitative data was compared to the quantitative data collected in the first phase of the study.

Validity

The researcher used several processes to validate the study and establish the credibility of findings. The processes included (1) member checking on transcription and then again on codes and themes identified in the interview and data analysis; (2) triangulation through repeated questions of stated beliefs; (3) thick description; and (4) use of a third-party peer reviewer. In the case of this study, the peer reviewer was approved by the dissertation committee.

Limitations

As with all social science research, the methodology of this study held limitations associated with the process of research. Due to the qualitative component of the integrated methods study there were limitations associated with the role of the researcher and the design of the study.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in the quantitative phase of the study consisted of collecting and analyzing data from the online survey. The researcher's job of child development specialist was predominately concerned with quality assurance and professional development. The power relationship between the researcher and the participant could be viewed as inherently unequal. It is possible that the participant might consider there to be a risk in participating in the study, either indirectly due to the influence the researcher may have on future or current job prospects, or through the perceived role of the researcher as a supervisor with evaluative authority.

Reactivity

Reactivity is a serious concern in the research context described in this study. Reactivity is the effect of the researcher and the participant on the collection and interpretation of qualitative data (Patterson, 1994). Several practical strategies were adopted to reduce reactivity concerns in the study as well as emotional risks to the participants and the researcher, including multiple stage informed consent and participants learning of the researcher before the researcher knew the identity of the participant. This process protected the participant from having to decide under the influence of the researcher's knowledge of their potential participation.

In the second, qualitative phase of the study, the researcher was closely involved with both the participants and the subject matter. The threat to the study of this involvement is the

reactivity of the researcher and the participant. Due to the knowledge and relationships the researcher and participants have previously established, this study could be considered coercive in its conception (Rallis & Rossman, 2010). This risk has been addressed prior to teacher participation as much as possible through several stages of informed consent. During the interview process it was stated that the researcher was a child development specialist and would maintain the role of a child development specialist during the interview. If, at any time, the participants felt uncomfortable, they could end the interview with no consequences. The participants were informed that they would not be judged based on their honesty or ability to answer questions. There are other difficulties possible because of the intimate relationships of the researcher and participants including researcher bias.

Researcher Bias

Potential bias concerns on the part of the interviewer required meticulously reflexive interviewing practices including pre- and post-interview memoranda to bracket the researcher's observations and experiences. The identifying information of the PALS participants and the survey participant were held blind to the researcher in order to prevent bias in the interview process. The researcher began each first-round interview by asking the participant to describe themselves and their relationship with the researcher. This interview technique helped to bracket, at least for the researcher, prior experiences and the shared relationship of the researcher and participant.

An additional potential opportunity for bias was that the researcher may not pursue discussion topics where the interviewer knew enough of the context of the participant that the interviewer could finish their sentence. The positive result of this reaction is that power differentials are minimized or sidestepped (Enosh, Ben-Ari, & Buchbinder, 2008). There were

also limitations associated with the design of the study including the researcher's assumptions about the data collected.

Design Limitations

Limitations of this study derived from the mixed-method design and confounding variables that are inherent in a pragmatic approach to data collection. There were limitations in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. A small sample size may skew data collected in the quantitative phase of the study. The small sample size may also cause analysis of data to find correlations between the two measures (PALS and Culture Survey) that would disappear in a larger data set. The qualitative phase of the study does not apply to a population beyond the sample population. The researcher's shared history with the topic of the study and the participants in the study may have caused bias in collection and analysis of data.

The researcher made several assumptions about the value of the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the course of the study. The first assumption was that a state-supported emergent literacy screening instrument designed to be used to inform teacher practice is a reliable indicator of teacher effectiveness. This decision was based on the state's indication in the judicial review study of the state preschool program that the scores produced on the PALS-PreK by students are a reliable indicator of program quality and teacher effectiveness. This decision was strengthened by using several years of archived data to determine participant selection. The second was that teachers will respond honestly and accurately to the cultural beliefs survey. This was an inherent risk of using surveys to collect data. This weakness was addressed through the process of checking participants' answers to the survey against descriptions of their practices and through asking participants to clarify and expand their answers to questions in the survey. The third assumption was that how teachers describe their practices is

related to what teachers actually do in their classrooms. The possible interaction between teachers' beliefs about culture and their professional practices provide much of the substance of this study. Due to the inability of an observer to know the thoughts of a teacher while they are teaching, the decision was made to interview participants about their practices based on their responses to a survey about their cultural beliefs. Weaknesses inherent in this process were addressed through asking participants to confirm their responses and through a second interview that asked participants to clarify and explain their answers provided in the first interview.

Purposeful Sample Analysis

The survey data intended to identify successful teachers was the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). However, due to the small sample size that agreed to be interviewed this were not possible. As an additional measure of success the participants' interview data was compared to the Head Start performance standards (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). The following section describes the implementation of these measures as they applied to the selected participants.

PALS Sample Analysis

The sample methodology included PALS scores for 40 participants. Of these participants, only 20 potential participants had three years of PALS scores. Included below is the data available for these participants. The descriptive analysis of PALS scores is presented alongside the data available from Pam and Candice (pseudonyms), the two participants with three years of PALS scores who agreed to participate in the interview phase of the study. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Analysis of a pretest (fall PALS scores)/post-test (spring PALS scores) model of teacher gain scores for urban African American boys living in poverty over three years was used to describe teacher success. Townsend and Konold (2010) used an

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine two latent variables of emergent literacy assessed by the PALS PreK instrument (see Table 1, p. 112). This study combined the eight tasks of the PALS into two latent dimensions (Townsend & Konold, 2010) of emergent literacy. The dimensions are described as Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness.

The latent dimensions of emergent literacy are based on the rationale that each of the PALS tasks addresses a part of emergent literacy. The scores are based on the predominant view that upper-case letter recognition is the most reliable predictor of future reading ability (National Reading Panel, 2000; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). The PALS tasks included in the Alphabet Knowledge latent dimension are upper-case recognition, lower case letter recognition, and a partial score for letter sound task as this task influenced both the Alphabet Knowledge dimension and the Print and Phonological Awareness dimension. The Print and Phonological Awareness dimension includes the name writing task, beginning sounds, letter sounds, rhyme awareness, Print and Phonological Awareness, and nursery rhymes.

PALS scores were converted into the Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness dimensions of emergent literacy for the purposes of measuring relative success within the sample. Quantitative data were entered into the statistical software program, SPSS version 19 (2012), and Microsoft Excel for analysis. Three calculations used latent dimensions of emergent literacy to determine teacher success. The dimensions of Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness (Townsend & Konold, 2010) were used to measure Z-score gain above the mean for each participant. These dimensions were also used to calculate effect size gain as compared to every other participant. Finally, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine statistically significant differences in mean gain in the two weighted scores of latent variables. Statistical significance was determined by a .05 alpha level. Participants were ranked

based on size of Z-score gain and average effect size. The mean scores for the total sample and for the sample of participants with three years of PALS as follows.

Table 2. The Weighted Mean Gain for Sample with Three Years of PALS and Interview

Participants

Participant	Weighted Mean Gain for Alphabet Knowledge	Weighted Mean Gain for Print and Phonological Awareness
Total Sample PALS (N = 40)	19.71	2.23
Three Years of PALS (n = 20)	19.45	2.22
Pam	20.21	4.65
Candice	21.40	2.83

The weighted mean gain scores from fall to spring describe the relative success of the entire sample of 40 teachers (see Table 2). The weighted mean gain in Alphabet Knowledge for the total sample was 19.71. The weighted mean gain for Print and Phonological Awareness for the total sample was 2.23.

The weighted mean gain in Alphabet Knowledge for the sample of teachers with three years of PALS was 19.45. The weighted mean gain for Print and Phonological Awareness for the total sample was 2.22. The weighted mean gain in Alphabet Knowledge for Pam was 20.21. The weighted mean gain for Print and Phonological Awareness for Pam was 4.65. The weighted mean gain in Alphabet Knowledge for Candice was 20.40. The weighted mean gain for Print and Phonological Awareness for Candice was 2.83. The scores in Table 2 were used to calculate weighted Z-score gain above the mean for the total sample and effect size percentile ranking with other participants against the sample of teachers with three years.

PALS Z-score

A Z-score calculation was used to determine the rankings by participant for the sample with three years of PALS scores. This calculation places an emphasis on the participant's average gain above or below the standard deviation for the sample. The following formula was used to calculate Z-score gain.

$$Z - \text{score} = \frac{\text{Participant Weighted Mean} - \text{Total weighted Mean}}{\text{Standard Deviation}}$$

The Z-score gain was used to measure differences in participant mean scores against the standard deviation of the sample of teachers with three years of PALS scores (see Table 3).

Table 3. Alphabet Knowledge Z-scores and Rank for Participants with Three Years of PALS

Participant	Alphabet Knowledge Rank	Alphabet Knowledge Z-score Gain
0.946782473	20	0.67
0.423353451	19	0.62
0.301318215	18	0.52
0.130282196	17	0.38
0.776107691	16	0.27
0.060942428	15	0.22
Candice	14	0.12
0.939272867	13	0.09
Pam	12	0.03
0.836908458	11	-0.08
0.27397365	10	-0.10
0.619104087	9	-0.21
0.756150008	8	-0.24
0.413375588	7	-0.36
0.688557404	6	-0.40
0.921831207	5	-0.44
0.397816616	4	-0.45
0.161721567	3	-0.52
0.213813542	2	-0.52
0.520044514	1	-0.53

Candice had a Z-score gain of .12 and ranked 14th, in the top 33%, within the sample of three years of PALS scores. In Alphabet Knowledge, Pam ranked 12th, in the middle 33%, of the sample with three years of PALS scores (n=20). Pam's Alphabet Knowledge Z-score was .03.

The scores are ranked from smallest gains (1) to largest gains (20).

Pam's mean Z-score gain, .27, in Print and Phonological Awareness fell in the top 33% of the potential participants with three years of PALS scores. Candice's Z-score gain, -.33, in Print and Phonological Awareness ranked seventh, in the middle 33% of the sample (see Table 4).

Table 4. Phonological Awareness Z-scores and Rank for Participants with Three Years of PALS

Participant	Print and Phonological Awareness Rank	Print and Phonological Awareness Z-score Gain
0.301318	20	0.85
0.946782	19	0.68
0.130282	18	0.41
0.423353	17	0.36
0.776108	16	0.36
Pam	15	0.27
0.060942	14	0.13
0.939273	13	-0.06
0.397817	12	-0.08
0.273974	11	-0.11
0.836908	10	-0.14
0.161722	9	-0.17
0.619104	8	-0.33
Candice	7	-0.33
0.520045	6	-0.50
0.75615	5	-0.52
0.921831	4	-0.53
0.413376	3	-0.53
0.688557	2	-0.65
0.213814	1	-0.73

The Z-score calculation enables the participant to be compared to the total sample based on gain beyond the standard deviation. In the next calculation each of the participants are compared against each of the other participants to determine effect size.

PALS Effect Size

A modified Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1992) calculation was used to compare the gain scores of each participant to each of the other participants. The Cohen's *d* calculation was modified using

Hedge's g (Hedges & Olkin, 1985) to control for small sample sizes of student PALS scores. The results of this calculation are expressed as the participant's weighted mean percentile standing with the comparison participant. This is a one-to-one comparison of means based on the standard deviation for each participant's scores. In comparing a Participant (P) and a Comparison participant (C) the average of the two samples becomes the control group. Differing sample sizes and standard deviations are averaged between the Participant and the Comparison, in this case, through use of Hedge's g (Hedges & Olkin, 1985). For example, a Cohen's d of 0.0 indicates that the effect of the participant is at the 50th percentile of the control group or the same as the control group. The formula is then understood as what effect or percentile standing the Participant (P) has above or below the Comparison (C). A Cohen's d of .20 = 58th percentile, a Cohen's d of .50 = 69th percentile, and a Cohen's d of .8 = 79th percentile (Cohen, 1992). In the formula below the Participant = P and the Comparison = C.

$$x = \frac{(P \text{ mean} - C \text{ mean})}{\left(\sqrt{\frac{(Pn - 1)(P \text{ Standard Deviation}^2) + (Cn - 1)(C \text{ Standard Deviation}^2)}{Pn + Cn - 2}} \right)}$$

In this calculation, greater than .20 is considered a small effect size, greater than .50 is considered a moderate effect size, and greater than .80 is considered a large effect size (Cohen, 1992).

The effect size calculation was used to determine the percentile standing of each participant's Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain (see Appendix F, p. 359) and Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain (see Appendix G, p. 361) as compared to each of the other participants with three years of PALS scores.

In Table 5 the instances of small, medium, and large effect size in Alphabet Knowledge are presented along with the ranking of the participants from one (lowest) to 20 (highest).

Table 5. Alphabet Knowledge Cohen's *d* and Rank for Participants with Three Years of PALS

Participant	Alphabet Knowledge Rank	Number of Instances of Small Effect size	Number of Instances of Moderate Effect Size	Number of Instances of Large Effect Size
0.921831	20	2	6	9
Candice	19	4	4	5
0.946782	18	5	5	5
0.776108	17	7	4	3
0.619104	16	7	4	3
0.939273	15	5	4	2
0.688557	14	7	2	2
0.836908	13	6	2	1
0.520045	12	6	2	1
0.75615	11	5	2	
0.213814	10	4	2	
0.423353	9	4	2	
0.413376	8	3	2	
0.060942	7	2		
0.301318	6	2		
0.130282	5	2		
Pam	4	2		
0.273974	3			
0.161722	2			
0.397817	1			

As can be seen, there is a rising pattern of instances of small, medium, and large effect sizes presented. Candice's effect size ranked 19th, in the top 33% of participants in Alphabet Knowledge. As compared to the other potential participants with three years of PALS scores, Candice's weighted gain Alphabet Knowledge score was small in four instances, moderate in four instances, and large in five instances. Pam's effect size ranked 4th within the sample, in the bottom 33% of participants, in Alphabet Knowledge. Pam's Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain score as compared to the other potential participants with three years of PALS scores was small in two instances.

In Table 6 the Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain scores are calculated using Cohen's *d*. Participants were ranked within the study sample. Pam and Candice both ranked in the middle 33% of the participants.

Table 6. Print and Phonological Awareness Cohen's *d* and Rank for Participants with Three Years of PALS

Participant	Print and Phonological Awareness Rank	Number of Instances of Small Effect size	Number of Instances of Moderate Effect Size	Number of Instances of Large Effect Size
0.619104	20		4	13
0.836908	19	4	2	11
0.520045	18		5	8
0.413376	17		5	8
0.060942	16	2	5	6
0.130282	15	3	3	7
0.213814	14	5	4	4
0.423353	13	2	4	2
0.939273	12	2	4	2
Pam	11	5	3	
Candice	10	3	4	1
0.301318	9	5	3	
0.776108	8	6		
0.688557	7	5	1	
0.397817	6	1		
0.946782	5	1		
0.161722	4	2		
0.75615	3	2		
0.273974	2			
0.921831	1			

Pam's effect size ranked 11th out of 20 in the Print and Phonological Awareness

weighted mean of the PALS. The percentile standing of Pam's Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain score as compared to the other participants with three years of PALS scores was small in five instances and moderate in three instances. Candice's effect size ranked 10th in the Print and Phonological Awareness effect size calculations. Candice's Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain score as compared to the other participants with three years of PALS scores was small in three instances, moderate in four instances, and large in one instance.

The Cohen's *d* calculation determined if the participants' gain scores were small, moderate, or large as compared to each other. In the last calculation an Analysis of Variance

(ANOVA) was run to determine if there were statistically significant differences in mean among the participants. A post hoc analysis was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences between which participants were the differences.

PALS Analysis of Variance

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to identify teachers whose urban African American boys' living in poverty mean gain scores showed a statistically significant difference from the sample. The ANOVA table shows that there was a statistically significant difference in Alphabet Knowledge weighted mean gain (see Table 7).

Table 7. ANOVA of Alphabet Knowledge Weighted Gain

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13069.256	18	726.070	3.900	.000
Within Groups	72784.830	391	186.150		
Total	85854.087	409			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain differences among 20 participants with three years of PALS. Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain differed significantly across the sample, $F(18, 391) = 3.90, p = .000$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the 20 teachers indicated that three participants' scores were statistically significant. The statistically significant mean scores are reported in Table 6.

Table 8. Statistically Significant Results of ANOVA of Alphabet Knowledge Weighted Gain

Bonferroni						
(I) ID Number	(J) ID Number	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0.301318	0.161722	15.31027*	4.06877	0.03	0.4393	30.1812
0.301318	0.520045	15.41488*	3.90553	0.02	1.1406	29.6892
0.423353	0.161722	16.67282*	4.21532	0.02	1.2662	32.0794
0.423353	0.520045	16.77743*	4.05797	0.01	1.9459	31.609
0.946782	0.161722	17.44479*	4.06877	0.00	2.5738	32.3158
0.946782	0.397817	16.37347*	4.29362	0.03	0.6807	32.0663
0.946782	0.413376	15.19602*	3.90553	0.02	0.9217	29.4704
0.946782	0.520045	17.54941*	3.90553	0.00	3.2751	31.8237
0.946782	0.688557	15.68180*	3.94202	0.01	1.2741	30.0895
0.946782	0.921831	16.30282*	4.17145	0.02	1.0566	31.5491

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Post hoc analysis revealed that neither Pam nor Candice were identified as having statistically significant gain scores from potential participants.

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain differences among the 20 participants with three years of PALS (Table 9). There were statistically significant differences in mean scores present in the sample. Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain differed significantly across the sample, $F(18, 391) = 3.90, p = .000$. (Table 9).

Table 9. ANOVA of Print and Phonological Awareness Weighted Gain

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	936.340	18	52.019	6.490	.000
Within Groups	3134.019	391	8.015		
Total	4070.360	409			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the 20 teachers indicated that three participants' scores were statistically significant. The statistically significant mean scores are reported in Table 10.

Table 10. Statistically Significant Results of ANOVA of Print and Phonological Awareness

Weighted Gain

(I) ID Number	(J) ID Number	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0.130282	0.413376	3.29897*	0.80141	0.01	0.3699	6.2281
0.130282	0.520045	3.17859*	0.80141	0.02	0.2495	6.1077
0.130282	0.688557	3.69209*	0.80907	0.00	0.735	6.6492
0.130282	0.75615	3.26224*	0.79426	0.01	0.3593	6.1652
0.130282	0.921831	3.27698*	0.85717	0.03	0.1441	6.4099
Pam	0.688557	3.11646*	0.82762	0.03	0.0916	6.1413
0.301318	0.161722	3.43515*	0.84429	0.01	0.3493	6.521
0.301318	0.273974	3.23312*	0.85451	0.03	0.11	6.3563
0.301318	0.413376	4.68554*	0.81042	0.00	1.7235	7.6475
0.301318	0.520045	4.56516*	0.81042	0.00	1.6031	7.5272
0.301318	0.619104	3.99460*	1.0724	0.04	0.0751	7.9141
0.301318	0.688557	5.07866*	0.81799	0.00	2.089	8.0683
0.301318	0.75615	4.64881*	0.80334	0.00	1.7127	7.585
0.301318	0.836908	3.34217*	0.8777	0.03	0.1343	6.5501
0.301318	0.897768	4.00766*	0.81042	0.00	1.0456	6.9697
0.301318	0.921831	4.66355*	0.8656	0.00	1.4999	7.8272
0.423353	0.688557	3.42201*	0.84934	0.01	0.3177	6.5263
0.776108	0.413376	3.02753*	0.79303	0.03	0.1291	5.926
0.776108	0.520045	2.90714*	0.79303	0.05	0.0087	5.8056
0.776108	0.688557	3.42064*	0.80077	0.00	0.4939	6.3474
0.776108	0.75615	2.99079*	0.7858	0.03	0.1188	5.8628
0.946782	0.413376	4.12841*	0.81042	0.00	1.1664	7.0904
0.946782	0.520045	4.00803*	0.81042	0.00	1.046	6.97
0.946782	0.688557	4.52153*	0.81799	0.00	1.5318	7.5112
0.946782	0.75615	4.09168*	0.80334	0.00	1.1555	7.0278
0.946782	0.897768	3.45053*	0.81042	0.00	0.4885	6.4125
0.946782	0.921831	4.10642*	0.8656	0.00	0.9427	7.2701

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Pam's Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain score was statistically significant from participant 0.688557 ($M = 3.12$, 95% CI [.009, 6.14]). It is important to note that the other participants with statistically significant gain scores also held statistically significant gains above participant 0.688557.

The Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness ANOVA method of interpreting successful PALS scores was valuable because it demonstrated important facets of the sample and the instrument. The first was that the statistically significant differences in Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain scores were limited to 3 teachers (15%) in the sample. This implies that the sample's Alphabet Knowledge gain scores were close enough to each other as not to be statistically significant. There was more variability in the Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain scores. Six out of 20 participants had statistically significant gain scores. It is important to note that none of the participants with significant gain scores had statistically significant Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain scores above each other. This method of calculating success helped to inform the process by revealing that Print and Phonological Awareness is a measure of emergent literacy development that was, with this sample, more likely to differentiate successful teachers.

Head Start Performance Standards Sample Analysis

Two of the interview participants, Pam and Candice, had three years of PALS scores that demonstrate their effectiveness to some degree. The other two participants, Sara and Jasmine, did not have three years of PALS scores, but do seem to describe activities, relationships, and experiences that match descriptions of effectively meeting the standards for early childhood development for Head Start program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). All four of the participants seem to be successful based on interpretation of the Head Start performance standards, the mandated regulations that determine Head Start's operation that are used to determine a program's effectiveness. One standard includes the mandate that Head Start teachers ensure children receive developmentally appropriate experiences that honor students' cultural backgrounds, learning styles, interests, temperaments, and rate of development. Each of

the participants described experiences supporting children's "gender, culture,... ethnicity and family composition" (p. 124, U.S. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Descriptions of teaching practices also included "a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, including individual and small group activities" (p. 124, U.S. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). For example, Sara said,

when you see them go to center and... transport their information, they intake in large group and then... in center you see them acting on it.... Especially when we do small group and, "Oh that's the letter for today... That letter makes this sound. We learned that today."...they can recall that information without you coaching it out of them.

The participants engage parents to determine child development approaches and conducted home visits with parents. Jasmine described her attempt to help a parent to "become integrally involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education" (p. 123, U.S. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008) when she said,

I've had kids that were very high (academically) with mom is only nineteen. And, I asked her,... "What did you do with him those first couple years?"... she said, "I just read to him. And I talk to him,"...and I asked,... "Would you share that with some other parents?"

The participants described advancing children's social emotional development by promoting independence and encouraging respect for others feelings. Sara described a social emotional interaction this way.

they get upset cause somebody hit them... Ok. Sit, set down. Cry it out. Acknowledge that feeling... they know you validated the feeling, and that you're going to do something about it. or you going to let me get it out my system and then when we can move on.... neurons get damaged by feelings, by words, by actions

Candice described how she supports and respects family culture while setting clear expectations, "the parents... say, 'Yeah but someone hits him I told him to hit him back'... I try to tell them, 'In here, you know, we explain, you know,... try to get them to solve their own problems.'" Finally, the participants described children engaging in play and exploration as well as incorporating creative expression and dialogue into the school day, and engaging students in age appropriate activities that support emergent literacy development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). Pam described several active learning emergent literacy activities.

Letters were textured if we were working on that. If we were telling a story they are retelling with props. If we are learning about words in a sentence, they will be the sentence... if we are learning another activity with letters we might be outside and they might race for letters or for their name card.

Based on the interview data provided by the participants, the interview participants seem to meet the Head Start performance standards, at least as they relate to early childhood development and their teaching practices. The Head Start performance standards provide a benchmark against which each of the participants was measured. It would have been helpful to have PALS scores on all four participants. However, PALS scores as they were used, describe a trend of emergent literacy development over three years by teachers on screening that assesses phonological skills of reading. The Head Start performance standards describe teacher practices and attitudes that assist parents and students to engage with literacy beyond the mechanics of reading.

Summary

The study methodology was developed to identify the most successful teachers based on three calculations of success. The participants were ranked according to each calculation within

the sample. Table 11 displays Pam and Candice's scores in Alphabet Knowledge weighted gain within the study methodology.

Table 11. Participants' Alphabet Knowledge Z-score, Effect Size, and ANOVA by Rank

Participant	Rank	Z-score	Rank	Effect Size			Rank	ANOVA Sig.
				Small	Moderate	Large		
Pam	12	.03 (Middle 33%)	4	2 (Bottom 33%)	--	--	-- (Bottom 33%)	No
Candice	14	.12 (Top 33%)	19	4 (Top 33%)	4	5	-- (Bottom 33%)	No

The rankings for the Alphabet Knowledge weighted mean scores of Pam and Candice varied by the type of calculation used. Candice scored higher than Pam in Alphabet Knowledge Z-score. This was a measure of gain compared to the mean in relation to the standard deviation of the total sample. The higher ranking for Candice in Z-score could possibly be attributed to Candice's boys' fall, or beginning PALS scores, starting lower than Pam's boys' fall scores. This would explain why Candice's boys' Alphabet Knowledge mean Z-scores were higher than Pam's. Candice also scored higher in Alphabet Knowledge effect size where she ranked higher than Pam and in the top 33% of the sample. Effect size is a measure of each participant's gain as compared to each of the other participant's gain. Using this measure Candice produced larger gains as compared to each of her peers, including Pam (see Appendix G, p.361). Candice had a large Cohen's *d* (1.02) in the 84th percentile as compared to Pam. Candice's Alphabet Knowledge gain fell in standing and was the second highest in the sample, ranked 19th.

In the Print and Phonological Awareness weighted gain score Pam scored higher than Candice in each measure (see Table 12).

Table 12. Participants' Print and Phonological Awareness Z-score, Effect Size, and ANOVA by Rank

Participant	Rank	Z-score	Rank	Effect Size			Rank	ANOVA Sig.
				Small	Moderate	Large		
Pam	15	.27 (Top 33%)	11	5 (Middle 33%)	3	--	16th (Top 33%)	Yes
Candice	7	-.33 (Middle 33%)	10	3 (Middle 33%)	4	1	-- (Bottom 33%)	No

The rankings of the weighted mean scores for Print and Phonological Awareness of Pam and Candice also varied by the type of calculation applied to the data. Pam scored higher than Candice in Print and Phonological Awareness Z-score ranking 15th and in the top 33% of the sample. This was a measure of gain compared to the mean in relation to the standard deviation of the total sample. Pam also scored higher in Print and Phonological Awareness effect size where she ranked higher than Candice and in the middle 33% of the sample. Effect size is a measure of each participant's gain as compared to each of the other participant's gain. Using this measure Pam produced larger gains as compared to each of her peers, including Candice (see Appendix G p.361). Pam had a moderate Cohen's d (.73) in the 76th percentile as compared to Candice. Pam had one statistically significant finding in the ANOVA which ranked her 16th out of the 20 participants.

It is with reasonable confidence that these teachers are considered successful. Pam and Candice were each successful according to the study methodology in either Alphabet Knowledge or Print and Phonological Awareness. Sara and Jasmine describe many of the ways they provide child development services that align with the Head Start performance standards. The practices of Pam and Candice differ in some ways from Sara and Jasmine, but they are more alike than different. The participants in the study can be described as somewhat successful based on their descriptions of their practices as meeting the Head Start performance standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DECISIONS

There were many variables associated with this study of Head Start teachers. Bandura defined agency as (p. 2, 2001) "... to intentionally make things happen by one's actions." The context of successful practice was defined as the consequence of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1997). The first point of the triad is the person, in this case the teacher and their beliefs. The second point of the triad is the behavior, in this application, the practices and actions of the teacher. The third point of the triad is the environment, which includes the students' classrooms, schools, homes, neighborhoods, and communities. The environment in this study also included the PALS assessment, which serves as a screening instrument to guide instruction and as a tool to measure success. According to Bandura's model (1997), each of the points of the triad can reciprocally influence the others. Three methods were used to integrate these variables for exploration. Teacher beliefs were explored through the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey (Love & Kruger, 2005). Teacher gain scores on the PALS over three years represented the results of agency. Finally, teachers' values and behaviors were explored through interviews of participants. The study design is best described as a two-phase sequential explanatory design.

The decision points addressed in this chapter include:

1. Pilot Study
2. Recruitment
3. Study Sample Methodology
4. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening
5. Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) Survey
 - a) CRTB Survey Integration with Interview Data
 - b) Rationale for Follow-up Questions
 - c) Survey Item Interview Follow-up
6. Codes and Themes
7. Qualitative Analysis Decisions

The implementation of the study occurred over a period of 14 months. The decision points during the study implementation are described in the timeline below (Figure 5).

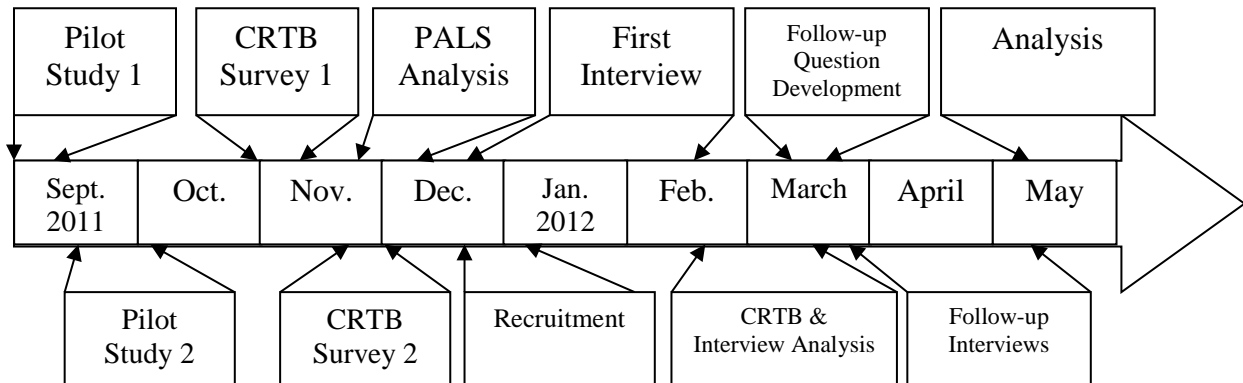


Figure 5. Timeline of study phases and decision points.

Complications and the sequential design influenced the integrated methods exploration of the triad of reciprocal causation described in the research methodology. The modifications and decisions are described as follows.

Research Decisions

The implementation of the study methodology led to challenges and obstacles that complicated the completion of the study. These complications affected the pilot study, recruitment, measure of success, sample size, and the blind CRTB survey responses integrated with participant interview responses. In addition, the study methodology described several decision points that incorporated results of initial data collected into the process of further data collection. As often happens with qualitative research, decisions were made to follow the path of inquiry set forth by the participants as indicated through constant comparison. Constant comparison is the process of checking and rechecking participants' data against previously considered data and researcher analysis to honor participants' perspectives (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). Constant comparison was applied to the analysis of the first-round interviews, in comparing the CRTB data to the first-round interviews, and in construction of the second-round interview questions. Additional decisions were made to the coding methodology as constant comparison revealed themes and codes to assist in understanding the data. The study methodology, as it was applied is described in the following section.

Pilot Study

The pilot study was implemented twice using the parameters described in the methodology. Participants were notified three days prior to the survey availability. The survey was then available for ten days. The first pilot began in August 2011. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey was distributed by the peer reviewer via email to the identified population as a hyperlink to the website that hosted the survey, Inquisite.com. The survey availability closed September 2011.

In the first pilot study, zero participants completed the survey. It was determined that there may have been a technical difficulty associated with email filters or other complications in the email sent by the peer reviewer. The principal investigator (PI) and the decided to attempt the pilot study again but to distribute the link to potential participants using the survey host to send emails.

The second pilot study began late September 2011. The survey window closed the first week of October 2011. The result was that two respondents completed the study. These participants did not consent to the request for further participation in the study through the interview process. Subsequently, a candidate who had not completed the survey was contacted to pilot the interview protocol. The interview protocol yielded responses from the participant that addressed the topics considered in the research questions. The pilot participant responded to the interview questions with enough thick description that the questions were determined to be valuable to the study.

Recruitment

The target population of this study was successful Head Start teachers of 4-year-old boys. Participant data included three consecutive years of archival Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) scores in order to show a trend in teacher PALS scores. At least three years of scores were used to reflect a trend in teacher effectiveness as opposed to the individual scores of a particular class or individual students. The analysis used a weighted mean gain score for Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness of PALS scores (Townsend & Konold, 2010). Teacher success was determined using Z-score gain, effect size, and Analysis of Variance.

The study was implemented based on preliminary findings from the pilot. The preliminary findings indicated that the survey link sent from the Inquisite.com website was more effective at recruiting participants. No changes were made to the first-round interview protocol. The survey notification was delivered electronically in early November 2011 with the survey delivered three days later. The survey was open for 10 days. During this time participants notified research staff that they attempted to access the survey but were not able to complete the survey. The PI and research coordinator became concerned that there may have been participants that did not receive the survey link or who were unable to complete the survey due to security restrictions on school computers. The research team decided to reset the survey keys of participants who contacted the research staff. The survey was reopened for an additional 10 days. A total of 20 respondents completed the survey. Nine participants agreed to further contact for potential participation in the interview phase of the study.

Study Sample Methodology

The sample methodology was designed with three goals. The first was to identify teachers that demonstrated a trend of success developing urban African American boys' emergent literacy in the Head Start program sampled in the study. The second was to provide a way for potential participants to provide data on their Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs. The third goal was to implement a blind sampling strategy due to the research coordinator's role as a teacher and child development specialist employed by the program being studied.

The structure of the methodology was complicated by the supervisory capacity of the research coordinator. The research coordinator has worked in the Head Start program that served as the sample for the study for ten years. His career spanned seven years as a teacher and then, at the time the study was implemented, three years as a child development specialist. As a teacher

within the program and then as a child development specialist, the researcher had developed strong relationships with some of the potential participants. It was a concern in the design of the study that if participants knew the researcher was a colleague they might feel compelled to participate.

It was also a concern that as a child development specialist the researcher served in an evaluative role in that he was responsible for monitoring and enforcing program policies related to child development. This role included conducting formal and informal observations, monitoring documentation, and discussing teachers' practices with them. When conducting qualitative research, it is possible for there to be perceived differences in power between researcher and participant. This could result in feelings of reactivity or coercion on the part of the participant. In order to address potential power differentials and to avoid issues of coercion, a blind sampling process was developed to enable participants to become aware of the identity of the research coordinator before agreeing to participate in the interview phase of the study. This process necessitated that the participants' PALS data and CRTB data be held by a third party. A peer reviewer, trained in qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to de-identify the participants' PALS scores and CRTB responses in order to ensure that the research coordinator was blind to the identities of the participants until they had agreed to be interviewed. De-identifying the data included removing participants' identifying information from the quantitative data and replacing it with six digit identification numbers before being provided to the research coordinator. (Note: During the second-round interview phase of the study, the researcher returned to the classroom to serve as a teacher.)

It was determined by the research team that the two respondents who taught 4-year-old students but had no PALS scores would be contacted for interviews. The rationale behind this

decision was that it would be useful to include four participants with PALS and two without in order to maintain fidelity to the study methodology by not including teachers with fewer than three years of PALS scores.

Disclosure emails were sent by the peer reviewer to the four participants with three years of PALS scores and two participants with no PALS scores. This sampling process recruited one participant with three years of PALS scores (Pam) and one participant with no PALS scores (Sara). Following the interview with Pam, another participant with three years of PALS scores (Candice) contacted the peer reviewer to request enrollment in the study. The participant was sent the disclosure letter and enrolled in the study. At the meeting with the research coordinator to conduct the interview, Candice explained that Pam, a long-time friend and colleague, had discussed the study with her and that she decided to request to participate. After sending three requests for participation over a period of three weeks to the original six participants selected with only one response, it was decided by the research team that the potential participant with one year of PALS scores (Jasmine) would be contacted. This decision was made with the understanding that Jasmine's PALS would only provide a limited understanding of agency in developing emergent literacy. Jasmine's PALS scores are an unreliable indicator of success within the framework of this study and consequently will not be considered in the analysis. Jasmine was sent the disclosure letter and chose to enroll in the study. No other participants responded to the request to participate.

Due to the small number of respondents who agreed to participate, the strategy to select participants that met at least two of the three measures by ranking in the top third of the sample with three years of PALS scores was not possible. Four participants were included in the study

with the modified criteria that they provided a variety of responses to the CRTB and were willing to discuss their teaching practices related to urban African American boys living in poverty.

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

The approach to sampling was developed to ensure, with as much confidence as possible, teachers selected into the study could accurately be described as successful using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening. It was necessary to create a method of identifying successful teachers without permitting linking of PALS data to the specific participants through the subsequent publishing of any papers or findings associated with the study. A method of describing success was formulated to protect the participants' identities while still supporting the assertion of success. It was decided that participants whose PALS scores fell in the top third of the sample in two out of three measures, including gain above the mean (Z-score), effect size (a Cohen's *d* calculation modified by a Hedges *g* calculation that controlled for small sample size), and by statistically significant means above peers as calculated by an ANOVA, were successful at developing emergent literacy. Each of the types of measures of gain were calculated from a mean gain score of students by teachers using two latent dimensions of emergent literacy, Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness (Townsend & Konold, 2010).

The study methodology described that participants would be selected from the top third of the potential participants with three years of PALS scores based on student gain from fall to spring. Success was measured by converting the raw PALS scores into the two latent dimensions of emergent literacy assessed by the PALS, Alphabet Knowledge and Print and Phonological Awareness. Analysis was completed for the 39 teachers in the total sample of teachers with PALS scores. There were 20 teachers with three years of PALS scores within the total sample that were analyzed independently of the total sample. The PALS scores of 20 teachers with three

years of data were then ranked against each other according to Z-score, effect size, and statistical significance by ANOVA. After this analysis was completed it was cross referenced by the peer reviewer with the respondents to the CRTB survey results who agreed to being contacted for further participation in the study.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Survey

The CRTB survey implementation yielded 20 respondents out of a possible 50, a 40% return rate. The survey sample overlapped with the sample of teachers with three years of PALS scores. Of these participants, nine agreed to be contacted for interviews. According to the sampling strategy of contacting participants with three years of PALS scores, four participants qualified for Phase II of the study. There were two teachers with no PALS scores but more than three years Head Start teaching experience. This seemed to indicate that these teachers taught primarily 3-year-old students who were not assessed by PALS. There were also two teachers with no PALS scores that indicated on the survey it was their first year teaching Head Start. Finally, there was one teacher with one year of PALS scores. The research coordinator provided a list of emails of teachers that taught 4-year-old students to the peer reviewer to cross check with the list of respondents. This helped the peer reviewer to confirm that two of the participants with no PALS scores actually taught 4-year-old students.

CRTB Survey Integration with Interview Data

The study methodology described a sequential explanatory process. This was accomplished through administering the CRTB survey first, then interviewing the participants. After the analysis of participant interviews and CRTB survey responses, cross-case thematic analysis of emergent themes from the first four interviews was conducted. In the cross-case analysis, participants' language was analyzed for recurring codes or themes of interest to the

participants. The cross-case analysis process included a review of field notes, identification of initial keywords that occurred across the interviews, and discussion of these themes with the PI and methodologist. These themes were used to develop potential follow-up questions for the four participants. Based on close reading and keyword identification within the individual interviews, analysis of the CRTB survey responses using directional agreement/disagreement among the participants, and cross-case analysis, three to five potential core follow-up interview questions were developed. Additionally, questions to confirm analysis or explore puzzles presented by each participant were identified. These questions asked participants to clarify responses to particular CRTB items, to explain phrases and language used in the first-round interview, and to expand on concepts or themes that, according to researcher analysis, seemed important to the participant. Based on the CRTB data responses and first-round interview a hypothesis as to each participant's identity was asserted in a memo to the PI and methodologist.

The participants' survey identification numbers became uncoupled from their survey responses during step eight of the methodology, the blinding process. The uncoupling of the data from the participants' identification numbers likely occurred due to human error in the analysis of the blind survey data. This caused the data reported in a summary of progress memorandum sent to the PI and study methodologist to be incorrect. This incorrect data led the research coordinator and principal investigator to flag several survey responses for follow-up in the second-round interviews. After receiving the survey with the participant names linked to the correct responses, the misalignment of the responses with the items was found. This led to clarification of several of the survey items that had been flagged for follow-up. The accurate data also led to new puzzles presented by incongruence between the survey and interview data. New

questions were developed for the second-round interview and discussed with the PI and methodologist who made suggestions for revisions.

Rationale for Follow-up Questions

The construction of follow-up questions for the second-round interview was described in chapter three. This process included discussing the data collected by the CRTB survey and first-round interview data with the research team. The PI and methodologist offered suggestions to be included in follow-up questions based on themes expressed in the first-round interview data, puzzles presented by the interview data as compared to the survey data, the inclusion of questions that asked teachers to describe how they discuss child development with parents, the practices teachers employ to develop emergent literacy skills in students, and exploration of some of the traits of the warm demander approach exemplified by the participants in the study.

Figure 6 shows common themes expressed in the first-round interviews of all four teachers. The follow-up interview explored these themes as well as attempted to clarify specific puzzles that emerged from the interviews and analysis of the CRTB survey.

First Round Interview Codes
Parents' prior experience with school
Student needs before learning
Boys as more active than girls but not learning different than girls
Emotional development of boys
Student behavior as a measure of effectiveness

Figure 6. Emergent codes in first-round interview used to develop second-round interview questions.

Analysis of the survey data revealed some apparently contradictory beliefs expressed by the participants in the survey responses. Participants' responses to the items in the "Students' race, ethnicity, and culture" dimension of the survey (Love & Kruger, 2005) were puzzling. Of particular interest were the following survey items,

- "2B. The cultural background of my students plays an important part in my teaching. I bring their backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into my lesson planning."
- "2D. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences."
- "2E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children."
- "2F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children."

Three of the four participants responded with agreement to apparently contradictory statements. Participants were asked to explain their perspectives on these survey items in the second-round interview.

Survey Item Interview Follow-up

The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey responses were analyzed to determine which items described the most divergent perspectives. The following statements provided a distribution of between 33% and 66% of the responses. Table 13 provides the distribution of divergent perspectives within the sample.

Table 13. CRTB Items with Between 33% and 66% Divergent Response Rate (n=20)

	Statement	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or No Answer
1C	Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them.	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)
1D	I expect students to come to me with a particular set of prerequisites skills.	11 (55%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)
2E	I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.	5 (25%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)
3A	Every year some students can be expected not to be a good match for me; they may, however, succeed with someone else who better meets their needs.	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
3B	Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well.	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	7 (35%)
3E	I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track.	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	10 (50%)
3G	The reason I use some form of peer learning in the classroom is because it's supposed to help lower achieving students learn the material better.	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	7 (35%)
3I	I expect my students to be responsible for one another.	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	4 (20%)
4A	My purpose for teaching is to give something back to the community in the same way I was given an education.	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
4C	Teaching is like paying my dues to society. When I'm through paying my debt, I'll probably retire or change professions.	1 (5%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)
4H	My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves.	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	4 (20%)
5C	A good lesson is only tentative.	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	8 (40%)
6B	Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences.	8 (40%)	5 (25%)	7 (35%)

The divergent responses in the dimensions of "Students' Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" and "Social Relations in and Beyond the Classroom" helped to inform the second-round interview questions. These dimensions rose to the foreground in the second-round interviews when participants were asked to explain the apparent contradiction between statement "2D. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences." and statement "2F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children." The interview explored teachers beliefs about teaching practices including implementation of types of learning groups and factors involved with effectiveness. These topics elicited from the participants ideas about child-led and teacher-led learning. The importance of peer-learning was also addressed by the participants.

The CRTB survey seemed to identify a variety of shared beliefs of the Head Start teachers who participated. There was a great deal of agreement among the participants about the survey items. When there was 100% agreement of participants it could be the expression of the Head Start program's values and practices as an entity as well as those of the teachers surveyed. The statements that elicited 100% agreement among the participants included both culturally relevant and assimilationist statements (see Table 14). The percentage of non-response has been included because it qualifies the degree of agreement among the participants.

Table 14. CRTB Items With 100% Agreement of Participant Response (n=20)

	Survey Item	Response	Undecided or No-Answer
1A	It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students.	Agree (Assimilationist)	2 (10%)
1B	What I learn from my students is as important as what they learn from me.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	0 (0%)
1E	One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	4 (20%)
2C	I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	3 (15%)
3F	I encourage students to work independently more often than I ask them to work together.	Agree (Assimilationist)	3 (15%)
3J	My underlying reason for using peer-learning strategies is to prepare my students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	5 (25%)
3K	I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom.	Disagree (Culturally Relevant)	3 (15%)
3L	Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom.	Agree (Assimilationist)	4 (20%)
4B	I teach in an urban public school because I want to.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	4 (20%)
4F	Teaching is where I belong-I know it and the students know it, too.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	5 (25%)
5A	Teaching is like an art; it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	1 (5%)
5G	Students who fail usually do so because they don't try hard enough; likewise, students who succeed do so because they put forth the effort.	Agree (Assimilationist)	3 (15%)
6A	The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	0 (0%)
6C	Every student I encounter is successful at something.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	4 (20%)
6F	I work with some of the most important people in the world, my students.	Agree (Culturally Relevant)	3 (15%)

The relatively congruent beliefs of the survey participants seem to indicate a set of beliefs that is common among the Head Start teachers or that they could be the function of the culture of the Head Start program sampled. In either case the beliefs of the sample responded to survey

prompts as culturally relevant on ten items and assimilationist on eight items. The participants were more likely to agree congruently than disagree, as demonstrated by only one out of 15 items having uniform disagreement.

The PI suggested that the participants' descriptions of interactions with parents about child development seemed important in the analysis of the first-round interview. Often participants described offering advice and coaching to parents about the parents' children and child development in general. Questions that asked the participants to describe how they discuss child development with parents were added to the interview. Questions that distinguished between emergent literacy skills students practice, and skills teachers teach were also included in the second-round interview.

Initial analysis of the first-round interviews indicated that the participants' responses may reflect the warm demander approach (Ware, 2006; Irvine and Frazier, 1998; Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008) associated with successful teaching in urban African American environments. It was decided that exploring the warm demander approach in the participants' interactions with students and parents may be useful in interpreting the participants' language and perspectives. The warm demander approach also incorporates a specific view on behavior. Warm demanders often see student behavior as a puzzle to be solved or a communication of a child's need. It was decided that the Head Start teachers in this study, acting in their roles as advocates for children in their care, may see themselves as advocates for their students, especially the boys, to their students' parents. One goal of the follow-up questions became to deny or confirm the researcher's hypothesis that the participants' perspectives on family involvement and effective teaching reflected a warm demander approach. This was explored through the inclusion of questions that explored the participants' perspectives on explaining child

development to parents. It was also explored through participant discussion of an excerpt from a study of warm demanders in action with students in an exchange related to student behavior.

Codes and Themes

Qualitative research attempts to follow the participant into their world in order to learn about their experiences. This requires qualitative researchers to make decisions about how to analyze data. Naturalistic coding was used to analyze the interviews to identify codes and themes to assist in understanding the data. It is considered valuable to qualitative research to use the words of the participants in developing codes. Codes derived from the participants' language are considered emic codes. Codes applied by the researcher that fit a construct or concepts applied to the participants' language are identified as etic codes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). It was decided that, whenever possible, emic coding would be used in developing the follow-up questions. These approaches strengthened the interview process by enabling the interviewer to refer to specific language used by the participant in the first-round interview and clarify questions raised in analysis.

During the process of analysis, when the interview text seemed to justify an identifying code (more than four or five statements), particular attention was addressed to using emic phrases in naming the code. Over the course of accumulating evidence for a code, it occasionally became clear that one or more emic codes acted as an identifier for two organizers of a larger idea or concept. This larger idea or concept is identified in the literature as an axial code (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). An axial code often incorporates more than one aspect of a code in order to more fully understand the perspective of the participant. In these instances, a simple organizing phrase was used to group the data with two or more emic codes used to clarify the axial code. For example, one code identified as "Hopes, Fears, and Trust", described parents'

wishes for their children's success and barriers to that success. Another code, "In the classroom it's on you" represented the perspective of parents overwhelmed by trying to meet their family's basic needs or who for some reason tried to disengage from the classroom. When combined, these two codes represented a larger code that became "A closer relationship" that described the qualities of the relationship between Head Start teachers and parents. Additional analysis often revealed further connections between the codes and axial codes to be more reasonably understood as a theme. The process of qualitative analysis decisions used in the study is described as follows.

Qualitative Analysis Decisions

Initial analysis of the first-round interview included a close reading of the interview data after each transcription. The interviews were transcribed by the research coordinator and cross checked by the peer reviewer. This process identified emic keywords and phrases that helped in developing the follow-up questions. Important quotes were highlighted alongside the transcribed data. Additionally, field notes, analysis notes and questions about the data were developed into potential follow-up questions. Finally, connections to the other participants' interviews were described.

A sample of some of the initial analysis notes and questions that guided the construction of the follow-up interview questions were, "Is teaching better related to student behavior?", "What is the relationship between behavior (plan) and effectiveness?", "Dealing with circumstances of the child before learning occurs", Jasmine quote, "you/ you have to start with what they what their interested in and let the child guide you within boundaries." After the construction and use of the interview questions in the second-round, a close reading of the transcribed second-round interviews revealed important quotes along with simpler, one to five

word codes or phrases. The first-round interview analysis was condensed into six major topics for consideration in coding decisions, including parents, teaching, behavior, poverty, boys, and individualization. The data were then discussed with the PI, a noted early childhood expert. This conversation led to additional themes of discussion, such as human development, including social and emotional development, teacher (as opposed to teaching), engagement, Head Start, and the code homes, neighborhoods, and communities.

Intentional use of constant comparison analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008) was undertaken to identify words, patterns of words, and concepts evident in individual case analysis and/or echoed in cross-case analysis. The validity of keywords was addressed by considering their use in context and keyword searches in Microsoft Excel to determine if the keyword designation was warranted. This list of keywords was shared with the methodologist, a respected qualitative researcher, and the PI. Both experts suggested adding several additional codes including “identity,” “parent-teacher relationship,” and “teacher beliefs about...”. The code boys (qualities) and boys (in relation to girls) was collapsed into a single code, “boys.” Figure 7 shows the final keyword list that guided the initial affinity diagram sorting (Winchip, 2001).

Teacher and Parent	Teacher and Student
teacher	teaching
engagement (parents) Pam2	poverty, hunger/ hungry
listen/listening (parents)	needs (learning)
parent	needs (basic)
needs (basic)	listen/listening (students)
poverty, hunger/ hungry	boys (in relation to girls)
services	behavior
culture	engagement (students)
Head Start	boys (qualities)
safe/trust/connection	social development
	emotional development
	learning
	individual(ize)

Figure 7. Keywords used in initial affinity diagram sorting process.

An affinity diagram (Winchip, 2001) strategy utilized the keywords above to identify codes and themes of the cross-case analysis of interview data. An affinity diagram is a qualitative method of analyzing data that breaks participants' interviews into small chunks of meaning. Then the researcher groups this data according to likeness and interrelationships among meaning chunks. (Winchip, 2001) This process indicated two major conceptual constructs operating within the participants' responses. The data were sorted according to these constructs and seemed to indicate a) that the development of relationships among students, families, and teachers through engagement in and out of the classrooms and n) teacher beliefs about teaching, including students' social-emotional development, student behavior, teaching methods, learning, and teaching methods, related to the acceptance or rejection of gender differences.

The affinity diagram (Winchip, 2001) process was organized into an outline of keywords, codes, and themes that more accurately reflected the language and concerns of the participants. Figure 8 describes the results of the affinity diagram process.

Teacher Relationships with Parents	Teacher beliefs about teaching
Hopes, Fears, and Trust	Social Emotional
“Learning on the back burner	"They have to do that" Assumptions
The Teacher-child-parent triad	about children
relationship	Aggression
“More than educational needs”	Active students
Culture	Social interactions
Teacher identity	Beliefs about engaging students
Prior experience of child and parent	Teacher led
	Child Centered
	Child led
	Behavioral Problems
	Advice on behavior
	What is important about behavior?
	Beliefs about behavior: "There's a
	reason for the behavior"
	Teacher effectiveness
	Child-to-child and Teacher to child
	interactions

Figure 8. Keywords results of affinity diagram used in final analysis.

This outline was further refined into the codes and themes presented in chapter five through a process of reflection, sorting, and discussion with the methodologist and PI.

Summary

The sequential explanatory design utilized in the study to consider teacher beliefs about culturally relevant teaching incorporated numerous decisions that affected its implementation. Decisions that arose were discussed with the PI, methodologist, and research coordinator in order to most closely reflect the intention, processes, and purpose of the study design. However, as discussed, the sampling methodology was problematic due to technological difficulties. The relative importance of PALS scores was diminished due to a small participation rate from the sample. However, integration of CRTB survey data and participant interviews into the research design led to second-round interviews that more accurately explored the perspectives of the participants. Finally, codes and themes that reflect the participants’ perspectives guided the

analysis. Chapter five will provide analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected as a result of the design and decisions made during the course of the study implementation.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the tangential or integral role Head Start teachers' beliefs play in their descriptions of their practices as they relate to successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. The integrated methods implemented to answer the research questions utilized sequential layers of data collection to provide insight into the perspectives of the Head Start teachers sampled. The goals of the study were to understand the variety of beliefs of teachers within a Head Start program and to explore the beliefs of a sample of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers.

Sample

Analysis of the data collected using a sequential explanatory design (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006) reviewed the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) records of 39 Head Start teachers of 4-year-old students. Of these, 20 teachers met the criteria of three years of PALS scores for inclusion in the study. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey was delivered to 50 teachers of three and 4-year-old students within the Head Start program. Of these, 20 Head Start teachers completed the survey. Finally, four Head Start teachers of the 20 who completed the CRTB survey, who taught 4-year-old students and who agreed to be contacted for an interview were enrolled in the study to explore their perspectives on how they successfully develop emergent literacy in urban African American boys living in poverty. In this study two teachers selected fit the criteria of successful

Head Start teacher as demonstrated by emergent literacy gains over three years in the top and middle third of 20 teachers with three years of PALS scores. Two participants did not have three years of PALS scores. These two teachers could not be confirmed as successful with their PALS scores, however their responses were compared to the Head Start performance standards to confirm that they met the expectations for the Head Start program.

The target population of the study was teachers in a Head Start program located in a mid-size Southeastern U.S. city. The Head Start program has been in continuous operation for over 45 years. The program is a grantee of the local school system, which requires teachers employed by the program to be credentialed to teach by the state.

Research Questions

This study addressed two research questions. The first question explored successful emergent literacy teachers' culturally relevant and assimilationist teaching beliefs with a quantitative measure to understand the variety of beliefs held by the sample of Head Start teachers. The second question utilized participant interviews to explore their culturally relevant teaching beliefs. Each form of data collection held inherent strengths and weaknesses in understanding the beliefs and practices of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. Through integrating quantitative and qualitative data, a more complete picture of the beliefs and practices of the four teachers are presented. The research questions follow.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?

The CRTB survey generated descriptive quantitative data of the variety of culturally relevant and assimilationist teaching beliefs held by the Head Start teachers sampled. The CRTB survey served as a basis for questions asked in the first-round interview and informed the content of questions asked in the second-round interview. Data collected and analyzed in answering this question determined the sample participants and informed the interview questions.

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?

This question explored successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' divergent beliefs about their teaching practices. In answering this question, four teachers' interviews were analyzed to develop a biographical sketch of each as an individual. Further, their beliefs were coded across all four participants and utilized in a cross-case thematic analysis to describe the variety of shared and individual beliefs. The analysis of the interviews was integrated with the CRTB survey in the process of developing questions for the interviews and in the analysis of the interview data. The interviews of the teachers in this study shed light on the perspectives of Head Start teachers as they relate to culturally relevant teaching beliefs and the successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys.

Results

This chapter will discuss the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the two phases of the research study. The findings are presented in the following order: CRTB survey results, biographical sketches of the participants, and cross-case thematic analysis. The data are presented this way in order to tell the story of the discovery of the codes and themes

that became evident as important to the participants through the inquiry process. There were two points at which data collected through the quantitative phase of the sequential explanatory design methodology informed the inquiry. The following outline describes the findings as they will be presented. Phase I included the PALS analysis (see chapter three) and CRTB survey analysis. The analysis of CRTB items that influenced question construction was a research decision that can be found in chapter four.

1) Phase I: Quantitative Measures

- a) Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (n=20) (see chapter three)
- b) Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey (n=20)
 - i) Dimensions of Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs
 - ii) Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Within Dimension Findings

2) Phase II: Qualitative Measures

- a) Biographical sketch
 - i) Identity and Head Start
 - ii) Relationships with parents
 - iii) Learning, Surviving, and Behavior
- b) Cross-case study codes and themes
 - i) Head Start Teacher
 - (1) Identity
 - (2) Entity of Head Start
 - ii) Relationships with parents
 - (1) Learning on the Back Burner
 - (2) On the Same Page: The Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad

- (3) A Closer Relationship
- iii) Learning, Surviving, and Behavior
 - (1) Learning and Surviving
 - (2) Learning and Behavior
- iv) Teacher Beliefs about Gender and Learning
 - (1) Boys and Girls, Same and Different

The findings from the CRTB survey that describe the variety of culturally relevant beliefs of teachers in the Head Start program sampled are presented in the Phase I findings. The Phase II findings include the biographical sketches of each participant and the cross-case thematic analysis with subsequent emergent codes and themes.

Phase I: Quantitative Measures

This section will describe the quantitative phase of the study. This included analysis of PALS scores for the study sample (see chapter three) and the CRTB survey responses used to develop second-round interview questions (see chapter four). The PALS was used as the original measure of success in the sampling process. However, as described in chapter four, the analysis of these data was only helpful in describing the overall Head Start teacher sample and the scores of two of the participants. The CRTB survey represents the responses of 20 teachers out of a total 50 participant sample. These two measures described the overall effectiveness of 4-year-old teachers (n=20) in the Head Start program on the PALS and the variety of beliefs held by the teachers (n=20) within the Head Start program.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Survey Findings

The Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey was used to answer RQ1 as a means of describing the variety of culturally relevant beliefs within the sample. The survey

sampled 50 Head Start teachers with a respondent rate of 40% or 20 teachers. The responses of these teachers were analyzed to understand the culturally relevant and assimilationist teaching beliefs, as described by the survey, of the Head Start teachers sampled. Culturally relevant beliefs align with the descriptions of culturally relevant teaching described in *The Dreamkeepers* (Ladson-Billings, 1994). These beliefs include regard for student perspectives, cooperative learning, connections to the community, professional commitment to teaching in urban public schools, and the importance of students' culture, including race and ethnicity in teachers' decisions about teaching and learning. Culturally assimilationist beliefs as described in the survey built on Ladson-Billings description of non-culturally relevant beliefs as a "teaching style that operates without regard to the students' particular cultural characteristics. [...T]he teacher's role is to ensure that students fit into society" (p.22, 1994). This manner of distinction is particularly applicable to the sample due to Head Start's position as an anti-poverty policy intervention that aims to empower families to be successful in mainstream society.

In the survey, participants could choose to "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree" with statements. When a participant selected undecided or did not respond to a statement, the answer was coded as "Undecided" or "No Answer." The CRTB data was analyzed for directional or divergent agreement. Survey items with directional agreement included items in which participants responded as culturally relevant or assimilationist at a rate of more than 66%. For example, 18 participants (90%) agreed with the culturally relevant survey item "6A. The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons." Survey items with divergent agreement included items in which participants responded as culturally relevant and assimilationist at a rate between 33% and 66% for either perspective. For example, in response to item, "4H. My students need a good education so that they can move

out of this community and have a better life for themselves." Four participants (20%) disagreed with the assimilationist item (a culturally relevant response), and 12 participants (60%) agreed with the statement (an assimilationist response). The discriminatory ability of the measure, and its usefulness to this study, rests on its ability to identify similar beliefs and where participants differ in their responses.

The use of directional agreement in analysis of the survey was a valuable tool to discriminate the culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs of the sample. To determine directional agreement, statements that the participants agreed with or strongly agreed with were combined into one perspective. The same process was followed with the items participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with. Several items within the survey yielded a more than 33% Undecided or No Answer response from participants. When participants agreed or strongly agreed with a culturally relevant statement, or when they disagreed or strongly disagreed with an assimilationist statement it, was coded as culturally relevant. The same was true for agreement with assimilationist statements or disagreement with culturally relevant statements.

When the responses were aggregated into the dimensions of culturally relevant teaching, the data appear to show a diversity of views with an emphasis on culturally relevant responses within the sample (see Table 15).

Table 15. Dimensions of Culturally Relevant Teaching of Head Start Teachers (n=20)

Dimension of Culturally Relevant Teaching	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or No Answer
1. Knowledge (5 items)	39 (49%)	28 (35%)	13 (12%)
2. Students' race, ethnicity, and culture (7 items)	91 (66%)	29 (21%)	18 (21%)
3. Social relations in and beyond the classroom (12 items)	115 (48%)	70 (29%)	55 (23%)
4. Teaching as a profession (8 items)	81 (51%)	18 (18%)	49 (31%)
5. Teaching practice (9 items)	106 (66%)	19 (12%)	35 (22%)
6. Students' strengths and needs (6 items)	78 (65%)	27 (23%)	15 (13%)

However, when the dimensions were examined by item, there was high directional agreement by the participants in both directions -- with culturally relevant and assimilationist statements -- which caused the dimensions to take on a balanced appearance when aggregated. The next section will report the findings of each dimension by item.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Survey Findings within Dimensions

The value of the CRTB directional and divergent agreement analysis to the study is found in its ability to discriminate culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs of Head Start teachers in order to identify diversity of beliefs among the participants. In analyzing the survey for items that revealed somewhat balanced responses between culturally relevant and assimilationist perspectives, as opposed to directional agreement by the sample, participants' beliefs are discriminated from responses that tend to reflect views of the entire sample or the culture of the

Head Start program. The analysis of the directional agreement of the dimensions of the culturally relevant beliefs survey can be found in the Appendix. The dimensions include:

1. Knowledge (5 items) (Appendix H, p.364)
2. Students' race, ethnicity, and culture (7 items) (Appendix I, p.365)
3. Social relations in and beyond the classroom (12 items) (Appendix J, p.371)
4. Teaching as a profession (8 items) (Appendix K, p.368)
5. Teaching practice (9 items) (Appendix L, p.369)
6. Students' strengths and needs (6 items) (Appendix M, p.370)

The responses of the sample were analyzed for tendencies and puzzles for each of the six dimensions. These will be presented along with discussion of items important to the process of inquiry in Phase II, the qualitative phase of the study. An overview of the culturally relevant and assimilationist responses within each dimensions follows.

Knowledge Dimension

The statements in the Knowledge dimension (see Appendix H, p.364) of the survey instrument explored participants' perspectives on knowledge construction from a culturally relevant perspective (Love & Kruger, 2005). In culturally relevant teaching, knowledge is described in the literature as co-constructed by students and teachers. It is also viewed as a way to empower students to become culturally aware and to combat their oppression (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The participants tended to respond to the survey items with directional agreement when they answered the survey prompts within this dimension. Participants responded as culturally relevant to the following survey items. In response to the item, "1B. What I learn from my students is as important as what they learn from me." 20 (100%) of the participants responded

culturally relevant. Of the participants who responded, 16 (80%) agreed with the culturally relevant statement, "1E. One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts." The sample tended to agree with the assimilationist items "1A. It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students." (20 participants, 100%) and "1D. I expect students to come to me with a particular set of prerequisites skills." (14 participants, 70%). Within the sample of 15 participants that responded to the item, "1C. Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them." seven (35%) agreed with the assimilationist statement, and eight (40%) disagreed.

The Knowledge dimension of the CRTB seemed to reflect directional agreement within the total sample. The directional agreement within the dimension seems to indicate perspectives on knowledge of Head Start teachers that are a function of the entire sample, not necessarily individual teachers. Item, "1C. Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them." of the Knowledge dimension was explored in the first-round interview with the core questions, "What do your students know before they come to school?" and "How do you understand or address your students' backgrounds in your teaching?" Follow-up questions related to the Knowledge dimension of the CRTB in the first-round interview included, "How would you teach a child to recognize their name who was ready for school as opposed to a child who hadn't had any experience with letters?" and "How do you use your students' background in what you teach?" The directional agreement of the responses may reflect the particular type of content Head Start teachers are expected to teach. Many Head Start students come to school having had very few literacy experiences. As will be described in following sections, the other dimensions of culturally relevant teaching offered more variety of responses by participants.

Students' Race, Ethnicity, and Culture dimension

There were five items within this dimension that elicited primarily culturally relevant responses. Item, "2A. Knowing the race or ethnicity of historical figures does little to enhance the learning of students of color" represented 15 culturally relevant responses (75%) and two assimilationist (10%) responses. The responses to item "2B. The cultural background of my students plays an important part in my teaching. I bring their backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into my lesson planning." (16 participants, 80%) and "2C. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture." (17 participants, 85%) were also primarily culturally relevant. In response to "2D. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences." the item was answered by 16 participants (80%) culturally relevant and by one participant (5%) assimilationist. In responding to the prompt "2F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children." 5 participants (25%) disagreed with the statement, reflecting a culturally relevant statement, and 14 participants (70%) agreed with the assimilationist statement. These two items also elicited varying responses from the interviewed teachers, and follow-up questions about these two items were included in the second-round interview.

In the Students' Race, Ethnicity, and Culture dimension of the CRTB (see Appendix H, p.364), 17 participants (85%) indicated agreement with the statement "2C. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture." Out of 16 participants, 11 (55%) indicated agreement and 5 (25%) indicated disagreement with the assimilationist item, "2E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children." The apparent contradiction of agreeing with these two statements within the dimension of culturally relevant teaching beliefs was a puzzlement that was addressed in the second-round interviews.

Social Relations in and Beyond the Classroom Dimension

The beliefs described as social relations in and beyond the classroom in the survey are meant to explore participants' views on relationships with students that affect student achievement. A puzzle presented within this dimension included the high number of participants who responded as "Undecided" or "Not Answered" to prompts concerning individual versus communal responsibility. As shown in Appendix J (p.371), when responding to the item, "3E. I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track." one participant (5%) responded as culturally relevant and nine (45%) as assimilationist. Interestingly, 10 participants (50%) chose not to answer or were "Undecided" in their responses. This response pattern to the item seems to indicate apparent discomfort on the part of the participants with either the subject of team work or student responsibility. Ambiguity about the concept of individual versus communal responsibility is also present in item "3B. Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well." in which 10 (50%) responses were culturally relevant, 4 (20%) were assimilationist, and 6 out of the 20 participants, (30%) did not respond as either culturally relevant or assimilationist. Another puzzle was found in the culturally relevant item, "3I. I expect my students to be responsible for one another." in which nine participants (45%) agreed with the statement and seven participants (35%) disagreed. It may be difficult for the participants to assign responsibility to students at 4-years-old in the manner that is expressed by the survey created for elementary and middle school teachers (Love & Kruger, 2005).

The concept of individual versus communal responsibility was not explored in the first-round interview but emerged in the participants' descriptions of student behavior and teaching

strategies. It was followed up on in the second-round interview with the question, "What would you say is the most effective way to teach your students: one-on-one, small groups, or whole groups? Why?" The qualitative interviews in this study also explored this dimension based on the participants' responses to questions about students' homes, neighborhoods, and communities. Relationships with parents were especially important to the interview participants. This dimension provided the most number of divergent items within the survey.

Teaching as a Profession Dimension

The responses to the items about teaching as a profession (see Appendix K, p.368) presented some diversity in responses. Item "4D. Someone's got to teach these youngsters in urban schools; it might as well be me." was a puzzle when compared to the interview data. Of the 20 participants, 14 (70%) did not respond to the statement, while three (15%) agreed and three (15%) disagreed with this assimilationist belief. The assimilationist statement, "4H. My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves." yielded 12 (60%) assimilationist responses and 4 (20%) culturally relevant responses out of 16 participants (80%), including three of the four interview participants, who indicated agreement with the statement. This statement presents some variety of beliefs on the part of the participants. The stressful neighborhoods students live in, with threats of violence and uncertainty, may predispose the participants to this perspective. Head Start was designed to break the cycle of poverty, which often includes moving out of subsidized housing, securing a job, and engaging in job training. In the interviews this perspective was addressed through questions about students' homes and communities.

Teaching Practice Dimension

The teaching practice dimension (see Appendix M, p.124) of the CRTB explores the perspective of teaching and learning from the culturally relevant perspective. Culturally relevant teaching is described as student led and collaborative (Love & Kruger, 2005). The participants in this study indicated a predominantly culturally relevant perspective on teaching practices, at least as described by the survey. They indicated agreement with the apparently contradictory statements, "5B. Students' responses determine where I go with a lesson; I just cannot put a time limit on good teaching." and "5F. With enough repetition, drill, and practice, students will attain a passing grade." These two contradictory beliefs about child-directed and teacher-directed learning played out in the interview participants' descriptions of teacher-led, child-directed, and child-led learning that occurred in their classrooms.

This dimension offers a valuable glimpse into the participants' beliefs about their practices that develop successful emergent literacy in urban African American boys living in poverty. However, it could be that the survey, as developed for elementary and middle school teachers, does not accurately reflect the practices of Head Start teachers. The one dimension that 19 participants (95%) agreed with was "5A. Teaching is like an art; it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding." This item, in referring to "dramatizing from concrete experiences to the conceptual level of understanding" may have struck a chord with the participants. This dimension of culturally relevant teaching offers a lens through which to view the variety of responses presented in the interviews.

Student Strengths and Needs Dimension

The dimension concerning students' strengths and needs (see Appendix L, p.369) yielded somewhat balanced perspectives from participants. One statement had only slightly more

culturally relevant responses eight (40%), than assimilationist responses seven (35%) "6B. Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences." However, nearly as many, seven participants (45%), indicated "Undecided" or "No Answer" for the statement. This statement also concerns the same topic of individual versus communal responsibility and assessment as the item "3B. Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well." in which six participants (35%) chose not to respond.

Participants indicated almost total agreement (18 participants out of 18 responses, 90%) with the item "6A. The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons." This statement seems to contradict the 19-participant (95%) agreement with the assimilationist statement, "6D. Children basically learn in the same way." This item was explored in the follow-up questions in the second-round interview. Each participant was asked, "Do all students learn from the same activities? Do you see any patterns of differences in effective lessons?" The responses of the participants, when given an opportunity to explain their agreement with the statement, offered some insight into how the participants view teaching and learning.

Summary

The CRTB survey was intended to serve three functions within the study. The first was to discriminate culturally relevant and assimilationist views of the participants. The second was to provide a method for identifying participants with divergent beliefs for intentional sampling purposes for the qualitative interviews. Finally, it informed the interview process through integration of survey analysis with the first-round interview. The survey was helpful in describing the beliefs of Head Start teachers in the study sample; its usefulness in the sampling

methodology was not fully utilized due to the small sample size (see chapter four). The survey elicited both culturally relevant and assimilationist expressions of directional agreement by the majority of the study sample. This directional agreement served as a jumping off point for some of the follow-up questions in Phase II of the study. Two such culturally relevant statements include, "2C. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture." (17 participants, 85%) and "5A. Teaching is like an art; it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding." (19 participants, 95%). Two assimilationist statements that elicited directional agreement were "1A. It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students." and "3L. Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom." There were also several items that participants responded to with divergent agreement. The dimensions of teaching beliefs with the most divergent responses included "Social Relations In and Beyond the Classroom" and "Teaching as a Profession" (see chapter four). Examples of divergent agreement in "Social Relations In and Beyond the Classroom" were "3B. Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well." (10 culturally relevant response, 50% and 4 assimilationist, 20%) and "3E. I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track." (1 culturally relevant response, 5% and 9 assimilationist responses 45%). Within the dimension "Teaching as a Profession" two items that elicited divergent agreement were "4A. My purpose for teaching is to give something back to the community in the same way I was given an education." (13 culturally relevant, 65% and 2 assimilationist 10%) and "4H. My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves." (4 culturally relevant, 20% and 12 assimilationist 60%). It was interesting that the findings from the

qualitative phase of the study, including the participants' relationships with parents and the effects of this relationship on their identity, would also fall within these two dimensions of culturally relevant teaching. In the next section, the results of interviews and integration of the survey data with the interview data will be presented as biographical sketches.

Phase II: Qualitative Measures

This phase of the study answers RQ2, " How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?" It integrates analysis of participants' interviews with their survey responses. The first-round interviews were conducted between December 2011, and February 2012. The second-round interviews took place between February 2012 and April 2012. Each interview lasted between an hour and one hour and thirty minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. A close reading was completed with important quotes and phrases selected for further analysis. Close attention was paid to connections between participants' interviews.

The interview participants will be referred to by the pseudonyms Pam, Sara, Candice, and Jasmine. The first-round interview consisted of five interview questions with follow-up questions. Additional clarifying questions were asked based on the participants responses to scripted questions and puzzles presented from the analysis of the CRTB survey for the total sample. In the second-round interview, questions were constructed based on the responses of the interview participants to the survey, analysis of the first-round interview, and through discussion with the PI, methodologist, and peer reviewer. The following section will include biographical sketches of the participants based on analysis of both interviews. The participants are presented

in the order in which the data were collected. The first interview was with Pam, then Sara, followed by Candice and Jasmine.

Biographical Sketches

This section will profile the beliefs of the interview participants. Each of the participants is an African American woman. Each holds a professional license to teach in public schools. The profiles of the participants are organized according to the codes and themes that emerged in the cross-case study. When applicable, specific CRTB survey items are included in the discussion of the participants' perspectives. The organizing themes for the biographical sketches include: identity and Head Start, relationships with parents, and learning, surviving, and behavior.

Pam

Pam taught Head Start for approximately 19 years at the same school. Her demeanor is matter of fact and often humorous. The researcher and Pam have known each other for approximately 10 years. During that time the researcher has grown to respect Pam's passion for teaching and Head Start. Pam was a teacher during the time that the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening data used in this study were collected, from the fall of 2007 through spring of 2010. In the Fall of 2010 she was promoted to child development specialist for Head Start. In that role, she supports Head Start teachers in their practices. Pam has a 10-year-old son and a stepdaughter.

In response to questions concerning what learning looks like, Pam used the terms "developmentally appropriate," "the individual needs of each child," and "very active, very hands-on, excited children, teachers involved." This description would make her more likely to affirm culturally relevant teaching beliefs. In contrast, her description of teaching also included references to traditional, or in the frame of the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey,

assimilationist teaching practices. In Pam's response to the clarifying question that asked her to describe what active learning means to her, she explained that active learning meant changing traditional teaching into teaching that included student movement or sensory activities. She said, "You take what other people might think is drill and practice or rote learning and turn it into something where the children can move around and touch stuff." She also stated, "with letters we might be outside and they might race for letters or for their name card."

Pam seemed to express conflicting perspectives throughout the interview. Some of Pam's responses to interview questions about student backgrounds seemed to suggest an assimilationist perspective. Although parents are not mentioned in the interview questions, she brought up mentoring parents as part of her work. Her perspective reflected the assimilationist perspective in that she actively attempted to expose parents to, in her word, "appropriate" media to support student learning and development. She also described the need to "take them where they are" in addressing students' backgrounds and planning for instruction. This reflects a culturally relevant approach to meeting student needs.

Pam responded to a total of 38 out of 47 CRTB survey items. Her response was culturally relevant to 29 items (62%) and assimilationist to 9 items (19%). In the CRTB survey, Pam indicated "Strongly Disagree" to the assimilationist statement, "2E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children." Her response was the only culturally relevant response within the entire sample. The dissonance between Pam's culturally relevant responses to the survey and her assimilationist interview descriptions became clearer through the second-round interview as she described her perspectives on mentoring parents and the relationship between learning and behavior.

Identity and Head Start

Analysis of Pam's interviews revealed a passion for working with parents and children that was expressed through several descriptions of becoming involved in the lives of her students' families. Pam described how she felt Head Start teachers needed to be as a teacher, when she stated Head Start teachers need,

to be models for our parents. A lot of times advocates for our parents. We have to give them words. You might have a parent to come in to have a problem with something that's not related to um, you know the child or the education. It might be just them and something they're trying to accomplish. You have to help them.

Pam described that to be successful with the students that she taught, a teacher needed to "ready" for anything. Pam expressed a belief that learning was non-negotiable in her class. She explained, "I think you need positive behavior and you better get it if you're going to get learning to take place... There has to be learning." She also described her values about the role of behavior in teacher and student interactions. She said, "This child, their behavior is a problem,... there's a reason for the behavior so you have to find out what that is. Adjust the behavior and the learning will take place." Pam seems to utilize a problem solving approach to dealing with behavior. Pam explained that her effectiveness relied on her sense of self as the locus of control in her classroom. In describing a less effective day she said,

It could have been a day when something that affected me, that, made me not as... focused I could be. The children may have been fine but um, because of the way I was interacting with them I may have felt that it wasn't going well... me more off of my game because you have to be prepared for whatever the kids bring. If they come in frustrated, sad,... unhappy, you have to deal with that.

She described several instances of reaching out to parents to help them make choices to support their children's learning and development. In describing her relationships with parents, Pam described the importance of "always maintaining that professionalism." In reference to mentoring parents, Pam described suggesting music to support student learning, suggesting alternative TV programs, and supporting parents in achieving goals.

Relationships with Parents

In Pam's interviews, she expressed that connecting with parents was a part of who she is as a Head Start teacher. Pam expressed that she believed that her students' parents cared deeply about their children. She said, "You have families where parents care. You know they care. They may not know exactly what to do educationally or raising children at all really but you know they love their children and want the best for them." Her description includes the sense that Pam cares about her students' parents as well, as she explains that the parents "become important to you."

I've found that as a teacher and that for teachers, colleagues, what have you, as a Head Start teacher you, must be open to, willing to, and want to work with the parents as well. Some schools you might go to a school and you know they have parent involvement but ... it's not a required thing that you have the relationship that we have with our parents.

'We send home notes, you invite em on field trips,' that kind of thing that's it but, with us, we have to do a lot more as far as our parents... In a lot of cases without stepping over the lines of professionalism it becomes a family, you know. They become important to you. When they succeed or when they're excited you're excited. When they accomplish things, when they get a GED, when they get their first job,... when they come in to volunteer,

and they light up, because you know "This is something I never saw myself doing, but I'm doing it now." ... I'm just as excited as I am when my children learn things."

In the previous excerpt, it was apparent that Pam saw the parents of her students as her clients as well as their children. She also attempted to describe the difference between Head Start teachers and other teachers by saying it goes beyond "send home notes" and "invite them on field trips."

Pam seemed to describe part of her job as a Head Start teacher as not only a teacher of children but also as mentor to parents. She described several instances of reaching out to parents to help them make choices to support their children's learning and development. In reference to mentoring parents, Pam described suggesting music to support student learning, suggesting alternative TV programs, and in one particular case mentoring a 19 year-old parent who volunteered in her classroom.

I can give you an example of one parent who had...six children. Five of them I taught. and, they were all boys and when I met her she had the first one at 15. So when I met her (the parent), four years later he was four, she was a withdrawn, I'm gettin' emotional but, she wouldn't even look up. And, so, (Pam is tearing up a little but pushes on with the story) She didn't have a relationship with family. But she wanted the best, for her children you know. But she would come into the room and she wanted to be involved but she would/ She didn't talk. You know she wouldn't say much. You would have to tell her what to do. And she would do it but she was just so, I mean she did not look at you... And by the end she was the type of parent that you could depend on for anything. She could pretty much run the class on her own. You know. So just seeing that growth is, was wonderful. And we went through it. You know there were things that she did that were

crazy. And you know/ but she learned a lot. Over the years. The oldest one is in high school now... Still working on her but, you know definitely a difference.

The passage above shares the depth of interaction Pam had with the parent she described. She seemed to take pride in the personal growth of the parent. She also explained that she was "still working on her." This suggests that Pam has maintained her relationship with this parent as former students have gone on to high school. Pam believed that her relationship with her parents was "a partnership between the parents and the families/ teachers and the families. The buy-in to that partnership is not always immediate for those parents but, having to just keep working on it." The persistence she described suggests going beyond a customary interaction into a more sustained manner of engaging parents.

Learning, Surviving, and Behavior

In describing what learning looked like in her classroom, she offered multiple perspectives. She described child-directed interactions, such as "Children asking lots of questions. Making mistakes and learning through them. A lot of play, music, some quiet times, individualization..." She also described activities that were "Very active, very hands-on, excited children teachers involved." However, she also described active learning as, "You take what other people might think is drill and practice or rote learning and turn it into something where the children can move around and touch stuff. Letters were textured if we were working on that." The multiple perspectives Pam described suggest a fluid perspective on what works in her classroom.

This fluid perspective is present in how Pam responded to the question, "Do all students learn the same way?" She said,

I would say noooooo and yesssss... You have the same overall activity but you might have to make some changes and I'm trying to think of some examples. But you might have to make some alterations to the activity to have everybody get what your trying to get at. Ok so if my thing is rhyming and I'm saying to them, "We're going to do rhyming words and I'm going to say a word and I'm going to give you a word to rhyme. I want you to give me a word that rhymes." Some of them are going to do it just like that. Some of them are going to need pictures to be able to select a word that rhymes with the word that I'm giving them.

She placed her response in the frame of individualizing to student needs.

Pam described the importance of dealing with circumstances that affect learning before students can "receive" learning, such as hunger, anger, and exposure to age inappropriate media. In describing the experiences of her students she cited exposure to arrests, sexual imagery, and violence. She also mentioned students living in foster care, single parent households, or being raised by grandparents. She mentioned hunger and anger as factors distracting students from learning, "just a whole lot of different things that go on. Before they can even think about getting to learn or receive what it is teachers are trying to do." Pam went on to describe the tension between lack of basic needs and learning this way,

A lot of the parents are more concerned with the basic needs. With keeping them in a home. Keeping them in clothes. Making sure they eat. Those kind of things. And, they have to learn, 'cause a lot of times its a cycle. So a lot of them are... really young. A lot of them didn't realize the importance of school while they were there. Didn't finish or whatever. So they have to be taught that its important and they need to pay attention to it.

The idea of addressing student needs before learning can occur seems to reference Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1968). Receiving learning could also be related to the idea of changing traditional rote learning into active games that incorporate movement and sensory experiences. In describing the background of her students, Pam made reference to two general groups of students based on their prior experiences. The two groups include students who were well prepared for school and students who were not prepared for school. Each of these groups' preparedness were linked to parents' backgrounds and experiences. In describing students that were "ready to go" Pam said,

they know a lot. They've been exposed, to lots of different things. Parents have taken them out and you know to museums, you know just kid activities, who worked with them at home, who understand the importance that if you're watching TV that it be something educational or age appropriate for their children.

In describing students that were not prepared for school, Pam said, "Then there are those who come in who... books was something that just didn't happen." Pam described her role in addressing student background as, "take them where they are, you know, and move them forward from where ever that was." Pam described the importance of getting parents, students, and the teacher "on the same page" about emotional development.

Emotionally, just getting the family on the same page. Understand that you know. A lot of times they think , "I'm the mom, this is what I say, this is what you do." A lot of times, but they don't understand that you have to I'll say pick your battles. You have to explain things. You have to understand why they're doing things and that kind of thing. So once they, You know once you get on the same page and we're you know just doing the same things emotionally it should be ok.

Pam "Strongly Disagreed" with the assimilationist statement, "2E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children." In clarifying her perspectives on race and ethnicity, as it was explored in the survey question, she explained,

Children are children but, and I don't know if I should say more color and... just in the environment that I've worked. African American and poverty some of them. You know or parents who don't have... financial means, education, all of them aren't that way but a lot of them are. So, I think that I have to take into consideration some of those things.

Because people, kids are, I mean they're just some differences."

Pam seemed to acknowledge that, in her experience, there were "some differences" that were important to acknowledge about students' race and ethnicity. In describing the learning of boys compared to girls, Pam said, "Learning as a boy, at four and five years old, I didn't really see much difference. Most times more active than girls. They like to run and jump and hit and push." In the following passage, in describing that girls do not necessarily need to move to learn but with boys, "if you're having trouble" movement can help them to learn however, she maintains her gender neutral perspective when she says, "it happens with girls as well."

a girl you can say, "let's count" and they'll count easily. And boys will too. But if you say, "let's jump as far as we can every time we name a number, listen for the numbers." I do think that boys learn um if you're having trouble whatever, getting them to get a concept or skill, if you add some activity... some movement and it happens with girls as well. So. Boys just more active. They just need to have fun, move.

She also expressed concern for the emotional development of boys. She seemed concerned that parents of boys did not want boys to be fully emotionally developed. She described that parents wanted boys to live up to images of men they valued. She said,

The parents would come in and I would hear them say to their son, 'Don't cry. Be tough.' That kind of thing and at four years old that was always hard for me. Because you know you want them to understand that they are human and that they have emotions and they can deal with them. Just like everybody else.

These statements allude to gender expectations of the parents of her students, not the students themselves.

She described boys' behavior as more active than girls but learning as “no different than girls.” It could be that the lack of distinction in describing learning in boys and girls is due to her adoption of an active learning approach that puts learning in a context that includes movement and sensory experiences. She said,

if you provide a environment that's nurturing. You provide the boys those I know they need a lot more, I feel they need physical stuff but girls need that too. So if you incorporate that active learning hands-on... and in pre-k that's appropriate for everybody, that kind of thing, just being busy and moving around and learning through the play.

Pam seems to describe an approach to teaching boys that is intended to meet their need to "move around" but is also implemented to meet the needs of girls in that it is "appropriate" for all students. Finally, Pam's thoughts about the emotional development of boys and gender expectations led to insights that informed the study's focus on boys' learning.

Summary

Pam seemed to express complex ideas about teaching and learning. Her descriptions of boys' learning and the way that boys and girls are the same and different took into account the diversity of experiences her students had prior to coming to school. During her interview, she was consistently passionate about describing her interactions with parents. As Pam told her stories about students, she often described humorous and caring interactions. Pam described the importance of dealing with circumstances that affect learning, before students can "receive" learning such as hunger, anger, and exposure to age inappropriate media. Pam also expressed multiple perspectives on how to interact with students.

Pam's stories seem to embody a pragmatic approach. She described using rote activities that incorporated movement and learning that happens through "asking questions, making mistakes, and play." She described boys' behavior as more active than girls' but learning as "no different than girls." It could be that the lack of distinction in describing learning in boys and girls is due to her adoption of an active learning approach that puts learning in a context that includes movement and sensory experiences and also that boys and girls in her class learn the same way.

In listening to the stories of Pam's 19 years of experience as a teacher, it is evident that she has deep feelings about her work in Head Start. She was most passionate when she discussed her relationships with parents. She expressed many of the traits of a culturally relevant approach to teaching, including high regard for student perspectives, connections to parents and the community, a commitment to teaching in urban public schools, and the importance of students' culture, including race and ethnicity in teachers' decisions about teaching and learning. She also emphasized some assimilationist perspectives on appropriate media, on learning as non-

negotiable, and on using a problem-solving approach to behavior that are attributes of the warm demander philosophy (Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2008). The combination of culturally relevant beliefs about race and ethnicity, combined with Pam's authoritative approach with parents and insistence on learning, suggested that Pam might qualify as a warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2008) teacher as well as a culturally relevant teacher.

Sara

Sara taught kindergarten for more than six years before becoming a Head Start teacher. She had moderate success as a kindergarten teacher, but according to her, she did not really fit in with her kindergarten colleagues. The relationship between parental experiences with school and student success is an emergent theme in Sara's interview. The tension between parents' prior experiences with school and their ability to develop school readiness in their children is mentioned more than once. Sara viewed parents as "doing the best they can" while acknowledging variability in parents' capacity to support their children's learning.

Sara responded to a total of 44 out of 47 survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 33 items (70%), assimilationist to 11 items (23%), and undecided to 3 items (7%) According to the survey, Sara's perspective is more culturally relevant than assimilationist in her beliefs about her teaching. In the CRTB survey, Sara agreed with four contradictory statements and was asked to explain her perspective in the second-round interview. The statements included, "2C. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.", "2D. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences.", "2E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.", and "2F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children." When asked to explain these

opposing statements, Sara seemed to have some cognitive dissonance as she tried to communicate her perspective. This was indicated by several attempts to describe her beliefs punctuated by changes in direction and stumbling on first and second person tenses. As she explained why she responded to the survey the way she did, she seemed to accommodate a somewhat different perspective as she spoke.

More of/ I read a lot of um slavery and escaping from the south and going to the north. I read a lot of that, because I wanted to touch on that. But when it was/ I do bring in different, I do take consideration of their race and their heritage when/ I do especially when we each do one of the months we're celebrating. Latino month, um African American. Black History month. I do take into consideration that I want to highlight on certain parts of their lives so they can identify with that. But on the other hand, when you do teach you still got to remember that they're children. You're teaching children. So, I can see why somebody would disagree, and agree, and agree, and agree. But that it does sound/ it is contradicting. Cause it did not/ you gotta be aware of where the child comes from. You gotta be aware of it. I mean, just see children. In this day and age, you just see children. You just can't. I mean when I was growing up, yeah maybe they just saw children. In this day and age, nah. You gotta come correct. Yeah. I mean. In that's a/... you right, you can't just see children. Cause to me, just seeing children is not going the extra mile. No/ I'm just saying, that statement, just see children is/ is it/ is/ if somebody said I just see children in my classroom I don't see individuals then you're not going the extra mile. To address all your children's needs. I would disagree with it. You can't just see children. (Researcher: So you would see that as being in that context as being something you would disagree with?) Yeah. In that/ but/ knowing you're dealing with them on a um

individual (Researcher: So individually, as opposed to an identification with a culture or race) right. Individual they're children. But when you identify them with their race you have to/ you have to have your lesson so that they can make some kind of identification. In the preceding passage, Sara has seemed to explain that she uses race, ethnicity, and culture in making decisions about curriculum, such as what stories to read. She seemed to accommodate the perspective that students' cultures should be accessed to respond to students' identities. At the same time, she also held the opinion that students should be supported through individualizing to their needs. In summarizing her perspective, Sara said, "Individual they're children. But when you identify them with their race ... you have to have your lesson so that they can make some kind of identification." This "identification" is an aspect of culturally relevant teaching in that it makes the student's culture a part of the school experience and is used to support their learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Identity and Head Start

Sara's story touches on how she sees her development as a professional. In her interview Sara described Head Start as more creative than kindergarten and seemed to see it as a better fit for her as a professional. Sara became a Head Start teacher after her friend, Ms. J., another Head Start teacher and mentor to her, died the year before. Sara was hired to fill the position left open by her deceased colleague. This was her first year. In the preceding passage Ms. L. was the former assistant principal who supervised Sara as a kindergarten teacher.

During the summer Ms. J and I used to work together. And um I I like the program actually during the summer, was real good. And it gave me preparation for what was coming down the line for Kindergarten. And um Ms. L my, Ms. L. used to come in my classroom and saw all the creative stuff um and she was just like, "You're you're not a

quote un quote Kindergarten teacher. You more of a Head Start" and she felt that would have been a better fit for me. Because I did all the, I went outside the box. So, thats how I ended up coming down here.

In Sara's description, before working for Head Start, she saw herself as a "type of teacher" that would do home visits. Home visits, a requirement of Head Start, are not required in kindergarten in the urban school system where Sara works. She expressed her connection with her students and their families as a member of their community.

Ok well first, I'm one of the teachers that live in the area. So, um, it's an area that is up and coming. It does have its setbacks and yes I've done home visits with the kids at the kids house during August. And some of them live in some rough neighborhoods where you can't send them out to play. Um, in my experience, before I got to Head Start I always did home visits. So I'm the type of teacher that will go from having a problem or even if I'm not having a problem, in September I'll go to the homes and introduce myself.

Sara explained that she empathized with her students' parents and used her personal experiences to help her connect with parents. She said,

I've been on low income. I've been in public houses, I've done, you know, but you don't have to stay there. I used... resources that were available to me. I used them and pulled... me up by the boot straps. "And you have so much resources. More than what I had when I had my kids. You have so much resources open to you."

Later Sara described some of the differences between teaching in Head Start and teaching in kindergarten. "Some of our parents are afraid of school. But um, now that I'm in this program I feel like I can help more with the parents by offering the different services that Head Start has to offer. My hands were kinda tied in Kindergarten." She also said, "Kindergarten is more rigid.

You gotta be on target. Head Start is more/ gives the teacher more freedom to explore with the kids and adjust the curriculum to help kids." Sara seems to see her work in Head Start as freeing her to pursue the professional identity she desired to fulfill. Sara saw her hands as "kinda tied in kindergarten," but now she has freedom to allow students to "think for themselves." In the following passage, High Scope refers to the curriculum framework that Head Start uses to guide teacher decision making. It is a child-centered approach where teachers set up the conditions for student exploration and build on student interests to provide key experiences in a child's development.

That's why I love High/Scope so much cause they have to think for themselves. They really do. Where I was coming from kindergarten it was, "I tell you, you do it," That's it. There was no, there was no, "Let's think," no, "Lets' go here," there was no freedom. And I think that's what Ms. L saw in my classroom. Because when she come to my classroom, the same thing you saw. The plants growing, the hands on kind of work. Child work. Material work and stuff that student/ student guided and in kindergarten it's not like that. Its teacher guided. So going to that workshop helped me understand. Deprogrammed me from being teacher guided to student centered.

Sara described her commitment to teaching in the urban public school where she works within a framework of her love for children giving her the strength to be where she is needed most. She said,

You gonna have to love children to be in this predicament with these kids in a high risk school. Because there is some mornings you're not gonna want to come here. And there's mornings where you're like, you know that's the morning when they gonna need you the

most. The one morning when you say, I'm not coming in here and you drag yourself in here and that's the day they're going to need you the most. That's the way I look at it.

Sara's identity and her perception of Head Start seem intertwined. Her story of Head Start being more creative than kindergarten, her feeling that her "hands were kinda tied" in kindergarten, that she was "the type of teacher" who did home visits before Head Start, and her identification with her students' parents seem to imply that she was, in her view, meant to be a Head Start teacher. If this is accurate, it would seem to have influenced some of the words she used in describing her experiences, such as being "deprogrammed from being teacher guided to student centered" and describing Head Start as "a better fit" and that her "outside the box" teaching making her better suited to being a Head Start teacher.

Relationships with Parents

Sara presented what seemed to be a positive regard for parents. She explained that she lived in the neighborhood of the school and that she had conducted home visits prior to working for Head Start. She described what seemed to be a tension for students' parents in relating to school. Sara explained that she felt as if she was a team with her students' parents when she explained, "we have to act as a team so we can do the best for their child so we get the best outcome. So I like to think we're on even planes in working together." In reference to the parents of students she said,

They're doing the best they can. Economically, socially, they're doing the best they can. Some of our parents are afraid of school. But um, now that I'm in this program I feel like I can help more with the parents by offering the different services that Head Start has to offer.

The relationship between parental experiences with school and student success is an emergent theme in Sara's interview. The tension between parents' prior experiences with school and their ability to develop school readiness in their children is mentioned more than once. Sara viewed parents as "doing the best they can," although she described variability in parents' capacity to support their children's learning. Sara sees her parents as caring passionately about their children,

They (parents) had a bad experience with school. Their school experience was not joyful. Um, and some parents will come in here and tell you, it was rough. They didn't understand it. Um. But you know, you have to understand that the parents, their children is like a gem, it's like the dearest thing to them. They will die for their children. Sometimes they will believe the child over you. But you have to make that relationship work where, that we're all on the same page. If you could get everybody on the same page. You won't have any problems.

The concept of getting the parent-child-teacher communication "on the same page" is an important idea to Sara. She believed that it was part of her professional responsibility to work towards this goal.

Sara seemed to express a great deal of empathy for her students when she described an experience she had when her children were in preschool.

That's I mean my preschool experience with my kids was in a preschool setting where you played the guitar and all that stuff, my first... older kids,... their first preschool experience was like that, and um, it was helpful to me. Because I, they went to school while I was in college. They had a daycare center on campus... if I came in on one note, and the teacher looked at me, she was like, "Come here. You had a rough day in school

today. What happened?" Not about what my son did, what the children did, nothing like that, to take the time to talk to me. That was good.

This experience seems to inform her other descriptions of the importance of listening to parents and the role that she hopes to play in parents' lives.

Learning, Surviving, and Behavior

Sara described the importance of listening to students and being engaged with students throughout the interview. She said, "I just wait until they invite me and then I listen. I do a lot of listening. You got to do a lot of listening in Head Start." She compared her experiences as a Kindergarten teacher using a scripted curriculum to her experiences in Head Start which used what she described as a flexible approach. She described learning as exposing or teaching concepts or skills during one part of the day and seeing or hearing those same concepts emerge in conversations and play in other parts of the day. She also described teaching as actively engaging with content in the following passage,

I love the way Head Start is, because I get to do all the things, I get to take it a step further. Yes I showed you a picture of a plant. I brought in a plant, Now, I want you to have some kind of ownership so we are going plant a plant now. And I want you to take care of that plant. So you, you're teaching so many things by just putting a seed in the soil. You're teaching so many things in that, one one lesson. But if you don't teach them. Look if I gotta spend time on behavior we're never gonna get to plant the seed so that you can take care of a plant. We're never going to get to that.

Sara was the only interview participant that indicated agreement with the statement "6C. Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences." This

assimilationist statement seemed to be an indicator of Sara's high expectations, especially related to emergent literacy development as she described them in the interview. She said,

My goal for them, if not reading, reading ready when they leave here. At least, they have to know their alphabets. They have to know their sounds, and they have to take the sounds and put the sounds together to make words. They do that, we're halfway there. I'd be pleased with that to send them on to kindergarten. Reading would be nice (hahah laughing) I'm kinda aiming high for reading but that's where I want them to be.

This insistence on high achievement, regardless of the cultural context of her students, is an aspect of the warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2008).

In describing student backgrounds, Sara focused on the difficult experiences of her students, on three levels of prior experience, and on the tension between parents' fear of school and love for their children. According to Sara, on-track students have had some experiences with letters and numbers but lack confidence in their knowledge and abilities. The high-level students can become bored with classroom routine and must be challenged to be engaged. In describing her students' experiences she stated, "They see a lot at a early, very early age. They see drinking, they see drugs, they see shooting, they see the cops all the time. It's a rough area." Sara described her students' backgrounds and readiness for school as generally related to three levels of parents' economic background. She used the descriptors struggling, on-track or emerging, and high to describe students' prior experiences and school readiness. Sara explained that each group of students present unique teaching challenges. The struggling students have little prior literacy experience on which to build emergent literacy skills. To address this Sara described working one-on-one with students using flash cards and providing individualized homework assignments. Sara described one struggling student this way.

He gets angry at the drop of a dime. And we have to work around that. So that by the time you work around through the anger and work and get his, get him to trust you or get some kind of rapport with him um, part of the day is already gone. And you have to pick up again. And Mondays is his rough days because he's coming back from the environment. So Mondays is his rough days. I find myself listening to the news to make sure if anything happens down there in H- that I'm prepared for what to come in and hear what the struggling kids that live down there have to say and give them my full attention that day.

Sara went on to describe the way she attempts to cope with affect of disruptive experiences in children's home lives on their learning at school. She expressed that this was tied to her sense of efficacy and ability to be present for her students. She said,

So, emotionally, this year I've taken a different turn that, I meditate in the morning, I um, I come in in a good spirit. So that my classroom is in a good spirit so I can recognize 'hey, he didn't come in here jumpin' all over the place. Something's wrong with him. Or, 'something's wrong with her, she's not talkative like she usually is.' And I can cue into that early in the day, and then say, feel their head to see if their hot, see if there is some medical problem. And if then if it's not they just something happened at home that day. Just can't process. Give them time to talk it out. And then let them stay close to me for the whole day. And show them that, you know, you can still have fun, during the day, even though stuff is happening at home."

Sara explained how she reaches out to parents of students who are surviving. She said,

And sometimes kids will tell you. We don't have enough food in the house. I will go out and buy food for them. And then I will also, again iterate the services again to the

parent... "These services are here. Nobody's going to know your business Mr. M could meet you in the back of my classroom. Nobody will know what's going on."

Sara described boys as active learners. She expressed belief in the perspective that boys' brains develop differently than girls and that the most effective way to teach them was through movement and visual methods. She believed that "girls are more verbal" and "boys are more physical." She came to this perspective through personal experience and training she received in how to implement the High Scope curriculum. In describing the training she received on boys' learning she stated,

So it gave me a better understanding of how boys think and what boys need in a classroom. They need to move. they need to be up and about. You can't have them sit and expect them to sit criss-cross apple sauce. That's not goin' work, for boys. So my class you see a lot of movement with the music. And we go outside, even if we don't go to the playground, we go right out here in the opening, out here. They get to run around. Boys have to run around. They, and I'm speaking from a parent point of view, 'cause my first four children were boys. I was always on the go with them. Kids you know they have to see they're visual, they have to see a lot. And they gotta see it in increments. They can't see it all at once and decipher it. They have to see it one at a time. To get it and build on that. So, my whole lesson plan is different now, from that workshop.

In reference to boys' language development Sara described the challenge of helping boys communicate when they are frustrated or angry. She said, "Well boys usually can't verbally tell you. They know physical, they cry, and they're not crying because they're hurt. They're crying 'cause they can't verbalize it. And if you're sitting up there, Saying, 'Well tell me.' That's not going to work." Sara explained that she addressed students' background by individualizing to

student needs. She stated, "I start where they're at and then bring them where they should be." Sara described high expectations for her students, "At least, they have to know their alphabets. They have to know their sounds, and they have to take the sounds and put the sounds together to make words. They do that, we're halfway there. I'd be pleased with that to send them on to kindergarten." In describing an effective teaching day, she related success to student behavior. Sara described her behavior management system, "Our behavior chart is red for not on track, yellow is you were off track but you was redirected and could get back on track. And green is you was on track all day." When asked to describe her day she stated, "Today we only had one red light. We had couple yellows, um, Yesterday was an all green day. Um. Today we had yellow because they were working and excited about the holiday coming." Sara also described interruptions in the daily routine as a hindrance to her effectiveness. Sara explained that effectiveness was related to student engagement and student behavior. She said,

"When its less effective you can tell. No conversations going on. Well there is conversation but not the type you want in a classroom. There's a lot of red lights that day. And... it's not going the way it should. And I have to take a moment and go in Al's Pals and take a time out... so I can get what I want."

This statement alludes to effectiveness residing within the teacher. Sara's description of the possible relationship between level of emergent literacy and level of income is a theme that was explored through follow-up questions. Sara made the statement, "The community, I, the community, is your gonna meet a vast array of people. Your gonna have some that are educated. You're gonna have some that are in the middle and you're gonna have some that are just afraid of school." Sara also said that she had students who were less ready for school who were high income and students who were low income that were more ready for school.

Summary

Sara's interview provided valuable insights into how a teacher, who had recently begun working for Head Start, understands her work with children and families. Sara seemed to appreciate many of the aspects of the culture of Head Start as valuable to working with students and parents. She expressed that she felt as if her hands were "kinda tied" in kindergarten. Her descriptions of encouraging students to think for themselves, problem solving the emotional behavior of boys, and her high expectations for student emergent literacy development make her seem to express a warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, and Hambacher, 2008). However, her emerging perspective on race, ethnicity, and culture, as explored in the interview would seem to describe her practice as moving from an assimilationist to a more culturally relevant perspective, at least in relation to the CRTB survey responses.

Sara seemed sensitive to the perspectives of her students and parents, and her description of a preschool teacher who helped her when she was in college seemed to provide the most telling detail in her narrative about why she teaches for Head Start. Throughout her interview she made references to being "in the community" and having been on "low income." She seemed to sympathize with her parents and their daily struggles to survive. Sara's perspective on boys was unique among the participants in that she firmly believed that boys' learn differently than girls. Due to this belief in the differences in how boys and girls learn she said, "my whole lesson plan is different now." She described breaking learning down into small chunks and using movement, music, and visuals to teach. She described how boys developed differently than girls emotionally and needed to move. Although Sara believed that boys learn differently, the practices she described as implemented to address this learning difference are similar to the practices used by the other participants. Sara explained that she is a teacher who has a similar background to her

students' parents and picked herself up by her "bootstraps" through using the resources available to her. She made statements that reflected a culturally relevant approach, especially related to her interactions with parents and in understanding her students, but this perspective seemed to be emerging. Sara's limited experiences in Head Start may have been an influence on her survey responses in that she completed the survey after having been a Head Start teacher for approximately 12 weeks. Her first interview took place after approximately 18 weeks as a Head Start teacher, and the second interview took place after approximately 30 weeks. Her statements in regard to high expectations for students and her problem-solving approach to behavior might describe her successful emergent literacy practices as a warm demander approach as well as a culturally relevant approach.

Candice

Candice has been teaching for twenty years. She has taught in several areas of the city. She is generally positive and humorous. She has faced several health issues recently, as has her instructional assistant of twenty years. She requested to join the study after discussing the study with her friend and colleague, the participant Pam. Candice described learning in her classroom as, "On a daily basis, basically, helping the children to be self sufficient. To rely on using their own minds to figure out things on their own." When she is teaching well she said, "The children are really engaged. They're excited... everybody wants to have a turn, doing whatever we might be doing. Everybody wants to get involved."

In the interview, student behavior as a measure of effectiveness and Candice's sense of efficacy in the process emerged as themes. Candice seemed to express in her interviews and her survey a culturally relevant perspective related to individual and communal responsibilities. In response to the survey questions regarding individual or communal responsibility, Candice

consistently responded as culturally relevant or "No Answer." These items included agreement with the statement, "3B. Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well." but a puzzling "Strongly Disagree" response to the statement, "3C. One student's success is success for the whole class, and one student's failure is failure for us all." Candice's strong opinions, as described in her interview and in the survey would seem to indicate Candice would agree with 3C. However, it could be the term failure that causes her to pull back from her cooperative approach. Candice is the only participant who was interviewed that agreed with this statement.

When asked to describe what it means to be self sufficient for a four year-old child, she described self-help skills along with social skills to negotiate conflict. She said,

To be able to tie your shoes basically... to know the routine when it comes to next what to do next.... Caring about each other, and take care of their own...I think when they learn to be a little bit more self sufficient then they learn that they can go and explore and kinda learn things on their own."

Candice responded to a total of 38 out of 47 survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 31 items (66%), assimilationist to 7 items (15%), and undecided about 9 items (19%).

According to the survey, Candice responded as culturally relevant and assimilationist in her beliefs. In the CRTB survey Candice agreed with one assimilationist statement "3E. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.", and "Strongly Disagreed" with the statement "3F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children." Candice was asked to clarify her perspective on these two items in the second-round survey.

Candice represented a perspective on classroom learning that relied on communal responsibility and individual self-help skills. The importance of Candice's relationship with parents was also described.

Identity and Head Start

Candice seemed to derive some of her sense of efficacy and reward from the relationships she developed as a Head Start teacher. In describing two recent interactions with the families of former students, she described that it was important that parents "trusted me with their child. They felt that I was worth, you know, having a friendship with." She said,

I've had recently I've had two parents or a grandparent and a parent to call me and I taught their kids three, four, five years ago. To call me and tell me, to thank me for the start that they got, their child got in the classroom. Because they're doing so well. Now in the upper grades. One of them is like in third grade. The other little girl she's like in second. And you know, that makes me feel like I'm really doing something. And um knowing that I touched that child's life and the parents saw it, I did something to help them learn. And it's like, that's from two different parents to call me from two different schools so, yeah. Um, it means a great deal to me that, like I said, the parent actually trusted me with their child. And I didn't know them at all, you know. That was, you know, my first time meeting them when their child came to the classroom. And just to know that they trusted me with their child, they felt that I was worth, you know, having a friendship with. And, hopefully the parent thinks the same way. Those two parents that did contact me I still keep in contact with them sometimes. I even had one little girl, one of the little girls um, in some kind of way, her grandmother asked me about a church. I just kind of mentioned my church. She brought the little girl to the church. And she

comes in on a regular basis now. And joining the church and the girl had joined. Um, brothers and sisters. So. It kinda makes me feel good.

A sense of trust between Candice and her students' parents is important to her and appears several times during her interviews. Candice did not draw clear lines in her interviews between her professional self and her personal self. This was evidenced in her several descriptions of becoming friends with the parents of her students and the events and interactions that led to those friendships. When asked how she became friends with the parents of her students she said,

I think just having conversations with the parent. Talking about likes and dislikes. Some find I guess just a common thread about different things. Most of them begin with just when a child has a birthday coming up. If they're gonna have a party at their house and, "Ms. Candice, we want you to come to the party." And I think they're surprised (/Interruption/) Ok Um hmm, birthday parties or like say weddings. And I think the fact that I actually showed up kinda like, "Oh, ok she's not too bad. 'She/', you know, 'she's somebody we can deal with outside the classroom." So yeah, that's/ and also um with them coming in to volunteer a lot. You know. You learn a lot about the person.

For Candice, working with parents and who she is as a teacher seemed intertwined. Candice described her sense of agency as having been affected by discussions with parents after their children left her classroom. Candice described her teaching effectiveness in the context of student behavior. When asked if she had a good day yesterday she said,

"As a class, yesterday. Hmm Yesterday was probably like a ten. It was a good day yesterday. A really good day yesterday! Everybody had a green light yesterday... because it was one of those days when everybody came in was excited and I was excited about the

day and we went to our our groups and they went to centers. Its It just flowed. Everything just flowed yesterday. That's our behavior system. That we use. They get red if they are not having a good day. Yellow if it's a so so day you know. I had to redirect them more than two or three times. Well more than two times. And then green light is everything just flows smoothly.

In contrast Candice described a lower effectiveness day as a day when students have had difficult experiences before coming to school and she had difficulty gaining their attention. Candice explained that using a behavior system helps the school day to "flow better" which in turn helps her to teach better.

Relationships with Parents

Candice described her relationships with parents as different than relationships between parents and teachers in other grades. She said,

we get to meet the parents before the child starts school. And so you kinda develop a relationship in the beginning so I think they kinda start building a trust with you. They invite you into their homes. You get to see where they live and talk to them. And so I think it's a lot closer than maybe another program or another grade level. And you see, make a point to see them throughout the year. Or try to anyway. Hmm. I guess it becomes a closer relationship. The child probably respects you more when they see that the parent respects you. So the child shows more respect towards you. Children now don't have a lot of respect for any kind of, any adults... The parent and the teacher have a good relationship and that kinda gives a level of respect for the teacher. A little bit more.

In the preceding passage Candice described the nature of the relationship between Head Start teachers and Head Start parents as "closer" and based on trust. The importance of trust was indicated repeatedly in Candice's interviews. She said,

develop a relationship in the beginning so I think they kinda start building a trust with you. I think that prior experience with schools, that brought about again, trust, trust in people in the school with their child. And they were more, I guess more apt to come in and volunteer or help out.

She also described the benefit of this relationship in terms of the affect on the student. She said, "The child probably respects you more when they see that the parent respects you." She described the challenge of communication with parents and their prior experiences with education like this,

"A lot of em may or may not have a a down on the an education level where they can really explain things. Or you know share their feelings or, cause they might come in and curse you out or whatever but that's their way. That's their only, That's all they know. So you can't get upset and curse em back out. You have to kinda pretty much kill em with kindness. You know talk to em. To calm em down. Um. They're pretty much um, just surviving. A lot of em might not work. So their pretty much living off, they get public assistance. That's just their way of living. They might not understand why you, you know, go to work every day. 'Cause you could just do like I do.'"

In her interview Candice described the strong connections with parents she developed through her work with Head Start children. The passage above also seems to indicate that Candice tries to embody an understanding that her parents come from particular experiences and backgrounds that may make it hard to communicate with teachers.

Learning, Surviving, and Behavior

Candice described learning in her classroom as, "On a daily basis, basically, helping the children to be self sufficient. To rely on using their own minds to figure out things on their own." When she is teaching well she said, "The children are really engaged. They're excited. They are, everybody wants to have a turn, doing whatever we might be doing. Everybody wants to get involved." She explained that, "all students don't learn the same way... You can have the same activity but you might have to alter it a different way toward their learning style."

In describing how she approached her teaching of students who may have limited experiences before school, she said, "keep your expectations high but don't expect too much in the beginning." Recurring themes in Candice's descriptions are students helping each other, thinking for themselves, and being positive.

Candice expressed the themes of students becoming self sufficient, working together and figuring things out on their own. She mentioned the importance of rapport with parents several times, along with an understanding of some parents being primarily concerned with survival and possessing potentially limited ability to communicate.

Candice described her teaching effectiveness in the context of student behavior. When asked if she had a good day yesterday she said,

Yesterday was probably like a ten. It was a good day yesterday. A really good day yesterday!... Everybody had a green light yesterday...it was one of those days when everybody came in was excited and I was excited about the day and we went to our our groups and they went to centers... It just flowed.

In contrast, Candice described a lower effectiveness day as a day when students have had difficult experiences before coming to school and she had difficulty gaining their attention.

Candice explained that the "stop light" behavior system helps the school day to "flow better" which in turn helps her to teach better. When Candice described her students' background she used the word survival or surviving several times. She said that students know how to survive in their neighborhoods before coming to school. When asked what surviving meant she said,

Surviving. Just getting from day to day. being able to take care of your family. To provide for your family. Being able to get up in the morning. Get your child ready for school. Cause I've seen you know, kids with their parents that are on drugs. I've seen kids that have parents basically, older siblings taking care of the younger kids. I had a kid one time that the sister. The older sister was taking of him because the mom had to work. And the older sister was about 15 or 16 and she had a baby herself. And so just, pretty much, you know, trying to keep their head above water from day to day.

Candice described children living with hunger, as having one or both parents incarcerated, and a child whose father was killed during the school year. She also said that parents were welcoming during home visits. She tried to connect with students and parents this way, "I try to to pretty much sympathize with them and try to understand and get to know where their coming from. So I can kinda better support what they need."

When asked to describe the relationship between a family that is surviving and the learning that happens at school she said,

It's sometimes it can be a little bit more difficult for that child to learn. Because there is so many different that's kinda tearing him. Keeping him from learning. He might not have anyone at home that can read to him. Something as simple as just read. Reading a book to him at night. Or, um help him write his name. That kind of thing. So it kinda. So sometimes it can be a struggle for that child. (I) Just try to give as much attention and as

much love to that child as possible. And sometimes maybe help the family seek outside help.

Candice believed that "boys are taught to be aggressive" by society and that they need to learn when to be "rough." Candice expressed concern for one particular boy's emotional development when she described what boys' learning looks like. She said,

They're um the boys are pretty much up and all over the place and loud and when their excited because they're learning. I have one little boy in particular who just gets all excited and if he can't get something right he just starts crying and he's actually one of the smartest boys in here. So if he can't get it, he's crying but, um basically they're all over the place.

In describing boys' learning and how to be effective with boys she shared, "the most important thing...to keep them encouraged they can do... they can be successful. Let them know that you're there for them. And you will help them." She did not discriminate between boys' and girls' learning. In describing boys' and girls' learning, Candice said, "To be a boy in my classroom. I want them to feel like accepted and feel like they can learn... just as well as everybody else...I don't think I treat em really different." Candice also described working with boys in small groups to meet their learning needs.

"I know I probably give 'em more individual attention. Ms. E_ (instructional assistant) and I... We'll pull the boys, she'll... pull the group of boys together. 'Cause we only have like five and she'll get em and she'll work with em. And you know just drill em so yeah we do a lot of individual teaching. Real small groups, 2 or 3 kids."

She cited using "open-ended questions" and that all students learned from, "Hands on with everybody pretty much." She explained that boys need to learn, "when to be rough and when not

to be rough. Because boys want to wrestle and jump around. And a lot of the times, boys don't always want to actually sit down and do work." When asked to describe what it means to be self sufficient for a 4-year-old child, Candice's description focused more on the child as a part of a community instead of individual rights or responsibilities. She said,

To be able to tie your shoes (laughing) basically um to know, I guess know the routine when it comes to next what to do next um even as far as you feel a conflict with another child to be able to go that child and talk to them. And say, "Look you hurt, you hurt my feelings, you know we need to talk about it." And that sounds a little farfetched...but some of em will eventually do that. You see another child hurt, you go and check on them, that kind of thing. Caring about each other, and take care of their own. Knowing that when it's time to eat lunch you're supposed to go and wash your hands. I shouldn't have to remind you of using the bathroom that kind of thing. That you're supposed to wash your hands. (Researcher: Does that effect the learning that happens here?) Yes. I think it does. Because when you, when they, I think when they learn to be a little bit more self sufficient then they learn that they can go and explore and kinda learn things on their own. Figure out things on their own.

The themes of mutual caring and self sufficiency are interwoven throughout Candice's interviews.

Summary

Candice expressed the themes of students becoming self sufficient, working together and figuring things out on their own. She viewed her role as a teacher as helping students to learn to take care of themselves and each other. She mentioned the importance of rapport with parents several times along with an understanding of some parents being primarily concerned with

survival and possessing potentially limited ability to communicate. Candice valued trust and is concerned that parents feel they can trust her. Candice's approach to her professional identity seemed to incorporate personally meaningful relationships with parents and was a unique perspective in the interviews. These relationships extended beyond student achievement or even teacher as mentor boundaries into friendship. Candice's interviews focused on relationships with parents and between students. Students in Candice's class seemed to be expected to work together and learn from each other. She described students being "all over the place" when they were learning. Candice described her relationships as personally meaningful. Candice has some definite ideas about how boys develop, including that they are taught to be aggressive by society, but she did not believe they learned differently. Communal and group responsibility is the highest priority in Candice's descriptions of her classroom. Candice did not seem to embody some of the attributes of a warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2008), including insistence on high achievement and appropriate school behavior. Candice's focus on cooperative learning and communal responsibility in which students learn from each other seemed to contradict the warm demander approach. She seemed to see behavior difficulties as a function of conflicting cultures between home and school. She described several times that parent views and school rules conflicted. Candice described teaching students to care for one another and teaching students to talk to each other and that "you don't use your fists. You don't have to fight for everything."

In considering the survey responses and interview data, Candice seems to be a culturally relevant teacher that considers society and culture a major influence on her students' lives. She described society's influence on boys' social emotional development, the effects of just surviving, and how students know how to survive in their neighborhoods. She described her attempts to

address this through creating an interdependent school community culture in her classroom that contradicts some of her students' experiences in their home cultures and that developed school readiness skills. Candice seemed to understand and apply the knowledge that her teaching takes place within a cultural context and so embodies a culturally relevant approach.

Jasmine

Jasmine has taught for eleven years. She was first hired as a preschool teacher for a state-funded preschool program on a provisional license in the urban school system where she still works. After her provisional license expired, she worked for Early Head Start as a caregiver to children aged birth to 3-years-old. When she was able to secure her professional license, Jasmine began teaching 4-year-old students in the Head Start program three years ago. She is a single mother to a 5-year-old boy. Jasmine is generally soft-spoken and positive. As a child development specialist, the researcher has actively mentored Jasmine.

Jasmine described learning in her classroom as student led, busy, open, and engaging. In describing student learning, she focused on students learning from each other. In describing her students, she discussed what she saw as a need for them to feel important. Jasmine explained that a majority of her students live with extended family. Jasmine described where her students live as "rough." Her students are exposed to violence, drug abuse, and neglect. She also shared that she saw her own background as similar to her students' background and that she could relate to them through her experiences as a child.

Emergent themes in Jasmine's interview included the emotional development of students and boys in particular, the importance of students feeling valued and a part of something, and the importance of meeting students where they are with the goal of making progress academically.

Jasmine used the word empathy to describe her interactions with students and parents. She described students learning from each other and working together.

Jasmine responded to a total of 46 out of 47 CRTB survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 32 items (70%), assimilationist to 13 items (28%), and undecided about 1 item (2%) According to the survey, Jasmine's beliefs about her practice are more culturally relevant than assimilationist. Jasmine was the only participant who agreed with the CRTB survey item "5C. A good lesson is only tentative." This belief was affirmed by her descriptions of following her students' interests, offering choices to students that do not want to engage in lessons, and having a plan but being willing to change it if students interest seems to be going in another direction. She also strongly disagreed with the statement "3F. I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track." Jasmine described several times in the interview students working together. The difference between what Jasmine described as cooperative learning and the survey statement is the role of responsibility in the interaction. Jasmine said several times in her interviews that she saw her students as "just children." It may have been her perspective on responsibility with young children that influenced her response.

Identity and Head Start

In Jasmine's interview she described how, "I feel a connection to a lot of these kids because I know from which they come" as she identifies with her students. She sees their backgrounds as similar to her own. She also described the importance of teachers in her own life, "I had some really good teachers. That really touched me....She sparked a love of reading in me."

Jasmine described her growth as a professional in several ways during the interview. She mentioned her developing sense of acceptance of her parents as she "had to learn to not judge." She described bridging her personal and professional identities through her experiences as a

parent and a child caregiver for children in the Early Head Start program serving children aged birth to 3-years-old, "over the years as I've, one became a parent myself, and two,... seeing these parents do care for their kids. They just may not have the knowhow to go about doing things for them." During the first interview Jasmine stated that her students were, "just children." In asking her to explain this, she said, "Don't put on them the labels and the behavior modifications on them making them do this and do that. Like little soldiers." She went on to explain,

this is a person, not my soldier, not my person who's made to come in here and do everything I say, how I say it. They have a voice... I want them to learn anything I want them to learn that their voice is valued. I have an opinion. I have a choice. And I guess that's how I try to reach them as individuals by giving them those things... where they can voice their opinions. They can choose what they want to do.

Jasmine also described the role of empathy in her development as a professional when she described her experiences working with teenage mothers and their young children in the Early Head Start program.

I guess that's when I learned to not judge... all of these parents, no matter their background, no matter where they came from, love their kids and they're poor. Because I dealt with as young as a 14 year old mother. And, I've had 40 year old mothers who are principals, and at the end of the day, both of those mothers wanted the same things for their kids. And, with my young moms. I/ I guess our relationship became so much tighter because I connected to this child.... And, you almost say, they came to you almost like a mother figure. You know. they didn't necessarily have the support at home. I had girls who lived in a group home with their babies. They were foster children. So they didn't even know where their mother was, so I almost became a foster parent too... Not only did

I have the child during the day, but the beginning of school and sometimes during school, they'd come in and talk about what was going on. How they needed help. So. Um those were some of the most powerful connections that I think I've made since I've been in Head Start.

In the preceding passage Jasmine described her role in helping young mothers in an Early Head Start classroom. The close relationships she developed with young mothers affected her and helped her to develop her capacity for empathy. Jasmine described what she sees as the value of Head Start in her description of how the program helped her to help entire families, not just the student. She said,

with Head Start, if that family had a need, if it was a nutritional need a dental need there was someone that I could personally call say, 'Look here I have this family.' Um I had a child this year who didn't have any shoes and his foot is so small because that's something I usually go into my own closet my own son and get some shoes but his foot was so small I could call my family service worker and she gave me three resources bam, bam, bam. And we got him shoes in a couple weeks. And it was I think that's what really turned me on to Head Start. That it was the whole family. It was about the whole family. Because it wasn't just education based where of course, we deal with the child, with their learning but, if he's sitting there crying because his feet are hurting. He's not focused on this A this is B. He's focused on my feet are hurting. So I like that we could focus on the whole child and the whole family.

She sees the importance of initial home visits as more important for parents than for students. She said, "A lot of times these kids they are young. And this is their first experience being away from home. So, that initial home visit... helps with making that connection to the

parent." She explained that she believed that lack of parent involvement was a cycle, "their parent wasn't involved in the school. And so it's like a cycle and until you bring them out of that cycle, show just little ways you can help... it continues on." Jasmine described a day when she was less effective as a day when there were more behavioral issues because students were less engaged. Jasmine expressed that the boys in her class get more excited about some of the themes in the reading curriculum than others. She said that a new teacher to Head Start should, "At this age child you really have to start with their interest and then branch out from there." This statement seemed to reflect Jasmine's child-centered approach to teaching.

Relationships with Parents

Jasmine seemed to express acceptance and empathy as ways of acting towards parents. She described her connections with parents as important and valuable to her students. In describing her relationships with parents, she expressed appreciation for their enthusiasm and seemed interested in channeling parent interest to benefit the child. She said,

Our parents they're great, I really try to get them involved early. Because you try to set that foundation for later....like to come on field trips. They love all this experience with this/ this young child and we just try to keep it in kindergarten on. So the main thing is establishing that first year rapport, and getting them to familiarize themselves with the school and everything.... I have parents that I... still communicate with to this day... that call me on the phone, and I'll run into them and see how their kids are doing.... "I see your child... as your investment.... No one's going to care for or teach or be as concerned for your child as you are. And when you make that strong connection with the school, with the teacher, you show them that I am here for my child." And I know that...they care and they love them, are very concerned for their kid,... but depending on their

background and what they may have experienced they don't necessarily know to come to the school and say, "I want to volunteer," or its intimidating to want to read a book.

Cause it's not something that they do outside of their home.

This dialogue was in response to a second-round follow-up question based on the CRTB survey item "3L. Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom." with which all of the interview participants "Strongly Agreed" with. She expressed the importance of not judging parents for their "not knowing how to do this." She said,

Just because these parents live where they live or they may have experienced what they experienced... they don't love their kids any less. They may not have all the tools or the resources but they don't love their kids any less.

Jasmine seemed to express a sincere appreciation for her students' parents and a desire to help both the child and the parent be successful. When Jasmine was asked to label her relationship with parents she said,

a friend in the point where you're comfortable enough leaving your most valued treasure with me. You trust me that I'm going to return them at three at o'clock and um you feel comfortable enough that if something's bothering you, or them, or the family or whatever that you could come to me and talk to me about what's whats going on... Thats what friends do.

Learning, Surviving, and Behavior

Jasmine seemed to value treating each student as an individual and used individualizing to student needs as a rationale for classroom decisions. She saw a great deal of variety in her students' readiness for school. Jasmine stated that she tried to meet students where they are but expressed using a reciprocal approach to addressing student needs.

I just I guess I try to meet them as individuals. They're/ they're human. You know so I just see each child as a person that I'm meeting maybe for the first time. And I just, after a while we all get to know each other and what makes us tick and everything. They learn me just like I learn them. But I think I meet their needs as I just see them this is an individual. They have good days, bad days, in between. And I think I just look, look at them from the human aspect. You know this is a person and that's how I guess I try to reach them.

Jasmine uses child-initiated instruction (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988) in her approach to teaching as exemplified by her insistence that "you have to start with what they what their interested in and let the child guide you within boundaries." She explained that it is the teacher's role to, "create that safeness but don't be...rigid." She believed passionately that, "Everything is a learning experience" and that every person, "has their own way of learning." She believed that, "all kids, depending on the activities will learn something from that activity." Her open-ended, experiential approach is present in what she sees as her most effective lessons. She said, "I see my kids, when they really learn, are hands-on experiences when they're able to get wet and messy and touch and feel.... There is more language. There is more engagement." This approach is based primarily on her belief that, "They learn through play." She considers movement an indication of engagement and expressed, "I like to see my kids moving at all times. Doing something." She also believed that the most effective learning happened when students were, "learning from themselves and they're learning from each other." Jasmine expressed her approach to behavior and her sense of humor when she explained that, "teachers have control issues. And some teachers want little soldiers. And some kids are not going to be little soldiers. So to relieve your stress and the stress on this kid sometimes you just got to let it go." The

phrase, "little soldiers" was repeated by Jasmine as she described unrealistic behavior expectations of students. In describing why boys need to feel valued and empowered, Jasmine described the relationship between mothers and their sons.

Sometimes, and I've found this if mom is no longer in a relationship with dad depending on how dad treated her, I've found, you know I've had comments, 'He's just like his father. He look just like his daddy.' And she has her own personal issues with that father, and she'll reflect that on that little boy and so he comes to you, down by, just, 'Gosh, I'm just like my dad.' and she says it not in a positive way, but in a very negative way. And then I have a lot of little boys that deal with their father being incarcerated. I have a little boy right now and my heart breaks for him because he's stressed. And his mother won't tell him that his father's in jail. She'll let him talk to him, but she won't say. So he's thinking my daddy can call me but won't come and see me. And he sat in here today and he cried (whispered. J began to tear up now). And he said, "I just want my daddy" and as a teacher I can't say, it would, I and I talked to her and I said, "I think if you just told him he would feel better." And she's like, "I don't want him to know he's in jail." So these boys come with a lot.

In supporting boys that "come with a lot" Jasmine said,

Treat them just like you would another child. Be sensitive to what they're going through but don't be overly empathetic or you know, to the point of you're going to be a push over because I know your dad, I understand his dad was locked up and he wants to talk to him but I still wouldn't let him just go completely spazzed out. Because he didn't need that either.

In the following passage Jasmine is responding to the follow-up interview question related to seemingly conflicting CRTB survey items. Jasmine agreed with the item "2D. Every child is a unique

composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences." and strongly agreed with the item that states, "2F. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children." She strongly agreed with this statement and was asked to explain how someone could agree with both statements. Jasmine describes how she negotiates seeing children as individuals as she attempts to honor their cultures in her teaching. Jasmine seemed to struggle in her attempt to explain her perspective. She said,

But that's what makes them who they are I mean/ that's what gives them/ our/ our culture and our background, and everything about us you know forms us, it/ it/ and I/ I do understand when they say, I/ I guess because they don't want to see bias when they when/ when/ when you say, I don't see color I just see children. I think maybe they honed in on that because you don't want to feel like I see, this is a Mexican child, this is a black child, this is a white child. So I guess it, they/ they focus in that/ saying that, I don't see these kids like that. But how can you if you see them as individuals, or you see them as all that makes them up. I have a/ a Spanish child here. And I have to ah you know, look up, when we are talking about animals, look up that the Spanish words for animals for her. Because that's a part of her. She may identify the pig as a pig for us but she wouldn't identify it in Spanish. So, I/ I maybe they got caught up in the point of I don't see the race of the child. But you have to you have to see something about the kid you know, from their background because this is what makes them. This is a lot of where their cultural experience is coming from, if it's kind of making them up from who they are. What they experience... We can't put all of these behavioral expectations on them or conformity that they have to be able to sit this long, or they have to be able to um, come in with all this prior knowledge, or they have to come in knowing how to tie their shoe. You know it's a learning process that their going through.

In regards to social emotional development Jasmine maintains a maturationist perspective (Kagan, 2008). She said, "I really don't feel that I per-se develop it, I feel that I set the course and I set the rule but I

allow it to develop on its own. Because you gonna mature at your own rate." In describing when her most challenging time of day for behavior was she said, "when everybody is all together on the carpet. And, 'I'm not necessarily feeling reading about bunny rabbits and I am just not interested in this story.' That's when you have, you know, more of your behavior problems."

In describing her experience teaching boys she hoped that boys felt empowered in her classroom. She explained that she tried to keep boys busy with jobs and responsibilities in the classroom. She expressed concern for the emotional development of her boy students. Her concern was that boys did not feel they knew how to do something, they would not take the emotional risk of trying. In describing how she approaches this issue with her boys and her effectiveness at teaching boys she said,

I mean I'm dealing with a child who may have never been in school. Never seen a formal what formal education looks like and it intimidates them. Because they've been told, "You should know this, you should get that right" so I... never try to use those kinds of words. I always try to, "You can do it... just try."... I would rate myself an eight or nine. And just building their self esteem. And uh, getting them to, understand that it's ok to try and fail but as long as I try I got something out of it.

She also said,

they (boys) sometimes just want to be loved. They just want to feel valued. You know that they're part of something. And that they can be rambunctious they can be very active. Sometimes they can be hard to love, you know. Um But, you kinda you know, you just you, what should she know about these boys? To to help them feel valued. Because sometimes they don't always feel... important. And that its, it's ok to learn, and it's ok to not know everything. You're only four, you're only five. You're not going to know everything. It's OK that can't write your name. Cause you're

going to learn. That's what we're here for. And even not even learn once you leave here. But, if if you come making scribbles and it turns into lines and circles, that's awesome.

Jasmine told the story of a boy whose father is incarcerated. His mother does not want to let the student know that his father is in jail, but she lets him talk to the father. The boy came to school extremely upset and angry. He kept saying, "I just want my daddy." After Jasmine let the boy calm down, she suggested that he help a classmate learn his colors. She said, "And it did something for him. It was empowering to him." She went on to say,

I guess because he doesn't have any control of his little life. And he doesn't understand why his dad's not coming but I can talk to him. But in five minutes I can help this little boy and I can feel so important. Because I showed him something he didn't know, so.

Jasmine described a day when she was less effective as a day when there were more behavioral issues because students are less engaged. Jasmine expressed that the boys in her class get more excited about some of the themes in the reading curriculum than others. She said that a new teacher to Head Start should,

At this age child you really have to start with their interest and then branch out from there. You can do it in such a way, even if you want, even if your whole focus is teach colors, but they're more interested in (cough covered word) you do it in such a way that you take their interest but you incorporate what you basically, you know what you really want them to learn. But, you you have to start with what they what they're interested in and let the child guide you within boundaries. You know you still create that safeness but don't be so rigid because early childhood education is not for a person that is into a lot of type a personality structure that that doesn't fly with them.

Summary

Jasmine became emotional several times during both interviews. She was especially passionate in her descriptions of parents and boys. Jasmine seemed to express that she used empathy as a way to interact with students and parents. She described students learning from each other and working together. Jasmine believed that exercising choice was an empowering activity for children. It was a major concern for Jasmine that her students' feel that they were not treated as "little soldiers" but "their voice is valued" because they did not always feel that way. Jasmine described practices that were primarily based on emotional engagement with students and parents with the highest priority being students' ability to make choices. Instead of the warm demander's insistent approach to behavior and achievement (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, and Hambacher, 2008), Jasmine expressed an approach that was closer to child-centered approaches to teaching in early childhood (Schweinhart, & Weikart, 1988). Student growth took priority over a standard of excellence. The role of culture in Jasmine's classroom seemed not necessarily to drive her decisions but rather informed the organization, decision making, and curriculum. She agreed with the conflicting statements on race, ethnicity, and culture and seemed to explain culture as important only in that it makes up the experiences of the individual child. Jasmine reflected what seemed to be a culturally relevant approach in that she wanted to value the child and his/her development solely on an individual basis and not in reference to the dominant culture. In this way her practices seem culturally relevant and child-centered.

Summary

The descriptions and perspectives of the interview participants provided an important window into understanding how these teachers understand their students, parents, and their practices. The influence of teacher efficacy and identity in combination with the influence of the

structures and processes of Head Start seemed to provide a background for the descriptions of the participants' practices. The participants' views on their relationships with parents indicated that their interactions were a priority in their understanding of their successful practices. Descriptions of learning, surviving, and behavior seemed to vary more than descriptions of relationships with parents. The participants described using teacher-directed, child-centered, and child initiated practices in their classrooms.

Pam seemed to be a pragmatic warm demander who focused on behavior as a means of generating learning. Pam described teaching practices that took teacher-directed and rote learning and turned them into fun, engaging, and movement-oriented learning. She also described feeling a "family" like connection with students' parents and a sense of pride in their growth as she supported the entire family.

Sara came across as an insistent warm demander that focused on high expectations for student achievement. Sara's personal experiences living on low income and being helped by a preschool teacher as she went to college to become a teacher seemed to influence her manner of interacting with parents. She described engaging in a partnership with parents towards student success.

Candice seemed to describe a culturally relevant perspective that acknowledges the role of culture as an influence on student success and development. She did not make sharp distinctions between personal and professional identity and described numerous friendships she developed with parents. Trust was an important value for Candice in her development of relationships with parents. She focused on developing students' ability to care for each other and to learn from each other. Candice described developing a culture of communal responsibility in her classroom.

Jasmine was a child-centered, culturally relevant teacher who acknowledged the role of culture primarily as an influence on how she understood students but not in defining how she interacted with students. Jasmine valued choice and student voice in how she organized and made decisions in her classroom. Jasmine focused on students learning from each other and taking ownership of their learning. She was empathetic with parents and focused on her role in helping parents to develop connections to the school culture to help lay a foundation for future student success. In the next section the cross-case analysis considers the codes and themes that emerged from the participants individual stories.

Cross-case Thematic Analysis

Cross-case thematic analysis was conducted over the course of the inquiry through utilization of several strategies. As described in chapter four, there were six themes that emerged from the first-round interview. These included parents' prior experience with school, student needs before learning, boys as more active than girls but not learning different than girls, emotional development of boys, and student behavior as a measure of effectiveness. Each of these themes was explored in the second-round interview. Analysis and comparison of the CRTB survey with the first-round interview revealed some puzzles and questions that were included in the second-round interview. Whenever applicable, items from the CRTB survey may be included to emphasize or act as a foil to the analysis of codes and themes. The analysis of both interviews revealed the following four themes and codes (see Figure 9).

Theme	Code	Description
Head Start Teacher	Identity	How teachers "be" as a teacher, act as a teacher, and understand as a teacher.
	Entity of Head Start	The influence of the context of Head Start on students, parents, and teachers.
Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom	Learning on the Back Burner	The context of families that can distract from engaging with education.
	On the Same Page: The Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad	The process of communicating between parents, children, and teachers towards the goal of family engagement.
	A Closer Relationship	The nature of the relationships between Head Start teachers and Head Start parents.
	Learning and Surviving	The effects of outside student factors on engagement with learning in classrooms.
Learning, Surviving, and Behavior	Learning and Behavior	The interaction between engagement and student behavior that leads to learning in classrooms
Teacher Beliefs About Gender and Learning	Boys and Girls, Same and Different	How boys and girls are different and the same in social emotional development and learning.

Figure 9. Codes and themes of cross-case thematic analysis.

The codes discovered in the thematic analysis will be explored in the following section. These themes include Head Start Teacher, Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom, Learning, Surviving, and Behavior, and Teacher Beliefs about Gender and Learning.

Head Start Teacher

The theme Head Start Teacher emerged from the analysis of the interviews that seemed to consider the role of the participants' "Identity" in their teacher agency and the role of the "Entity of Head Start" as an influence on the context of these teachers' practices. The influence of each of these codes on each other is not clear, however, their grouping juxtaposes the functions of each on the context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty.

Identity

The code "Identity" emerged from the first interview data as participants discussed why they teach, the way they interacted with parents and students, and in descriptions of their effectiveness. As the participants told the stories of their teaching and re-lived their experiences through dialogue they gave glimpses at what could be considered the act of sharing and shaping their identities. The role of identity is important to understanding why and how teachers' create positive outcomes for at-risk children. Culturally relevant teaching focuses on the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of successful teachers. Acknowledgement of personal and professional identity is key to the actualizing of culturally relevant teaching (Beauchamp, & Thomas, 2009; Maye & Day, 2011). The language of identity permeates teachers' descriptions of what they do, especially as it relates to the background of their students and how they interact with parents. In this study, Sachs' (2005) description of identity is applied to the participants' language because it is related to Bandura's (1997) description of agency within a reciprocal context of teaching.

Teachers' professional identity can offer a framework of understanding identity. The three ways of understanding identity in the context of this study are "how to be" as a teacher, "how to act" as a teacher, and "how to understand" as a teacher (Sachs, 2005, p.15). In the interviews the participants shared stories and experiences that helped to explain the way they are with parents and students, how they act with parents and students, and how they understand parents and students (Beauchamp, & Thomas, 2009).

Teacher identity often manifests itself in how teachers explain their experiences and are constructed through dialogue about their professional lives (Beauchamp, & Thomas, 2009). Identity is critical to understanding teachers' agency (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006) in that identity can influence and be influenced by a teacher's ability to perform well. Sara shared a story in which she discussed how she had moved from being less effective as a kindergarten teacher, at least in terms of behavior management, to a more effective Head Start teacher. Sara described how her class "played off" her sense of self and her sense of agency. After describing how she helps children who come to school with strong emotions and that she tries to be present in order to perceive the child's perspective, she turns back to her sense of self and how it relates to her students and her effectiveness.

the teacher... has to be... in a good mind. If you're having a bad day. Then the whole class going to have a bad day...'cause they play off of what you come in with. When I was going through the loss of my husband, and the loss of my son, "You going to have to find a way to come in here calm"... Because your children are playing off of your feelings. And it's written all over your face... when I come in and do the, "Yes! We're going to have a great day right!"... it just carries on for the rest of the day.

Teachers in the study described how they related to their students through stories about their own children, their membership in the community, and their professional development. Jasmine described her identity in relation to her students as similar to her own.

some of their backgrounds aren't necessarily any different from my own background... I didn't have um violence in my background but I was raised by a single parent...I feel a connection to a lot of these kids because I know from which they come...I think the difference in my own personal life is I had some really good teachers. That really touched me... in like the third grade...she sparked a love of reading in me. And I think that's when my drive comes from with these kids. I just thought about that.

This reflection suggests the strong connection Jasmine feels with her students. It also suggests that she sees her own identity as connected to her students' experiences. Awareness and acknowledgement of identity is an important aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Liggett, 2008). Teacher awareness of their identities and the caring they demonstrate in reaching out of or across the border from their own identities to that of their students and parents is a critical piece of culturally relevant teaching (Maye & Day, 2011). Each of the participants expressed a perspective of acceptance of their students and parents that reached beyond considering prior experiences. In the following passage, Jasmine suggested that her professional self developed the acceptance she feels for her students and parents through the interaction between her personal and professional identity.

I had to learn to not judge... over the years as I've, one became a parent myself, and two... seeing these parents do care for their kids. They just may not have the knowhow to go about doing things for them... or giving them learning skills.”

The boundary between personal and professional identity seemed to be clear for Pam, Jasmine, and Sara. The references to "maintaining professionalism" seemed to come into play when they talked about not getting too familiar or informal with their students' parents. This did not necessarily mean that the participants were not emotionally close or connected to parents. This is reflected in the participants' language that explored their relationships with parents, especially in the code, "A Closer Relationship" considered later. It could be that maintaining professionalism is the way the teachers bracketed their personal feelings in their professional relationships with parents.

Sara described that she felt it was a part of her work to create strong relationships with parents to "build the foundation" for the child and parent for school success. She also described reticence in some teachers at crossing the boundary from professional in the classroom to professional beyond the classroom. This distinction was an aspect of culturally relevant teaching that was addressed in the CRTB survey in the question, "3K. I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom." as well as voluntarily throughout the interviews. She said,

I know some of my colleagues here feel like that...you might get too personal with the parents but I feel like this, especially at this grade level, preschool, where you're laying the foundation for the child's education... this is an opportunity...just like you let...the student know the expectations of school,... let the parent know the expectations of how to communicate with your teacher. My first...three older kids,...their first preschool experience was...helpful to me...they went to school while I was in college.... I came in on one note, and the teacher looked at me, she was like, 'Come here. You had a rough day in school today. What happened?' ...to take the time to talk to me. That was good.

As Sara told her story of being helped by a preschool teacher who asked her about her life and listened to her, she seemed to express her identity that was actualized in her description of interactions with parents. Sara described what she meant when she said she needed to do a lot of listening to students and parents. The passage above helps to explain why Sara said,

sometimes some of our parents don't have nobody to talk to....So when you're listening to them, it makes them feel better. That somebody is actually listening to them. I have parents that come in and talk about...something that they're going through. Just giving them a listening ear and listening to them....that's part of your job if you want. That might help you understand why their child is behaving the way the child is behaving.

Pam also framed her caring interactions with parents in a professional context. She described how she acts with parents because as a professional, “You have to help them.”

I think Head Start teachers have to be models for our parents. A lot of times advocates for our parents. We have to give them words... You have to help them...always maintaining that professionalism.

Pam’s discussion of her professional identity appears to suggest an approach that is authoritative in that it is interacting with another adult as if they are less fully developed. This perspective was clarified when she talked about the pride and joy she felt when a parent was successful at reaching a goal. She referred to the relationship she held with parents as being “like a family” while still being professional. She also described in concrete terms how she acted as a professional while reaching beyond the classroom into the lives of her parents.

as a Head Start teacher you must be open to, willing to, and want to, work with the parents... without stepping over the lines of professionalism, it becomes a family, you know. They become important to you. When they succeed or when they're excited you're

excited. When they accomplish things, when they get a GED, when they get their first job,...when they come in to volunteer, and they light up,...I'm just as excited as I am when my children learn things.

Candice did not distinguish as clearly between her personal and professional identity. She described how the relationships she had with parents were meaningful to her personally. In Candice's descriptions she seemed to have taken a different direction in how she has negotiated the personal connections and feelings she has about her teacher parent relationships. She described friendships she had developed with parents over the course of her career.

it means a great deal to me that...the parent actually trusted me with their child. And I didn't know them at all... I've made friends with a couple parents. We have gotten together outside of the school setting.

In describing the nature of her relationships with parents beyond the classroom Candice said, "they kinda start building a trust with you. And so I think it's a lot closer than maybe another program or another grade level." Later, in describing how she builds strong relationships with parents, she discussed how accepting an invitation to a family's personal celebration moved her beyond the role of professional to the role of friend.

I think just having conversations with the parent... find... a common thread about different things. Most of them begin with just when a child has a birthday coming up. If they're gonna have a party at their house and, "Ms. B___, we want you to come to the party. And I think they're surprised ... the fact that I actually showed up kinda like, '... and also um with them coming in to volunteer a lot... You learn a lot about the person.

A telling passage in Candice's apparently personal approach to her professional identity was her description of two interactions with the parents of prior students. She found it meaningful to have

made a difference in the lives of the students and also meaningful that the parents felt her worthy of friendship.

Recently I've had... a grandparent and a parent to call me ... to thank me for the start that... their child got... because they're doing so well now in the upper grades. One of them is like in third grade. The other little girl she's like in second...knowing that I touched that child's life and the parents saw it, I did something to help them learn... it means a great deal to me that, like I said, the parent actually trusted me with their child... just to know that they trusted me with their child they felt that I was worth... having a friendship with. And, hopefully the parent thinks the same way.

The professional and personal identities of Pam, Sara, Candice, and Jasmine can be felt most often when they are describing emotional dimensions of their work (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). When Pam struggles to communicate the complexity of the relationships she has built with parents, when Sara describes developing as a professional, when Jasmine describes her connection to her students, and when Candice talks about making a difference in the life of a child or a parent, they seem to be sharing a sense or a piece of themselves. The identities expressed by the participants seem to have been influenced by the context of their works as a Head Start teacher. In the next section, the code "Entity of Head Start" describes the context of the influence of Head Start on the perspectives of these teachers.

Entity of Head Start

The "Entity of Head Start" was a code that was expressed by the participants in a variety of ways. Several quotes within the code developed from the concrete descriptions of the procedures and processes of Head Start. The language of the participants was analyzed with the perspective that Head Start, in the interview text, also acts as an environmental descriptor that,

through its operation, creates many of the circumstances and experiences the participants describe. Head Start, as an entity, is the goals, processes, and culture of Head Start as actualized through the interactions and implementation of the program through teachers and staff. The role of Head Start as a comprehensive child development program that addresses children's education, health, nutrition, dental, mental health, and social services is fulfilled through more than the interactions between the teacher and the parent (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999). It also works to engage families in the child's learning and to set and meet family growth goals.

Head Start as an entity was described by the participants in a variety of ways. Each mentioned the paperwork, the social-emotional development of students, and the focus on school readiness, such as emergent literacy. Participants described Head Start as supporting the whole family as they discussed the function of their roles as Head Start teachers in meeting the basic needs of children and families, developing the school readiness of children, and engaging parents in their own development. Sara described the child development aspect of the program.

Head Start has... assessments so that you get to know your child... The services that Head Start has to offer are awesome....Lots of paper work but it pays off in the end. Just keep up with your paperwork. Keep your parents happy, your students happy and you'll be ok.

When Head Start was considered from the perspective of acting as the environment in which teachers work it became more complex. When participants described the ways in which Head Start supports family engagement, it became apparent that it affected the approach teachers take to their work. The participants described the role of the Family Service Worker (FSW) or Family Service Advocate (FSA) in meeting the needs of students and families. The FSW acts as life coach to the parents of children enrolled in the Head Start program. They help parents to set family goals, whether it is to obtain a GED, purchase a car to secure a job outside of public

transit, or to find a place to live. These trained professionals work alongside teachers to assist parents in learning how to find and access resources as well as help teachers meet basic needs of students by helping the students' parents care for their children. Participants also described visiting the homes, neighborhoods, and communities of their students.

The act of doing home visits is a requirement of the Head Start performance standards. Teachers conduct one home visit before students come to school and again after the winter break in January. These visits mandate a crossing of the teacher from the classroom to the home. This interaction seems to be the basis of much of the trust built between parents and teachers, and as it was described by the participants, as it creates a different type of relationship (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999). Candice described the function of the Head Start home visit.

we get to meet the parents before the child starts school... you kinda develop a relationship in the beginning so I think they kinda start building a trust with you. They invite you into their homes. You get to see where they live and talk to them.

The "Entity of Head Start" was described by Pam as a "helpful program." Its role as an educational service and a family engagement program creates an environment that expects teachers to, according to Pam, be helpful to students *and* families.

I've found that there are many wonderful parents who, if it were not for Head Start would not make the changes or... do the things necessary for that child. Head Start is a very helpful program... as a Head Start teacher you, must be open to, willing to, and want to work with the parents...you might go to a school and you know they have parent involvement but... it's not a required thing that you have the relationship that we have our parents.... We have to do a lot more as far as our parents.

The deliberate design of Head Start to place teachers into the homes of their students to interact with parents around child development creates an opportunity for a closer relationship between the parent and the teacher.

Each of the participants described one of the strengths of the Head Start program as the variety of services provided through the family engagement portion of the program. They described how FSWs were able to assist in meeting the basic needs of children and parents they taught. They described that when children come to school hungry or in shoes that are too small, it is difficult for them to learn. By collaborating with the parent and FSW, the teacher is able to help the child and the family. Jasmine described the role of social services and family engagement in Head Start this way.

I had a child this year who didn't have any shoes and his foot is so small...I could call my family service worker and she gave me three resources bam, bam, bam. And we got him shoes in a couple weeks... I think that's what really turned me on to Head Start... It was about the whole family.

Jasmine also described how she occasionally filled the function of caring for the whole family because she was "somebody they feel comfortable with." This role of the Head Start teacher in working with Head Start parents was echoed throughout the "Entity of Head Start" code in how the participants described their interactions with parents based on the trust developed through a mutual care for the child. Jasmine said,

Sometimes you can't always get a hold of your family service worker... so you kinda have to sometimes... do a little social work on the side too. Because you have somebody... they feel comfortable with they'll come, "You know I'm a little tight, you know, do you know of anything?"

In Pam's description of her relationship with a Head Start parent, the overarching goal of breaking cycles of poverty is echoed as she describes how Head Start works to teach parents the importance of education.

a lot of the parents are more concerned with the basic needs. With keeping them in a home. Keeping them in clothes. Making sure they eat... a lot of times its a cycle. So a lot of them are... really young. A lot of them didn't realize the importance of school while they were there. Didn't finish or whatever. So they have to be taught that its important and they need to pay attention to it.

Summary

The support for the whole family through Head Start was expressed formally in descriptions that mentioned services and processes of the program. The value of this approach was expressed in quotes focused on helping parents to develop, addressing lack of basic needs for children and families, and the importance of engaging families to develop the parent and to help the child. In the next section the theme "Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom" explores the nature of the interactions between Head Start teachers and Head Start parents that are created by the context of Head Start's family engagement focus.

Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom

The theme of "Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom" emerged from the quantity and quality of the participants' descriptions of their relationships and rapport with parents. This theme is made up of three codes that explore teachers' perceptions of the experiences of students and families outside of the classroom, the interaction between parents, children, and teachers, and discussion of the quality of the relationship between parents and teachers. The code "Learning on the Back Burner" expressed how participants face the challenge

of working with parents of students living in poverty. This code included descriptions of parents, students, and teachers' experiences in classrooms, homes, neighborhoods, and communities. The "On the Same Page: Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad" code explored the content and processes of communication between parents and teachers, students and teachers, and students and parents. The code "A Closer Relationship" was discovered through analysis of the qualities of interactions between Head Start teachers and parents. Particular attention was paid to the emotions expressed by the participants in telling their stories. These codes form the theme of "Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom" by examining teachers' actions and beliefs about engaging parents.

Learning on the Back Burner

The world outside of the classroom appears throughout the participants' stories about their teaching. The effects of poverty are present in the hunger children bring to school. It is present in the emotional needs expressed through student behaviors. The homes, neighborhoods, and communities of families are present in the social norms children bring to school, the ability of parents to support learning, and in the exposure children have to media and the realities of where they live. Each of the participants discussed the challenge of working with families whose children come to school hungry. Jasmine described her experiences teaching Early Head Start where she taught children aged birth to 3-years-old. "I had babies and the mom that would come in and they both were hungry. They both needed more than just me sitting and painting with that baby." The weight of outside influences on the lives of parents and children were expressed by Candice as she described a family that was "trying to keep their head above water".

'cause I've seen you know, kids with their parents that are on drugs. I've seen kids that have parents basically, older siblings taking care of the younger kids. I had a kid one time

that the sister. The older sister was taking of him because the mom had to work. And the older sister was about 15 or 16 and she had a baby herself. And so just, pretty much, you know, trying to keep their head above water from day to day.

The participants expressed acceptance of parents focused on survival. When Candice answered the question, "What's the relationship between a family that's surviving and learning that happens in school?" she seemed to empathize with the child's perspective in gaining emergent literacy skills, "He might not have anyone at home that can read to him... or... help him write his name... Sometimes it can be a struggle for that child." Participants described how struggling to survive can cause parents to "put the learning...on the backburner." The many reasons parents may not be engaged with their child's learning were described by Jasmine.

It depends on... their own experience... If they're trying to survive, if they're trying to clothe and feed the child they kinda put the learning like on the back burner... They don't see that just everyday experiences could be learning experiences... They may have dropped out of school. They may just be trying to survive. You know worried about bills... I believe those things come into play with a parent who may not seem as involved.

Participants expressed the value of building rapport based on empathy and empowerment.

Candice described the perspective of parents who may only know survival and the importance of asking the parent to help the teacher understand the child.

They're... just surviving. A lot of them might not work...they get public assistance... They might not understand why... you go to work every day. 'Cause you could just do like I do'...Basically with the initial home visit, we... ask them about their child,... "we don't know your child so you know, let us know something about your child... We're here for

you... Our doors are always open. You can come and talk to us. You can call."... We're not out to get them.

The participants seemed to want to engage parents who are "just surviving" with the intent of helping parents to also focus on the student's success. The participants acknowledged that some parents are not able or willing to take learning off the back burner. They described parents who placed an emphasis on learning at school that, with the stress and challenge of surviving they "don't have time" and that "they don't understand that they're also the child's teacher". Bridging the parent's disconnection from school is dependent on communication. There were seemed to be a triadic relationship of communication that emerged as a code as participants' language consistently involved the voices of the parent, the child, and the teacher.

On the Same Page: Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad

There were several descriptions of the content and process of discussion among parents, students, and teachers. Much of this discussion concerned the participants' efforts to get parents, children, and teachers "on the same page." A list of the variety of types of interactions the participants expressed in their interviews includes:

1. Teachers' descriptions to the parent of the child's actions.
2. Parents' descriptions to the teacher of the child's actions.
3. Children's descriptions to the teacher of parent's actions.
4. Teachers' descriptions to the child of the parent's actions.
5. Children's descriptions to the parent of teacher's actions.
6. Parents' descriptions to the child of teacher's actions.
7. Negotiations of the conflicting messages between home and school experiences.

These interactions include the teacher, the parent, and the child in some way in each of the descriptions. These interactions are not necessarily the same as teachers' interactions with parents beyond this triad as described in the next code, "A Closer Relationship". The triadic arrangement of this analysis is unbalanced in that only the perspective of the teacher was available. The interactions that describe children talking to parents about teachers and parents talking to children about teachers are provided with the understanding that these interactions were based on the teachers' perceptions of these interactions and on subsequent interactions between the child and teacher or parent and teacher.

The process of perspective taking was a communication device employed by each of the participants who utilized taking first person or second person perspective in describing interactions. Participants, while describing an interaction between themselves and a parent, might take on the voice of the parent by switching to the first person singular to say what a parent might say. In this way the voices of parents and children are brought into the teachers descriptions of their teaching beliefs and practices.

1. Teachers' descriptions to the parent of the child's actions.

As teachers attempted to explain the child's perspective to parents, teachers described two main subjects that were addressed. In both situations teachers seem to take on the perspective or identity of advocate for children to their parents. The first type of interaction described by teachers was an explanation of the affect of the parent's actions on the child. In these situations teachers found themselves trying to tell parents things they might not want to hear. This situation was approached by Pam in the way described as follows.

you have to meet them (parents) where they are to respect what it is they feel, whether you agree with it or not. You have to find a way to get your point across without making

them feel like they're wrong even if they are wrong...like...watching television. Parents don't get that certain things you just don't allow your child to watch. "I wanted to go see that and I didn't have a baby sitter."...You just have to have them understand the importance of, if it's not for children then children shouldn't be there... Give them examples of... what watching a violent movie can do to children... through research or things that have happened... I've found that if you make things real to them you can share without being too personal some of your experiences with them then that helps them to understand.

This passage described some of the difficulties Pam felt in advocating for children to their parents. In the excerpt Pam described three strategies to accomplish her goal of advocating for the child: sharing examples, research, and personal experience with parents.

The second situation in which teachers acted as advocates for children to their parents was when a parent had a concern about a child's development. The teachers in the study described the importance of discussing child development with parents when parents expressed concern for delayed development or when student behavior or social emotional development seemed to warrant, for the parent, concern beyond normal child development. In each of these instances the participants described the use of examples, research, and personal experience to communicate with parents.

Jasmine described her way of explaining to parents why their children could not yet write their names.

a lot of parents don't understand why this child just can't pick-up a pencil and write their name. "Look I showed him how to do it. I put my hand over their hand, but when I let him do it by himself"...I went to a training and they took our hands and they put a rubber

band on our forefinger and our thumbs. And they gave us a pencil..."Now try to write your name." ... I have done this with parents... it was like a eureka moment, "Like wow." I said, "Just like they crawled first, in order to strengthen their legs, to walk," I said so, "Where you see him coming in playing with play dough all day, it's strengthening their hands to write."

Jasmine described a moment when she communicated to a parent about his/her child's development that the child needed to practice and build fine motor strength to be able to hold and use a pencil to write. In this description Jasmine seems to close the triadic communication by helping the parent experience the frustration of the child through trying to write with a rubber band on their hand. The effort to make the perspectives of the participants clear for each member of the triad could be described as getting the parent, child, and teacher "on the same page."

2. Parents' descriptions to the teacher of the child's actions.

In the next passage Sara described an experience of telling a parent that her son's social emotional development and behavior is a growing concern in the classroom. The "red light, green lights, yellow lights" Sara described is the behavior communication system she employs to let parents know about their children's behavior at school. The following interaction illustrates how parents' communication of the child's experiences to the teacher can influence the experiences in the classroom. The passage below describes a discussion between Sara and the child D's mother.

I was telling her... the behaviors I was seeing. They didn't start in September. I have... a behavior chart. And I keep track of it. The red light, the green lights, the yellow lights. And the student had a lot of green lights since September, October, November, but came December, January, February you started getting some red lights and they just got... more

red and less green...that's when mom opened up and said, 'that's when dad came into the picture.' I was like, 'Ok. So that was a life change. That would have helped me to so I can know how to do with D ... you need to tell him what's going on. You don't have to tell him everything. But, let him know that it's not his fault.'...You gotta get to their level and then work around it.... So I had to show her where... the behavior was playing with his schooling, and once I showed her all the data that I had collected it kinda, it didn't put the pressure on her but it, she knows that she has to do something, get some help for him."

The complexity of the interaction between Sara and the parent touches on several important concepts that came up throughout the interviews especially related to boys, home environment, and behavior. As Sara discussed the child's behavior with the mother she knew when the mother said, "that's when dad came in the picture," that there were emotional factors beyond her influence in the classroom. It is important to note that Sara did not say, "you have to get your child's behavior under control." She expressed concern for the child's perspective and encouraged the mother to talk to her son, in a sense closing the third side of the triadic communication.

3. Children's descriptions to the teacher of parent's actions.

Pam described students who talked about home experiences that might make it difficult to learn that helped to inform the parent-child-teacher communication triad code. The following passage includes children's descriptions of parent actions to the teacher.

Then there are those who come in who have no like I said, books was something that just didn't happen. TV shows were what the parents want to watch. You know with the cussing, and the sexual things. You knew about they had seen that. They could tell you all about it.

The challenge of how to deal with information that children share with the teacher about their home lives was shared by Pam as she went on to say,

Just pretty much accepted where they were... try to listen to whatever they wanted to talk about. um if it were the, the jail thing, that was always hard because a lot of times they didn't see it as terrible. You know that's just where daddy is. You know. That's where they see him for a year. And you don't want to make them feel bad about it, so, you know, you just deal with it as best as possible.

4. Teachers' descriptions to the child of the parent's actions.

Candice offered a teacher's description to the child of the parent's actions. In this situation Candice is explaining to the child that what he has seen at home is not appropriate at school.

There might be a male figure that's around but all they (the child) might see a violent person. And they think that's how you're supposed to treat a woman, treat a girl.

Hitting...I've had a kid that basically, that's all he saw was his dad beating his mom. So he would always fight girls. And he thought there was nothing wrong with it. So we had to kinda pull him aside and talk to him let him know, "No, that's not what you do."

In this situation Candice has tried to communicate to the boy that hitting girls was "not what you do." Candice seemed to express empathy or at least a no-nonsense approach to confronting the child about his behavior towards girls. She also expressed that within his home context, his behaviors were "normal."

5. Children's descriptions to the parent of teacher's actions.

When teachers told of instances of students talking to the parent about the teacher's actions they seemed to acknowledge the importance of each of the members of the triad

communicating effectively. Sara alluded to this when she mentioned the need to "get everybody on the same page."

But you know, you have to understand that the parents, their children is like a gem, it's like the dearest thing to them. They will die for their children. Sometimes they will believe the child over you. But you have to make that relationship work where, that we're all on the same page.

This importance of closing the triadic communication and getting everybody on the same page is found through out the types of interactions described.

6. Parents' descriptions to the child of teacher's actions.

When parents were described as communicating with the child about the teacher there was another allusion to the idea of getting the parent, the child, and the teacher "on the same page." Candice described how a parent reinforced the behavior system used in the classroom by encouraging the child to "get a green light." In this instance the communication between the parent and child helps the teacher "teach better."

They come in saying, "My mommy said I have a get a green light today." So they come in trying to work towards that green light. So that helps our day flow better. It helps me teach better because the day is flowing better.

Each of the types of communication has described the role of the parent, child, and teacher in the communication. The value of effective communication within this triadic relationship is found in getting "everybody on the same page".

7. Negotiations of the conflicting messages between home and school experiences.

The importance of the parent-child-teacher communication triad to teaching and learning in these Head Start classrooms was also expressed through the challenges teachers described

when students get conflicting messages from home and school. These interactions, as described by the participants, often call on the teacher to negotiate an understanding that acknowledges the reality of the child's experiences at home and to describe the expectations of school without discounting the perspectives of parents. This is often accomplished through the intentional descriptions of the differences to the child and parent between the home and school. The most common instances of this occur around the topic of behavior. The teachers in the study described how students have been told by parents, and had confirmed through experience, that they can and should protect themselves physically. Candice describes the balance of this interaction in the following passage.

Trying to get along with each other. That's a big challenge because you know, we're telling em one thing, you know. Try to talk it over with each other and, "My mommy says if someone hits me I gotta punch em out." ... So that's a big challenge. Trying to get them to see that they don't have to fight it out. They can talk it out... That's their way of survival at home so they bring it into the classroom... By this time of year (early April) they'll come to me and I just say, "Ok, what am I going to do?" And they look at me and they go to the person and they talk to them.

In the parent-child-teacher communication triad code the teachers use several methods to try to "get everybody on the same page." Some of these methods include examples, research, and personal experience to relate to parents. The difficulty of balancing the perspective of the parent and the obligations of the school play out in interactions around behavior, expectations, and child development. The influence of the home, neighborhood, and community are present as teachers discuss students' life changes and school experiences. According to the participants, efforts to connect with parents and get the parent, child, and teacher "on the same page" lead to

relationships between the parent and the teacher that are different from parent-teacher relationships in other settings. The nature of this relationship is described follows.

A Closer Relationship

In this code, teachers' connections with parents are described. Parents' hopes, fears, and trust are explored along with the participants' care, acceptance, and empathy as they occasionally conflict with teachers' judgment and role as a child advocate. The results of these interactions are the code described as "a closer relationship" with parents. Each of the participants described close relationships with individual parents that had a lasting impact on the parent, child, and teacher.

Pam, Sara, and Jasmine described the importance of "a closer relationship" with parents as a part of their roles as professionals. Sara said,

Well I know some of my colleagues here feel like that... you might get too personal with the parents but I feel like this, especially at this grade level, preschool, where you're laying the foundation for the child's education, will make that education experience pleasant for the child and you want to make it pleasant for the parent.

When Pam described her relationship with a parent she came to mentor over a period of years, the closeness of their relationship was present in the emotion Pam displayed in telling her story.

one parent who had...six children. Five of them I taught. and, they were all boys... she had the first one at 15. When I met her, four years later he was four, she was...withdrawn, I'm gettin' emotional but, she wouldn't even look up... She didn't have a relationship with family. But, she wanted the best for her children you know... she wouldn't say much. You would have to tell her what to do... And by the end she was the type of parent that you could depend on for anything... So just seeing that growth... was wonderful.

Candice did not draw a distinction between the relationships she held with parents and her personal self. She described relationships with several parents that have lasted for years. She expressed deriving a sense of meaning from the trust that parents put in her and her "worth" as a friend. "One of my parents she got married, she invited me to the wedding, I went to the wedding...Built a friendship."

Candice is the only participant who described an extreme negative interaction with a parent. She said she, "had a parent that got upset with me and hit me and that didn't work out so well...I had to get a restraining order against her." The closeness of Candice's relationships and the negative experience with one parent went beyond what Jasmine described as an everyday part of working with Head Start parents. She said, "Now I know every day is not a cake walk. Every day is not peaches, and some of the parents will come, they'll lay you out about this and that."

The hopes and fears expressed by parents about their children come to life in this description of how Jasmine believes parents judge teachers and decide whether to trust them. parents size you up from the beginning. Um especially depending on their experience of school... That first home visit it really does set a tone. Because when you walk through the door...they really try to get to know you... I'll tell them I'm a mother also so I know what you're going through. I know the trauma of ah, parenthood I know the joys of parenting... But our um, our parents think once they get over the surface, you're a teacher and they really see you... enjoy what you do...if a parent can read...it, all over your face, that you don't like what you do, it sets a tone. You have to be, you have to want to be here.

There is a connection in this passage with the identity code. In this situation Jasmine described parents as looking for a teacher who "wants to be here." Jasmine's apparent comfort with her identity as a professional seems to influence her ability to connect with the parent. The value of empathy is an important aspect of the code "A Closer Relationship" because it embodies the tone that the participants express when they describe the experiences of parents. In the next section Candice described the dynamic that can occur when a parent has had negative experiences with school.

their experiences with school... possibly they didn't finish high school themselves... I've had parents to say "well I don't know what to do." I'll explain to them that that I would show them what to do. They feel like they can't do it. Even things like reading. They don't feel comfortable around the children... some of them will tell you, "I don't have time." And some who are not interested... They don't understand that they're also the child's teacher.

Sara described the importance of the relationship for the teacher and parent, beyond the classroom, when she described her personal experiences as a parent of preschoolers when she was in college. She also explained the importance of the interactions between parents and teachers as it relates to her role as a professional.

Just giving them a listening ear and listening to them. Let them get it off their chest.

Might help them find a different way of looking at the situation...That's part of your job if you want, That might help you understand why their child is behaving the way the child is behaving.

The "A Closer Relationship" code has connections to other codes, including "Identity" and "Entity of Head Start." The act of engaging parents out in the community beyond school

walls can affect teachers' professional and personal identities (Lin & Bates, 2010). This interaction can also develop sensitivities in teachers that can enable them to respond in an empathetic manner to parents and children who are "just surviving." The "On the Same Page: Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad" is connected to the process and content of communication in the parent-child-teacher triad. The content of communication in Head Start classrooms is qualitatively different than in other early childhood settings due to Head Start's focus on family engagement and development (Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 1999). The "A Closer Relationship" code describes the emotions, trust, and family or friendship like relationships between parents and teachers. It is occasionally linked back to the affect of this relationship on the child's learning, but there are also benefits for the parent and the teacher.

Summary

The theme "Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom" emerged from the emphasis participants placed on interactions with parents. The code described dealing with the home lives of students, attempts to engage parents in students' learning, and the effects of strong relationships on their students' parents and themselves. This theme is related to the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey dimension, Social Relations in and Beyond the Classroom (see Appendix J, p. 371). This dimension includes numerous items related to students' social relations in the classroom and teachers' organization of the classroom. It does not address knowledge of the student's home and family lives or the types of "closer relationships" described by the participants. There are only two references in this dimension of the survey to parents. The assimilationist item, "3K. I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom." yielded 17 participants (85%) indicated "Disagree" or "Strongly Agree" responses. In the theme "Relationships with Parents in and Beyond the Classroom" participants' described

home visits, conferences, and informal conversations with parents. The strong relationships the participants have described were developed around communication about student and family development.

The first-round interview questions based on the CRTB survey did not include any references to parents. However, the participants focused on relationships with parents as a factor in student success. In the codes, "Learning on the Back Burner" and "On the Same Page: the Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad," the participants described attempts at engaging parents in supporting student achievement. Of the 18 responses to the assimilationist item survey, "3L. Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom." 17 (85%) participants indicated "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the statement. Participants seemed to believe it is part of their job to encourage and enable parents to be actively involved in the classroom. The participants indicated that in some cases the classroom was the forum of parental development and engagement. By supporting parents in engaging with their children and their classmates, they become empowered to demonstrate active parental involvement in later schooling. In the next section the teaching beliefs and behaviors of the participants are explored. These codes focus more on what is happening in classrooms when teachers are teaching and students are learning.

Learning, Surviving, and Behavior

The theme Learning, Surviving, and Behavior emerged from the participants' descriptions of their efficacy, their values about engaging students, and their beliefs about behavior and emergent literacy practices. The theme is made up of the codes, Learning and Surviving as well as Learning and Behavior. In Learning and Surviving, the tension between learning as the participants describe how it should look and student factors that prevent learning from looking as

it should be explored. Participants described their approaches to accepting, influencing, and coping with outside factors that affect student learning as well as teachers' efforts towards creating learning in the context of these factors. In Learning and Behavior, participants' perspectives on the relationship between learning and behavior are described. The variety of perspectives in the Learning and Behavior code make up the majority of the divergent views of the participants. Both codes combine to form the theme Learning, Surviving, and Behavior. This theme includes descriptions of what happens in the participants' classrooms, descriptions of factors that affect students, and descriptions of classroom practices related successful teaching.

Learning and Surviving

Teachers in the study expressed similar views on what learning looked like in their classrooms. They used words such as open, engaging, moving, excited, and hands-on. When Jasmine described what learning looked like in her class, she described a scene where learning is taking place around her, "that's when I think I'm really teaching well...They're learning from themselves and they're learning from each other. That's when I think my kids learn best." Candice expressed a similar view when she described her desire for students to be "self sufficient" and to "figure things out on their own." Sara and Pam described evidence of their effectiveness as when students reference the learning in which they have been engaged in another context. Pam expressed, "Something as simple as you read a story and the story has a moral whatever, and they use that in a different setting." The participants agreed that small groups were the most effective way to teach their students. Their descriptions of their approach to teaching varied among teacher-led, child-centered, and child-led perspectives. Teacher-led activities included the terms "drill" and "flashing" students. Pam described several teacher-led activities when she described and defined the term "active learning." Pam and Sara described

child-centered approaches where the teacher designed a lesson, but once the lesson is begun, she is willing to follow the student interests. Pam stated that active learning is, "You take what other people might think is drill and practice or rote learning and turn it into something where the children can move around and touch stuff." Sara described a hands-on activity that is child-centered in its approach but teacher-directed in its content when she said, "We've been doing animals with letters...this one is F for fox...they put the eye where they want, the nose where they want and it's OK!" Each of the participants described a variety of approaches and did not necessarily seem to differentiate as to when each was used.

There were two overarching perspectives expressed by the participants as they discussed what learning looks like and evidence of learning. Pam and Sara's descriptions of learning activities tended to describe teacher-led and child-centered approaches. Candice and Jasmine seemed to describe more child-centered and child-directed activities while still mentioning some teacher-led activities. The participants each described hands-on emergent literacy activities. Jasmine and Candice described the importance of students engaging with materials independently, while Pam and Sara described the importance of using movement and teacher led activities to build emergent literacy skills. Pam and Sara also described success as students transferring skills or knowledge from one learning setting to another. This contrasted with Candice and Jasmine's descriptions of students learning from each other and from themselves. Candice in particular described a child-centered activity that developed emergent literacy skills, "they had to match words with pictures... After a while they... started matching words. And they were... sounding out letters and reading the words."

Jasmine described how she was integrating the building of a new school into her students learning theme.

they're building a new school...we... go outside, I take a couple pictures from the theme and see if they can I Spy and find the different machines they're using... waved to some of the construction guys...They were really into that.

The participants described a variety of practices in developing emergent literacy. Descriptions included the difficulty of developing emergent literacy with children who are faced with challenges such as hunger, violence, and illiteracy in the home. Candice said,

it can be a little bit more difficult for that child to learn. Because...so many different (things) that's kinda tearing him. Keeping him from learning. He might not have anyone at home that can read to him....Or, um help him write his name.

In describing the relationship between a family that is "surviving" and the learning that takes place at school, participants seemed to express empathy or understanding for the experiences of students and parents.

The interconnectedness of learning at school and surviving at home is a theme that was present in other descriptions of teaching practices. Another connection to learning in the classroom that is affected by outside factors is the challenge that, as Pam described, "you have to get them to where you need to be to receive whatever it is you trying to give them." Pam described the dissonance between home life and school life this way,

"you hear rap music but its the dirtiest version of the rap music,... its loud, you know mom is saying, "Get out of the car! Go in the school!" ...you have to get them to where you need to be to receive whatever it is you trying to give them."

The crossing of the border from home to school for the child can be a significant disruption. It seems that, in the participants' descriptions, the more students appear to struggle at home the more difficult the transition from home to school can be.

Participants cited anger, hunger, and exposure to violence as inhibitors to student readiness for school. In some ways the participants described attempting to influence and mediate these challenges through love. In the Head Start classrooms of these teachers there seemed to be less emotional distance between the children and the adults in their lives. Sara said, "You gonna have to love children to be in this predicament with these kids in a high risk school." The love that Sara described seemed to embody a very specific type of love. The pedagogical relationship in a preschool classroom seems to embody the phrase *in loco parentis*, or acting in the place of the parent (Hatt, 2005). This closeness on the part of the teacher to the child is evident in how the participants describe why they teach and how they teach. It is also present in how the participants described what children need in order to learn. Pam said, "They need to be well fed, they need to be well rested, they need to feel safe. Loved. They need to feel like they can succeed." This statement echoes Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs (Maslow, 1968). The theory explains the importance of basic needs like food and shelter through need for safety, love, and self esteem to the human need for self actualization. Reliance on love as something students need to be successful was also expressed by Pam in describing boys' emotional needs. She said, "I think the boys...that I've taught, emotionally,... if they know that they're loved,...that their opinions and thoughts count,...if they feel like they're valued by parents, teachers, whatever then they'll be fine emotionally." Candice explained that when students struggle because they do not have the support they need at home she said, "(I) Just try to give as much attention and as much love to that child as possible. And sometimes maybe help the family seek outside help." Jasmine referred to the role of love as acceptance in her description of what it would feel like to be a boy in her classroom. She said, "hopefully being a boy in here, they understand 'Ms. M __ loves me but she's not gonna tolerate me...hurting somebody else.'" The importance of love to teaching and

learning is found within the authoritative relationship between teacher and child through the tacit agreement given by the child to the guidance of the adult (van Manen, 1991). This pedagogical love depends on relational knowledge of the child and deep understanding of the child's home environment; both of these aspects of pedagogical love are present in the participants' interviews. Specifically, they are found in the codes, "Learning on the Back Burner," "On the Same Page: The Parent-Child-teacher Communication Triad," and in the code, "A Closer Relationship." The role of love in the teaching and learning of these Head Start classrooms seemed to act as a mediator or conduit in the reciprocal relationships between child, family, home, and school.

The "Learning and Surviving" code represents an understanding of teaching and learning that reflects how these teachers attempted to respond to student factors that may prevent learning in the classroom, such as student experiences with anger, hunger, and violence. The participants described similar views on what learning looked like and explained some student experiences that can prevent learning from looking as it should. In the struggle of the participants to meet the most basic needs of students so that they are able to learn, the participants cited love as a force that helps them to meet students "where they are" and as a mediator for supporting student achievement. The influence of external student factors associated with living in poverty was a presence in each interview. The structure of Head Start, as described in the "Entity of Head Start" code, required the participants to engage parents in home visits that set up a relationship between Head Start parents and Head Start teachers. The role of this relationship between the teacher and the parent, as described in the "closer relationship" code, seemed to act as the forum in which teachers attempted to influence student factors that can prevent learning. The "Learning and Surviving" code is a description of how engagement with students plays out based on the participants' engagement with the factors affecting students before they arrive at school each day.

Learning and Behavior

In describing challenges to teaching and learning, "Learning and Behavior" emerged as a code that included influences on behavior, the relationship between learning and behavior, and practices to guide student behavior. Participants described many influences on behavior that placed the locus of control for behavior mostly outside of the child's influence. This is counter to their perceptions of how to guide student behavior where the locus of control is predominantly with the teacher. While "Learning and Surviving" describes the influence of student outside factors on classroom learning, the code "Learning and Behavior" focuses specifically on students' behavior in the context positive behavior and its relationship to learning.

Participants identified factors that influence behavior through descriptions like Jasmine's, "they may have gotten up too early and it just set off their day." Sara mentioned interruptions to the classroom and scheduling changes as influencing behavior, "We had...some interruptions... which kinda teared our schedule up...it kinda threw everything off." Sara also mentioned the influence of neighborhood trauma on students' lives that result in altered behavior,

And Mondays is his rough days because he's coming back from the environment. I find myself listening to the news to make sure if anything happens down there in H- that I'm prepared for what to come in and hear what the struggling kids that live down there have to say and give them my full attention that day.

While Jasmine and Sara described the effects of outside influences on behavior, Pam seemed to consider behavior a form of communication or lack of ability to communicate about their feelings and needs.

people might not think that children would come to school hungry...that they may come to school angry. You may not be able to reach them. It may not have anything to do with

whats going in your classroom but, something that happened in the home. They're four and five, they're not going to know how to tell you that.

The participants described challenges that affect the emotional and behavioral state of students who have recently experienced hunger, violence, and anger as they arrive at school. Sara described the difficulty of re-focusing a student who often displays anger at school, possibly related to experiences before coming to school..

He gets angry at the drop of a dime. And we have to work around that...by the time you work... through the anger and...get him to trust you or get some kind of rapport with him, part of the day is already gone.

Each of the participants seemed challenged or perhaps puzzled to figure out how to explain their complex thoughts and feelings about the interaction between behavior and learning. In the first interview Sara and Candice described effective days based on the behavior systems they use to document and communicate with parents about behavior. This description of the behavior system seemed important to explore in the follow-up interview. A series of core questions about behavior were asked of each participant in order to help them explore their beliefs about behavior and learning. The questions and short quotes from each of the participants are provided in Figure 10. Of particular note in the figure are the changing perspectives of the participants.

Learning Leads to Behavior	"It goes hand in hand"	Behavior Leads to Learning
<i>How is behavior related to learning?</i>		
Jasmine , "You have to be very flexible because a child's behavior depends on their day."	Sara , "behavior and education plays hand in hand"	Pam , "when the behavior is good, or manageable then the more learning will take place"

Candice, "if you have activities... that will keep them engaged, that will cut down on some of the behaviors"

Is positive behavior an indicator of learning or is it a prerequisite to learning?

Jasmine, "if positive behaviors are kids involved and active and learning, I feel they are a result of, not a prerequisite"

Sara, "It goes hand in hand... You can't get to the meat and potatoes. You just can't, because you're stuck on behavior."

Pam, "you need positive behavior and you better get it if you're going to get learning to take place"

Candice, "positive behavior can show that the children are engaged"

Can there be learning without positive behavior?

Pam, "There can be learning without positive behavior... Cause some people are going to learn regardless... The person that is not having positive behavior still may learn... I will say that learning is better for everybody... if there is positive behavior."

Jasmine, "I don't feel that there can be learning without positive behavior"

Sara, "You have to have some kind of acceptable behavior in the classroom to get you... to the meat and potatoes"

Candice, "Very limited learning... Because you spend more time... trying to deal with the behavior instead of actually teaching"

Figure 10. The relationship between behavior and learning.

As can be seen, when considering the participants' responses through the lens of "Learning Leads to Behavior," "It goes hand in hand," and "Behavior Leads to Learning," the participants responses vary based on the conditions addressed by the question. In the next section, in-depth discussions of the participants' responses to these interview prompts are described.

How is behavior related to learning?

The participants had difficulty putting their perspectives into words on the relationship between learning and behavior. In the next section the questions and participants' answers will be

presented with accompanying commentary. The participants seem to offer a variety of unique perspectives.

Researcher: How is behavior related to learning?

Pam: When the behavior is good, or manageable then the more learning will take place.

Pam seemed to express that there is an inverse relationship between negative behavior and learning. Her perspective seemed to reflect a pragmatic approach best described as an inverse relationship between behavior and learning. For example, the fewer behavior problems in a day, the more learning that takes place. Candice also described the importance of the relationship between learning and behavior.

Candice: If behavior is not intact a lot of learning doesn't happen... because they can have some learning experiences through their behavior or things that they do...I think if you have activities... that will keep them engaged, that will cut down on some of the behaviors."

Candice described the other side of the inverse relationship between learning and behavior. She expressed that learning could be about behavior and that the more engaging the learning the less challenging the behavior.

Sara: Behavior and education plays hand in hand but my reward is seeing them getting the lesson getting the meat and potatoes out the stuff.

Sara seemed to express that she saw effectiveness as student engagement, but she also qualified the statement by linking her sense of satisfaction to students getting the "meat and potatoes."

Earlier in the interview she referred to "meat and potatoes" as the important emergent literacy knowledge and skills such as letter recognition.

In the following passage Jasmine seems to present her rationale for teaching with a child-centered classroom while linking this rationale to students' experiences at home. Her perspective

on empowerment, choice, and valuing student perspective is a thread that runs through her interview but is especially present in her discussion of boys and behavior.

Jasmine: You have to be very flexible because a child's behavior depends on their day. You know it could throw off your whole lesson. So I say well, "Maybe I want to play with some animals or I want to do a puzzle." And I'll give them that option. Because all you're going to do is frustrate yourself, "Sit here and open up those lemons boy!" You're going to set yourself up for failure. And then you're also going to take from the learning experiences from the other children....That's the biggest thing to them, to be able to say what they want. Because sometimes they come from an environment where they don't have a choice. "This is what you get, and that's it."

In Jasmine's story she described shared decision making between the teacher and the student. She acknowledged outside influences and the importance of offering children choices. Jasmine described balancing the benefit of the lesson to the entire class with offering an individual student a choice of a different activity. Jasmine seemed to believe that exercising choice was beneficial to the student's self esteem and emotional development based on their experiences at home of limited choices. Perhaps Jasmine held this belief due to her knowledge of her students' homes or the effects of poverty.

Is positive behavior an indicator of learning or is it a prerequisite to learning?

The next question attempted to narrow the focus of the participant by asking if behavior was a cause or effect of engagement. The researcher asked, "Is positive behavior an indicator of student learning happening or is it a prerequisite to learning?"

Pam, You, well, you, your, no. You need it yeah, but have to be able to change the behavior if it's not positive because the learning has to take place. So yeah. I/ I/ I think you need positive behavior and you better get it if you're going to get learning to take place.

Pam seemed to express that behavior is a prerequisite because in her description learning is described as non-negotiable. Her tripping or struggling to begin her sentences seems to suggest the internal struggle she was going through as she tried to decide how to answer the question. She definitely seems to view behavior and learning as distinct. Candice presents a different view.

Candice: I think it is both. Because positive behavior can show that the children are engaged and they don't have time to think about doing something that's not right...if you have that positive behavior... in the beginning then that can help you move on to the other activities or...keep them engaged.

In this passage Candice reinforced her reliance on student engagement as a primary behavior practice. Candice seemed to express that she saw behavior and engagement as symbiotic in that they supported one another. More engagement equals more positive behavior, and positive behavior before learning begins enables continued learning. In contrast, Sara's views seemed to echo Pam's perspective, in that she saw learning and behavior were relational, but that learning was more important than behavior.

Sara: I think you could say that... It goes hand in hand. If your classroom is in chaos you're not going to be able, you're not, it's not, you can't get to...You can't get to the meat and potatoes. You just can't, because you're stuck on behavior.

Sara has described what seems to be a confirmation that she believes positive behavior is a prerequisite to learning. She is interested in getting to what she considers the important part of her teaching, the "meat and potatoes," but a lack of positive behavior prevents that from

happening. In Jasmine's answer to the question, she explains that expectations have a lot to do with interpreting behavior.

Jasmine: First it has to come from the teacher's comfort level... Positive behavior is when kids are all engaged in something that they want to be doing... It all depends on what you feel are positive behaviors. But if positive behaviors are kids involved and active and learning, I feel they are a result of not a prerequisite... You can't just say, 'I'm not going to do this until everybody is sitting quiet looking at me. I'm not going to read a story until all legs are crossed.' Because not all legs are going to ever be crossed. Not all kids are going to be looking at you. So you engage them in such a way that eventually... they'll stop doing whatever it is they're doing and get so into what's going on around them that it will create a positive behavior.

Jasmine describes positive behavior as a result of engagement and learning. She explained that learning may look like "chaos," but if the chaos is the result of engagement then it is positive.

Can there be learning without positive behavior?

In response to the next question "Can there be learning without positive behavior?" the participants were asked to discriminate learning from behavior. As the participants explained their perspectives on learning, they seemed to accommodate different views on learning than they may have previously considered.

Pam: There can be learning without positive behavior. So are you asking me... if there's behavior that isn't positive in a classroom can anybody learn? Or can that person that's not having the positive behavior learn? I would say yeah. Cause some people are going to learn regardless... The person that is not having positive behavior still may learn... They may just be a person that's just gonna sit here, do things that aren't positive while something is going

on but when ask them to give you back what.... you're teaching or giving out they can do that.

But, I will say that learning is better for everybody... if there is positive behavior.

Pam describes the complexity of the classroom by acknowledging that a student can learn while also engaging in negative behavior. In this description it became important that there was a balance between the good of the child with negative behaviors and the good of the entire group. It seems that Pam's response depends on more of a teacher-led perspective in that the learning is coming from the teacher. Candice had consistently described learning as happening through engagement with materials or peers. In her response this belief is reflected in how she qualifies the type of learning that can take place when there is not positive behavior.

Candice: Very limited learning... Because you spend more time... trying to deal with the behavior instead of actually teaching what you really set out to teach.

Candice acknowledges that there can be learning without positive behavior, however the nature of the learning is not going to be "teaching what you really set out to teach." This question seemed to push Candice more towards Sara in how she described learning and behavior. She described some learning as more important than others, similar to Sara's "meat and potatoes" perspective. Sara was particularly challenged to answer this question. In the following passage she seems to struggle to describe her beliefs.

Sara: That's a trick question. It depends on the... I'm going tell you right now the things that Ms. L (former assistant principal) was telling me...when I was in Kindergarten, that I needed to work on, to be an effective teacher. Most of it was behavior, behavior, behavior, behavior. You have to get that class under control... And I'm telling you last year,...it was not good.... You have to have some kind of acceptable behavior in the classroom to get you... to the meat

and potatoes...I get so much more work done when you set the type of acceptable behavior in the classroom at the beginning.

Sara seems to have settled into the stance that there cannot be learning, at least not important learning, without positive behavior. In Jasmine's response, she seemed to take a similar tack as Pam in that she wanted to qualify if the question referred to if an individual child without positive behaviors could learn or if an entire class could learn when a child did not have positive behaviors.

Jasmine: Are you saying for that individual child, or as the group as a whole, I/ I believe that ... it does derail from what you're doing a tad bit, if it's just outright negative scream/... yes that does affect learning. There is no way around that... No, I don't feel that there can be learning without positive behavior... how I feel is it's what you view as positive behavior. Because like five kids speaking out at one time. You do want to teach them the value of everybody's voice, 'Listen to what your friends are saying.' But if I have a kids that I've been working with all year to just respond to a comprehension question. I'm not going to shun him for yelling out... some people would see that as a negative behavior, "You're yelling out you're talking while I'm talking to everybody else." But if it's a kid that's very shy and that has some language difficulties I'm not going to say stop.

In Jasmine's quote she seems to affirm that there cannot be learning without positive behavior but with the caveat that positive behavior is a matter of perception. She went on to describe what might be considered negative behaviors that, in certain circumstances, could be considered learning. Jasmine, seemed to move closer to Pam's perspective in answering the question.

Each of the participants, except Sara, seemed to adjust their perspectives as they responded to the questions. In comparing and contrasting the views of the four participants as

they responded to each of the four questions, Pam qualified her belief that "Behavior Leads to Learning" with the statement, "learning is better for everybody... if there is positive behavior." Candice qualified her belief that "Learning Leads to Behavior" by describing learning without positive behavior as limited. Sara places more emphasis on the important part of learning taking priority and behavior as a means towards this ends as opposed to a prerequisite for learning.

The responses to these questions shed light on the teachers' beliefs and practices related to behavior and learning. Each of the participants held slightly different perspectives with Candice and Sara's described beliefs falling closer to each other, while Pam and Jasmine's seemed more polarized.

Summary

The participant responses in the theme "Learning, Surviving, and Behavior" seemed to align when the participants were describing student factors and to diverge when discussing beliefs about behavior. The code "Learning and Surviving" described the challenging home and community lives of children and the pedagogical love employed to influence and cope with student factors that can distract from learning. In the code "Learning and Behavior," the participants' perspectives on teacher-led, child-centered, or child-led teaching practices related to behavior are described. Learning was described as taking place between a teacher and a student as well as taking place among peers and with engagement of materials. The participants differentiated between learning about social relations and learning important content. They also described their perspectives on what was more important to student learning, student engagement or student positive behaviors. At some point each of the participants described positive behavior as necessary to student learning.

The learning that takes place in the participants' classrooms is embedded in a context of external student factors that influence students' abilities to engage with learning. Each of the participants described positive behavior as necessary to learning but engagement as necessary to substantive learning. The goal of student learning as more important than student behavior was clear in that positive behavior was described as necessary, a means to an end, and as a result of engaged learning. The interactions that take place in these Head Start teachers classrooms seemed dependent on students' external factors, students' emotional and social development, and teachers' ability to engage students and/or elicit positive behaviors. In the next section the participants' perspective on boys and girls in the classroom are presented. Particular attention is paid to descriptions of learning, emotions, and behavior.

Teacher Beliefs about Gender and Learning

The theme "Teacher Beliefs About Gender and Learning" is made up of one code that describes the shared and varied beliefs about boys and girls expressed by the participants. While there were differences between boys' and girls' activities and behaviors described, the participants were hesitant to state differences outside of generalities. When they did describe differences they often chose to use individual stories of particular children to express their beliefs. Whenever a generalization was made about boys or girls, it was made with a frame of colloquial reference or common wisdom with phrases that began, "boys are..." or "boys need..." or other similar stems. For example, Candice said, "I was always told that boys will be boys and boys are always a little bit more active than girls." She went on to say, "I guess boys by nature are a little more aggressive because they are probably taught young... can't be a cry baby. You got to be this bad boy." Some examples of assumptions and generalizations about boys included "boys are taught to be aggressive," "boys are more physical," "boys are a little bit more active

than girls," " boys don't have as many issues socially as long as they can play and have a good time," and "They need to move. They need to be up and about." Generalizations about girls included "girls are more verbal," "The girls are excited about going to small groups and doing activities," and "girls talk a lot," These assumptions and generalizations related to activity and physical aggression in boys and verbal development in girls are not necessarily inaccurate (Estrem, 2005). Bornstein, Hahn, and Haynes assert that boys and girls begin to differentiate the type of aggression used in conflicts beginning around 2-years-old, about the same time that language development differences between boys and girls emerge (Bornstein, Hahn, & Haynes, 2004).

The teachers interviewed used keywords that were predominantly associated with boys. The first was the word active. Active in the context of the preschool classroom can have more than one meaning. Active learning refers to the child-centered approach to teaching where students engage with materials and explore their environments (Elkind, 2007). When used as a descriptor for students it means physically active or busy (Pate, McIver, Dowda, Brown, & Addy, 2008). Pam described active in relation to boys this way, "Learning as a boy,..Most times more active than girls. They like to run and jump and hit and push."

The second keyword was aggressive. It was used almost exclusively to describe boys except when the teacher acknowledged individual exceptions as in, "The boys tend to be a little bit more aggressive, but now days, the girls are kinda aggressive too." In general, statements made about boys' aggression focused on boys' physical interactions with peers. Jasmine described one boy's difficulty with aggression this way.

we do have our boys that tend to be a little more aggressive...if they don't necessarily have a male in the home that plays a part... they need a lot of attention. They...do things

that are in your face to see what your response is going to be... They are very highly emotional.

The term aggression seems to be used when participants are describing disruptive or negative behaviors, but the term active is used when they talk about learning or playing. Boys were described as being excited about learning. Candice stated, "The boys are pretty much up and all over the place and loud when they're excited because they're learning." In describing how to be effective with boys she said, "Just keepin the boys as positive... letting them know that...we're here for you. We want to encourage you and you can do."

Participants described a variety of contradictory beliefs about differences in boys and girls emotional development and social relations. Pam described the difference between boys' and girls' expressions of anger this way, "I've seen boys who they blow up. They huff and they puff. They don't know how express it. Girls are easier to tell you what's bothering them." Participants described boys' physical aggression such as "hitting" and "pushing" several times. Girls' aggression was also described as occasionally aggressive but less often. Sara described what the literature terms relational aggression (Estrem, 2005) in girls, "Girls, they just tell you. Or they do it in play...you hear the girls go. Well she hit me on the bus I don't want none of you all playing with her today." Relational aggression is viewed as aggression that causes harm to relationships instead of to the physical person (Denham, Caverly, Schmidt, Blair, DeMulder, Caal, & Mason, 2002).

When boys' emotions were described there seemed to be agreement about the role of language in expressing emotions. One comment made by Sara seemed particularly important, "boys usually can't verbally tell you. They know physical, they cry, and they're not crying because they're hurt. They're crying 'cause they can't verbalize it. And if you're sitting up there,

Saying, 'Well tell me.' That's not going to work." This statement echoed several other statements made by the participants that mentioned boys' trouble with anger, frustration, and expressing themselves and the role of the teacher in developing boys' coping skills and emotional knowledge (Denham, Caverly, Schmidt, Blair, DeMulder, Caal, & Mason, 2002).

Who these teachers are in their personal and professional selves seemed to have influenced how they described the boys in their classrooms. Pam, Sara, Candice, and Jasmine are all mothers of boys. Jasmine and Pam are mothers to boys who are their only child. When Candice described her effectiveness with boys, she connected it to her experiences with her son when he was in school. She said,

being a mother of a son who...didn't really have difficulties as far as academically but he had a lot of behavior issues...I can kinda understand with the boys in here... because I been there

Candice seemed to explain that she felt empathetic towards the boys in her classroom. Jasmine expressed a similar sentiment as she talked about her son in his kindergarten classroom.

At home he moves all day long. So I can't imagine having him in the classroom... his teacher says, "He just was just sooo busy today."... I think kids are punished for their personalities.

The influence of male role models and parental expectations in boys' lives was described in the interviews as affecting boys' emotional development and social relations. Each of the participants described influences of uninvolved or incarcerated fathers, parents' expectations of gender-typed play, or neighborhood perceptions of "normal" behavior of boys. Sara described the complexity of the influences of adults on boys emotional development in the following

passage. Sara is describing a conference with the mother of a male student (D.) who had demonstrated increasingly aggressive behaviors.

the student had a lot of green lights since September, October, November, but came December, January, February you started getting...more red and less green...that's when mom opened up and said, "that's when dad came into the picture." I was like, "Ok. So that was a life change. That would have helped me to so I can know how to do with D_." I... told her, "The behavior happens when the...other male students' fathers come in. Oh D_ goes way up off the charts." So, we had to talk about that. Cause I think that's all she's accustomed to seeing. She hasn't seen...normal play with boys. Or normal behavior with boys. I think in that environment they live in, every boy acts that way.

The complexity of the interaction between Sara and the parent touches on several important concepts that emerged throughout the interviews related to boys, home environment, and behavior. As Sara discussed the child's behavior with the mom, she knew when the parent said, "that's when dad came in the picture" that there were emotional factors beyond her influence in the classroom. In the discussion Sara noted that D_'s mom had perceptions of boys' behavior that could excuse D_'s interactions with his peers. Sara linked this perception back to the experiences of the mother and the child in the home and neighborhood.

The participants disagreed as to whether there were important differences between boys and girls that affected learning. The participants generally described boys as different than girls in level of physical activity and social emotional development but similar in how they learn. In holding these diverse beliefs simultaneously the participants held tight to values of equity by describing differences in activity and behavior but then made statements like, "I don't think I

treat them really different", " young kids at this age. I don't see a lot of difference there.", and " if it's a boy or a girl every child's... needs are different."

Three of the participants seemed to see the differences between boys and girls as tangential to "active learning" practices that were considered valuable to all students. In contrast, Sara described believing that boys' brains develop differently than girls' brains. In describing the ways in which those differences affected her classroom decisions, she referred to classroom routines and procedures that addressed boys' activity level and challenges in emotional development. For example she described using visuals to teach, especially related to the class rules and stoplight behavior chart. The role of language development affecting emotional regulation seemed to be factored into how Sara addressed boys' difficulty with expressing anger and frustration by how she asked boys to wash their faces and come back to her ready to resolve a conflict. Jasmine described differences that were more rooted in seeing students as individuals. She seemed to focus her discussion on a perceived need of boys to feel important. She described the importance of helping boys to feel valued and loved. She did not describe general procedures or practices that differentiated based on gender except acknowledging that boys want to be active. She did note that boys seemed to be more engaged with certain themes in the reading curriculum because the content appealed to boys' sensibilities.

Summary

These findings relating to boys seem to suggest that how these Head Start teachers perceive and interact with differences in gender seem less important to success than teachers' approaches to teaching that incorporate active learning and address the differences in emotional development of boys and girls. Each participant acknowledged the higher levels of activity demonstrated by boys. Each participant also acknowledged and addressed boys' general

difficulty in communicating about anger or frustration possibly related to language development. When describing learning, the participants made statements that affirmed that what is good for boys is also good for girls in terms of actively engaging with emergent literacy knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening data, the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey, and the two rounds of interviews yielded a multi-layered understanding of the context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The findings of the cross-case thematic analysis emerged from the integration of the first-round interview, the CRTB survey responses, and the second-round interview.

In answering research question one (RQ1), "How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?" the study sample responded as predominately culturally relevant in their beliefs. The survey items elicited a variety of culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs from the participants. There were also a number of items that had uniform responses from the participants. Directional agreement seemed to indicate that these responses may be a function of the Head Start program in which the participants work or a cultural understanding that is a result of the context of the study sample.

Variations in beliefs of the participants were considered through divergent responses to survey items and when participants directionally agreed with seemingly conflicting values. The participants demonstrated in their responses apparently divergent views to survey items that included previous experiences and backgrounds of children, the tension between individual and

communal responsibility, and teacher-led, child-directed, and child-initiated learning. These responses also emerged in the interviews of participants.

In answering RQ2 "How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?" the biographical sketches provided an opportunity for the participants to tell their stories without the filter of comparison to others. Through this analysis several differences emerged that helped to inform the understanding of each participant. Participants described beliefs that considered the contexts of students and families, their approach to dealing with these contexts including culturally relevant approaches and warm demander approaches, and ways of teaching that included teacher-led, child-directed , and child-initiated learning practices. Individual beliefs about boys' learning and social emotional development were also described by the participants.

The integrated methods utilized in this study led to a multi-faceted understanding of the experiences and stories of the participants in the study. The cross-case thematic analysis provided insight into the participants' shared and differing perspectives on parents' and students' experiences. They seemed to express many similar views but differed in some key areas. The participants' approaches to developing the emergent literacy of urban African American boys were similar in that the culture of the boys' homes and neighborhoods was an influence on the practices and beliefs of teachers. Their use of teacher-led, child-directed, and child-initiated practices seemed to be influenced by perceptions of learning being derived from teachers or in co-construction with peers and affected by ideas of individual and communal responsibility. The participants described the importance of relationships with parents and the role of this relationship in teachers' attempts to influence student factors that affect success. They described

several shared culturally relevant beliefs including taking children where they are, and that students' home lives were an important factor in success. Assimilationist beliefs seemed to be a part of a warm demander approach that included insistence on positive behavior and high achievement. The role of the participants' culturally relevant beliefs in the emergent literacy development of boys was influenced by the participants' backgrounds and experiences. Teachers' beliefs about boys were somewhat varied, but effective practices as described by the participants were similar. The influence of the context of Head Start and the role of home visits in the relationships between parents and teachers seemed to affect the beliefs and practices of these Head Start teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore the role culturally relevant teaching beliefs play in the practices of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys is integral or tangential to their success. This study explored two research questions about the context of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The first research question was quantitative and examined the diversity of views of culturally relevant teaching held by these Head Start teachers.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?

The sequential explanatory methods implemented to answer this question incorporated a literacy screening to determine an intentional sample of successful Head Start teachers and a survey of Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB), specifically related to the beliefs of academically successful teachers of urban African American children (Love & Kruger, 2005). The quantitative phase of the study revealed that the beliefs of the Head Start teachers sampled were mostly uniform with variation in specific dimensions of culturally relevant teaching (see Table 13). The dimensions of culturally relevant teaching that included the most variation were

"Social Relations in and Beyond the Classroom" and "Teaching as a Profession." The second research question integrated variation in participants' beliefs into the qualitative phase of the study through interview questions related to variation in participant responses to the measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs. The explanatory phase of the study utilized the CRTB survey responses from the total sample to interview four participants in a first-round interview.

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?

Finally, the four participants were interviewed a second time to explore their individual responses to the survey and emergent themes from the first-round interviews. The data were analyzed first as a case study presented as a biographical sketch, and then as a cross-case thematic analysis.

The inquiry process produced and confirmed perspectives on culturally relevant teaching that were not considered in the CRTB survey that were, however, integral to the successful emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. These beliefs included forming close relationships with parents and the value of responding to the basic physical and emotional needs of students in order to engage them in learning. In this chapter, discussion, implications, and future research related to these findings are explored.

The findings described in chapter five illustrated the culturally relevant beliefs of the participants from individual and collective points of view. Analysis of these perspectives provided insight into how each of the participants viewed their identity, practices, students and parents. Culturally relevant beliefs that honor the experiences and culture of students were

expressed in response to the CRTB survey and through descriptions of interactions with students and parents. Culturally relevant teachers, as described by Ladson-Billings (1994), value communal and individual responsibility. They view themselves as part of a community and describe the importance of valuing students' race, ethnicity, and culture. Culturally relevant teachers also embody high expectations, combined these expectations with positive attitudes, and supports a school climate that values positive relationships in a similar fashion to an extended family (Willis, 1996). The role of assimilationist beliefs served an interesting function in the participants' responses to the CRTB survey and in their interview responses. Assimilationist beliefs as applied by the survey are an expression of the view that students must conform to the dominant society in order to be academically successful. Culturally relevant practices are an aspect of Head Start service delivery and are expected by Head Start performance standards, the measure of effective Head Start programs (Kossak, 2005; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). These culturally relevant expectations are broad and aimed to support the learning of diverse student populations served by Head Start, including English language learners, Native Americans, and children living in poverty (Liggett, 2008; Roehrig, Dubosarsky, Mason, Carlson, & Murphy, 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). The challenge in the analysis was to provide the participants the opportunity to explain the assimilationist beliefs they expressed in the survey. These explanations seemed to point to the culturally relevant perspective to teaching urban African American students termed the warm demander philosophy (Ware, 2006; Irvine and Frazier, 1998; Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008). The presence of assimilationist beliefs that seemed to be explained by the participants as similar to warm demander beliefs was explored in as a hypothesis in the second-round interview.

The CRTB survey, as originally implemented by Love and Kruger (2005), was developed to correlate culturally relevant beliefs, as described by Ladson-Billings (1994), which influenced academic success specifically for African American students living in poverty. The Love and Kruger study found some correlations between assimilationist beliefs of teachers and high academic achievement in math and reading in six elementary schools serving urban African American students living in poverty. There were two specific assimilationist beliefs that held positive correlations with reading scores in Love and Kruger, (2005). The Head Start teachers sampled in this study expressed agreement with the statement, "1A. It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students." including 18 (90%) agreement and 2 (10%) non-answers. Each of the interview participants except for Candice agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The responses of the Head Start teachers sampled expressed divergent beliefs in response to the second assimilationist item that found correlations to achievement in reading in Love and Kruger (2005). In response to the statement, "5F. With enough repetition, drill, and practice, students will attain a passing grade.", six participants (30%) agreed, six participants (30%) disagreed, and eight (40%) chose not to respond. The responses of the interview participants included a "Not-Answered" from Pam, "Disagree" from Jasmine, "Strongly Disagree" from Candice, and "Agree" from Sara (see Appendix N, p. 371). These two survey responses, when viewed alongside the participants' descriptions of their beliefs and practices, in the code "Learning and Behavior" and as evidenced in the role of acceptance and insistence in teacher-child and teacher-parent interactions, indicated that there may be another philosophy besides culturally relevant beliefs present in the descriptions of the participants' values. A hypothesis that there may be a warm demander philosophy present in the beliefs of the participants was tested through follow-up questions in the second-round interview.

The warm demander perspective, as described in the literature, is a culturally relevant approach specific to successful teaching of urban African American children (Ware, 2006; Irvine and Frazier, 1998; Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008). Central to the warm demander philosophy is the idea of student engagement through insistence and viewing problem behaviors as a puzzle to be solved (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008). The few differences among the participants' perspectives as explored through the survey and first-round interview helped the presence of this perspective to emerge. The warm demander approach holds very few differences from the culturally relevant perspective and may be a reflection of an aspect of a culturally relevant approach with urban African American boys living in poverty. However, within the frame of this study, the seemingly contradictory terms of culturally relevant beliefs and assimilationist beliefs played out as acknowledgement of a culturally relevant approach specific to the context of the African American boys living in poverty that indicated possible warm demander tendencies in participants Pam and Sara that were not also present in Jasmine and Candice's interviews. The overlap of the culturally relevant and warm demander perspectives include a commitment to the school community, viewing teaching as giving back to the community, a family-like approach to relationships, and emphasis on communal responsibility. It was in these participants descriptions of their agency as Head Start teachers that the variations in these perspectives came to light.

The participants' role as a Head Start teacher and their agency seemed to be intricately tied to the relationships they built with parents and students. The influence of identity on teacher's agency is critical to understanding how teachers make learning happen (Bandura, 1997). In adopting a reciprocal causation model, this study attempted to explain teachers' beliefs as much as possible as they related to their success within the context of successful emergent

literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. Agency is related to the participants' descriptions of efficacy as well as to their comments related to identity, especially in the context of culturally relevant beliefs (Maye & Day, 2011). It is through considering how the interview participants describe how to be as a teacher, how to act as a teacher, and how to understand, as a teacher that this study was able to uncover notions of agency that permeate the participants language (Sachs, 2005). Participants described themselves as being open, approachable, and empathetic with students and parents. They expressed the importance of being positive, being ready for what students bring, and being in emotionally present for students. The interview participants discussed communicating with parents about child development, using what might be termed culturally relevant as well as assimilationist approaches to emergent literacy development, and crossing from the school context into close relationships with parents based on home visits. The interview participants described how they understood student experiences that affect learning, student behavior related to engagement with learning, and parents' agency in supporting student learning. The participants' agency seemed to be primarily expressed through descriptions of relationships that accepted the experiences of students and parents and attempted to influence student factors beyond the classroom through relationships.

Discussion of each of the participants' individual perspectives is provided, followed by discussion of the cross-case thematic analysis.

Biographical Sketches

The biographical sketches of the interview participants provide a window into the perspectives of Head Start teachers. Their teaching experience ranges from six to 20 years. Three of the four participants, Pam, Sara, and Candice, taught in the same school. Jasmine taught in a school located approximately three miles away.

Pam was a seasoned teacher with 19 years experience. She embodied a pragmatic approach that was especially sensitive to the backgrounds of students and families. Pam described beliefs that considered parents, as well as students, her clients. Her approach to working with parents seemed to describe a combination of culturally relevant and assimilationist approaches that embodied a family-oriented approach to mentoring parents in which she attempted to help parents exercise appropriate decisions in parenting their children. She described several beliefs that seemed to indicate a warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, and Hambacher, 2008) that integrated predominately culturally relevant and a few assimilationist practices and perspectives including: understanding of student factors beyond the classroom and insistence on positive student behavior, that behavior is a problem to be solved, and insistence on high academic achievement. Pam described utilizing active learning practices that included teacher-led activities that incorporated movement, child-directed activities that built on student exploration of teacher provided materials, and child-initiated activities that gave students the opportunity to interact with each other and the teacher. Pam believed that boys and girls were mostly similar. She explained that boys were more active than girls but did not learn differently from girls. She believed that movement and active learning helped both boys and girls learn.

Sara, a teacher new to the culture of Head Start, seemed to be emerging from her previous role and practices as a kindergarten teacher into her identity as a Head Start teacher. She identified with her students' families through her background living in poverty and putting herself through college with young children. Sara had spent some time living in low income housing and resided within the same community as her students. Sara described several beliefs that combined culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs into what appears, through her

language, to be a warm demander approach. She insisted on high academic achievement independent of student prior knowledge and seemed to struggle with describing her beliefs about student behavior, often moving between insistence on positive behavior according to clear behavioral expectations and consequences and a more child-centered approach that aimed to develop students socially and emotionally. Sara expressed belief that boys learn differently than girls and described practices used to accommodate those differences. She described helping boys to develop their ability to communicate about emotions and active learning.

Candice had taught for approximately 20 years. In that time she developed beliefs about the students and families in her care, communal responsibility, and teaching practices. Candice valued the trust of her students' parents and described friendships she had developed with several of her parents. Candice was sensitive to her students' backgrounds and explicitly described the influence of culture on her students' development and her classroom. In this way, Candice seemed to embody a culturally relevant approach in her teaching. She described developing a classroom dependent on communal responsibility that included clear behavior expectations. She focused on students taking care of each other and learning from each other. Candice described boys as learning similarly to girls but as more active and emotional than girls. She cited the influence of culture on boys' development including the role of male role models in boys' lives and parental attitudes about masculinity and aggressiveness. Candice found boys to be more emotional than girls and inclined towards crying and externalizing behaviors such as pushing and hitting.

Jasmine identified with her students' backgrounds through her experiences as a child. She was the child of a single mother who lived in less affluent parts of the city as she grew up. Guiding values for Jasmine were empathy and choice. She seemed to employ empathy in her

interactions with parents and students. Jasmine described deep connections with parents, especially in the Early Head Start program, that had lasted several years but still maintained a professional context. She felt that she had been a mother figure and a friend to students' parents and mentioned a particular parent that was close to her heart. This parent was a single mother who was attending community college as an early childhood major. Jasmine was empathetic towards those who were influenced by student factors related to living in poverty, including hunger and unstable living situations. Jasmine expressed numerous culturally relevant approaches such as using cooperative learning and accepting using students' backgrounds in selection of content but seemed to focus on these approaches in the context of treating students as individuals with unique needs. Choice was the most prevalent value in her practices. She viewed it as an empowering opportunity for children and expressed concern that students be enabled to have a voice. Child-directed and child-initiated learning approaches were employed by Jasmine as she described activities that built on student interest and choice. Jasmine occasionally described boys as emotionally fragile and occasionally "hard to love." She expressed that boys were more active than girls but did not learn differently than girls.

In the biographical sketches two processes of teacher thinking became evident and informed the understanding of the participants' views. The language participants used to describe their relationships in and beyond the classroom seemed to describe a tension between the processes of acceptance and insistence. The participants' views on learning in their classrooms were informed by the participants' views on communal and individual responsibility. The participants seemed to enact these sometimes contradictory views simultaneously as they described their interactions with parents and students. The role of insistence and acceptance in Head Start was expressed through interactions with parents and children.

The participants described accepting the backgrounds and experiences of students and parents. Acceptance was used in descriptions, including accepting that students might have experiences before coming to school that could distract them from learning, accepting that boys were more physically active than girls, and that parents who struggled to care for their families might push "Learning on the Back Burner." This view seemed based on the belief that every parents loved their children and that they were doing the best they could to raise their children. It was expressed through descriptions of empathy and understanding of the effects of poverty. Finally, and most tellingly, in relation to culturally relevant and warm demander approaches, the participants described acceptance of student behavior as an expression of the (cultural) experiences of students.

Alternatively the participants described insisting that students and parents engage with the culture of the school. Parents that put "Learning on the Back Burner" because of the challenges of "just surviving" were engaged by the participants through home visits, parent conferences, and informal interactions. With children this was expressed as accepting that students have experiences described in the "Learning and Surviving" code and insisting that, even though students come to school having experienced hunger, violence, and anger, they express themselves within acceptable parameters appropriate for the school setting such as talking to peers about feelings and not expressing anger and frustration physically through hitting and pushing. The participants also described interactions where they encouraged students and parents to embrace the school culture. The participants expressed insistence when they encouraged parents to interact with their children in certain ways including supporting learning at home, volunteering in the classroom, and not exposing children to inappropriate media. This

view was enacted through the participants' expectations that students meet certain behavioral expectations and level of high academic achievement.

The participants' views on communal and individual responsibility were evident in how the participants described learning and social interactions in their classrooms. When the topic of accountability was broached in the survey and the interviews, the participants described views that considered students less than fully responsible for themselves. This perspective extended to the teacher locating agency within them self. This was evident through the affirmation of culturally relevant beliefs in the survey such as disagreeing with the assimilationist statement, "Some students, no matter what I do, will inevitably fail." In the interviews the participants embraced communal responsibility in the classroom, such as students learning from each other, but rejected mutual responsibility in refusing to hold students accountable for their peers' learning. This may have been due to the young age of Head Start students. The participants also varied as they considered learning in the context of classrooms. The participants affirmed that students learned from each other and that small groups were the most valuable setting for their teaching.

Emergent Themes

The participants described beliefs that overlapped with each other. In order to understand the shared beliefs of the interview participants, a cross-case thematic analysis was completed. This process uncovered the influence of "Identity" and the "Entity of Head Start" on participants' perspectives. The participants described relationships with parents that went beyond the classroom. These relationships seemed to develop from teachers' accommodation of the influence of struggling to survive on families, the process of communication among parents, children, and teachers, and the influence of conducting home visits and family engagement on

teachers and parents. The participants described the role poverty and surviving plays in classroom interactions and teachers' perceptions of the interaction between engagement and behavior. Finally, boys' and girls' social emotional development and learning emerged as important to the participants. How the participants responded, in relation to the other participants, is described in the Figure 11.

Code	Similar Responses	Different Responses
Identity	<p>Pam, Sara, Jasmine</p> <p>"as a Head Start teacher you must be open to, willing to, and want to, work with the parents... without stepping over the lines of professionalism, it becomes a family"</p>	<p>Candice</p> <p>"it means a great deal to me that...the parent actually trusted me with their child. And I didn't know them at all... I've made friends with a couple parents."</p>
Entity of Head Start	<p>Pam, Sara, Jasmine, Candice</p> <p>"you kinda have to...do a little social work on the side too. Because you have somebody... they feel comfortable with"</p>	
Learning on the Back Burner	<p>Pam, Sara, Candice, Jasmine</p> <p>"If they're trying to survive... they kinda put the learning like on the back burner."</p>	
On the Same Page: The Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad	<p>Pam, Sara, Candice, Jasmine</p> <p>"you have to understand that the parents, their children is like a gem, it's like the dearest thing to them...you have to make that relationship work where... we're all on the same page."</p>	
A Closer Relationship	<p>Pam, Sara, Candice, Jasmine</p> <p>"Just giving them a listening ear.. That's part of your job if you want. That might help you understand why their child is behaving the way the child is behaving."</p>	
Learning and Surviving	<p>Pam, Sara, Candice, Jasmine</p> <p>"you have to get them to where you need to be to receive whatever it is you trying to give them."</p>	
Learning and Behavior		<p>Candice and Jasmine</p> <p>"if you have activities... that will keep them engaged, that will cut down on some of the behaviors"</p> <p>Pam and Sara</p> <p>"when the behavior is good, or manageable then the more learning will take place"</p>
Boys and Girls, Same and Different	<p>Pam, Candice, Jasmine</p> <p>"Learning as a boy...Most times more active than girls. They like to run and jump and hit and push"</p>	<p>Sara</p> <p>"how boys think and what boys need in a classroom... You can't have them sit and expect them to sit criss- cross apple sauce. Thats not goin work, for boys."</p>

Figure 11. The similar and different responses of the participants to the codes and themes.

The influence of identity on the participants' beliefs about their teaching practices emerged as a theme. This included the influence of the participants' backgrounds, sense of efficacy, and engagement with families. The participants' backgrounds provided hints as to the participants' reasoning and beliefs about their teaching. The participants considered themselves to be effective, although they described differing views on the evidence of this effectiveness. For example, Pam and Sara described evidence of learning as students transferring learning from one context to another context. Candice and Jasmine described observations of students engaged with materials and with each other as evidence of effectiveness. Evidence of effectiveness that the participants shared included reports from parents. In considering the participants' identities, it became clear that the process of engaging families in their homes had influenced the participants' perceptions of their role in developing students and families.

A reciprocal factor that emerged was how acting as a proxy for Head Start, affected teachers' identity. The participants described ways that they needed to be as teachers, act as teachers, and understand as teachers (Sachs, 2005) that were the result of attempts to influence students' environmental factors. Participants described feeling empathy for students based on community factors and understanding of family factors that influence student success. The participants described encouraging and enabling parents to utilize community resources and showing pride in parents' personal development.

In describing engagement with families, the theme of relationships with parents in and beyond the classroom emerged. This theme included beliefs about the influence of student factors on families' engagement with school and parents ability to support learning at home. The process of communicating was described as teachers working to get parents, children, and teachers "On the Same Page" in terms of collaborating towards students' success. This

collaboration included developing awareness of child development, expectations for school behavior, learning in the home, the effects of parent and teacher actions on students, and negotiating conflicting messages between home and school cultures.

Emotional involvement of the participants in the process of engaging families elicited the code "A Closer Relationship." This described the nature of the relationship between parents and teachers that emerged from the process of engaging families. Teachers described this relationship as affecting them and parents. Descriptions within the code of "A Closer Relationship" overlapped with the participants' language in the "Identity" code. For example, when Jasmine described how parents size up a teacher she said,

parents size you up from the beginning. Um especially depending on their experience of school... That first home visit it really does set a tone. Because when you walk through the door...they really try to get to know you... I'll tell them I'm a mother also so I know what you're going through. I know the trauma of ah, parenthood I know the joys of parenting... But our um, our parents think once they get over the surface, you're a teacher and they really see you... enjoy what you do...if a parent can read...it, all over your face, that you don't like what you do, it sets a tone. You have to be, you have to want to be here.

Jasmine's described the value of the home visit in forming a "A Closer Relationship" with parents as parents attempt to "get over the surface" and that "it sets a tone" for the relationship and for the child's learning. Candice explained that she found it meaningful that parents trusted her and that she was "worth" having a relationship with. Sara described the importance of listening to parents and the value of being listened to when she was a parent of a preschooler.

The role of teacher as mentor, partner, and friend emerged from the closer relationship between

parents and teachers and overlapped with the participants' depictions of meaning in their practices.

Teachers' understanding of the influence of student factors on classroom learning and their perceptions of the relationship between behavior, engagement, and learning emerged as codes. The experiences of students as they affected daily learning were described as important to teachers' agency in the classroom. Factors such as hunger, neighborhood violence, and anger were described as affecting students' ability to engage with learning. The participants' practices and beliefs related to overcoming these factors included empowering students through choice, comforting and connecting to children with love, and providing and maintaining clear expectations.

Teachers' perceptions of the interaction between engagement and behavior provided some insight into how teachers' beliefs influence their practices. The participants' views varied in how they understood behavior. The variation in beliefs included that learning was the result of positive behavior, learning and positive behavior work together, and learning leads to positive behavior. Attempts to triangulate the participants' perspectives led to the participants adjusting their perspectives depending on a situation. This code emerged as the most varied set of beliefs among the participants.

The participants' beliefs about boys' development included three factors. How the participants interpreted these factors influenced their descriptions of how to be effective with urban African American boys living in poverty. The participants described boys as 1) more active than girls, 2) not learning differently than girls, and 3) having less ability to communicate verbally about emotion than girls. This led the participants to describe active learning practices that addressed the needs of boys and girls based on the needs of boys. One participant, Sara

believed that boys learn differently than girls; the other participants did not share this belief. However, Sara described practices similar to those of the other participants related to boys' active learning and emotional development. Boys' ability to express emotion seemed related to their language development and this difference seemed to be accommodated by the participants in their support for conflict resolution that built communication skills.

Sequential Explanatory Methodology

The study methodology as it was developed and implemented constitutes a step in broadening the parameters for ethical research by researchers in supervisory positions within their contexts of authority. The process of creating the informed consent model adopted by this study went beyond procedural considerations to consider the ethical responsibility of the researcher to place as much power, as exercised through informed consent and the process of inquiry, in the hands of the participant. The steps adopted to protect participants led to decisions in which a methodology was developed that used the necessity of keeping data blind to the researcher to the advantage of answering the research questions. One significant challenge raised in the design of this study was the necessity to devise a research methodology that appropriately addressed the research questions and that reasonably minimized the risks associated with the embedded nature of the researcher and potential and real asymmetrical power relationships between the researcher and the participant.

The researcher's position as a child development specialist employed by the Head Start program that was the study sample necessitated several steps to be taken to protect the participants from possible feelings of coercion (Rallis & Rossman, 2010; Malone, 2003). The relationship of the participant and the researcher (see chapter four), prior to the research, embodied an asymmetrical power relationship due to the supervisory role of the researcher in the

Head Start program (Enosh, Ben-Ari, & Buchbinder,2008). The consent process with its three levels of consent was developed specifically for this study. The three steps in the consent process were 1) Participants indicated consent to completing the survey. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to provide a contact email if they consented to being contacted to participate in a follow-up interview based on analysis of the survey. 2) After interview candidates were selected, the potential participants were contacted with a disclosure letter that informed them of the identity of the researcher and provided background information on the researcher. This letter asked them if they consented to participating in an interview with the researcher and assured them that the researcher did not know the identities of the participants. 3) The participant consented, in person at the interview, to participation. These steps were developed and implemented with the intention of supporting the sharing of power by the participant and the researcher (Enosh, Ben-Ari, & Buchbinder, 2008). The discursive relationship in the interview process employed a co-construction of the power relationship between researcher and participant.

In the interview process the researcher attempted to adopt an ethical approach that can be termed a stance of caring reflexivity. Caring reflexivity is the application of ethical reasoning to the development, implementation, and reporting of research. This process leads to a trustworthy study that can be valued as credible through its rigorous ethical reasoning (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). Caring reflexivity in this study flowed from the three-stage consent process (Malone, 2003) and to approaching the participants in a caring and thoughtful manner. During the interviews the participants asked questions, provided information, and made suggestions about the research that enabled them to influence the direction of the study. Caring reflexivity was also adopted in how the researcher approached the data as the analysis followed the participants into

the stories they shared. Caring reflexivity was a consideration in the adoption of the case study and cross-case study analysis. By sharing each of the participants' views as individuals as well as compared to each other, the voices and experiences of the participants are honored. The process of caring reflexivity was enabled due to the intimate understanding of the contexts the researcher and the participant shared. The relationships the researcher and participants held prior to the study became deeper and more complex through the interview process. In order to protect participants, the study also adopted the strategy of keeping some data blind to the researcher. This process further pushed the design of the study methodology to find a creative solution to interpreting the data.

The study adopted the blinding methodology employed by Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2004) by using quantitative data to inform the interview. The survey data were kept blind to the researcher before the first-round interview. This enabled the researcher to interview the participants in reference to their responses to the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs survey items in an unbiased manner. The previously established relationships between the qualitative researcher as described in Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva strengthened the study because the researcher had already established a trustworthy relationship with the participants (Rallis & Rossman, 2010). This led the participants to share their stories in what appeared to be a more open manner. The methodology also built off of the Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva study by including the step of the researcher forming some hypotheses about the data. These hypotheses were then tested through comparison to the individual survey responses of the participants and through testing in the second-round interviews.

Emergent Literacy

This inquiry into the agency of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty uncovered processes at work in the context of emergent literacy development. These processes included the role of teachers and the context of Head Start as influences on the development, of emergent literacy. In defining Head Start teacher agency in emergent literacy development it is valuable to consider what literacy is and what literacy does (Bartlett, 2008). Literacy, at the micro level, is the ability to communicate and learn through reading and writing. It is the ability to produce meaning from letters. Literacy, at the macro level, is what literacy does. Literacy is the ability to communicate towards an end. It is the ability to influence circumstance, and it is the currency of economic mobility in the dominant culture in America.

At the micro level the Head Start teachers' agency in this study was reflected by numerous active learning approaches to literacy development, such as racing for letters, building words, and acting out stories that developed alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension. These activities serve as the basis for a skills-based approach to literacy supported in much of the current literature about emergent literacy development (Lonigan, 2004; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Whitehurst, Zevenbergen, Crone, Schultz, Velting, & Fischel, 1999; Hammer, Farka, & Maczuga, 2010). Skills development was approached by the participants with a sense of insistence and a "whatever works" attitude (Ladson-Billings, 1994) that incorporated small group instruction, drill and practice, and parental support of literacy at home. Teachers' descriptions of accepting and accommodating the extenuating emotional and physical needs associated with poverty worked in collaboration with high expectations, social emotional development, and pragmatic

approaches to create an environment where the knowledge and skills necessary for emergent literacy success by urban African American boys living in poverty was created.

The Head Start teachers in this study played a role at the macro level of literacy development by supporting student and family engagement with literacy and the culture of the school. The interview participants described proactive relationship-based approaches to addressing student and family factors that hamper emergent literacy development. They formed close relationships with parents for whom they acted as mentors, advocates, and friends. Supporting students and parents in discovering the value of literacy as a mode of communication were explored.

These Head Start teachers did not take on this role as heroic individuals, but through integrating it into their responsibility as proxies for a larger process aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty in students' lives. The "Entity of Head Start" set up many of the conditions that made this influence possible and in doing so affected the development of these Head Start teachers' agency. Teachers' relationships with parents moved beyond simple discussions of student knowledge and skills in the classroom to discussion of child development, parenting practices, and parents' personal development towards goals.

Literacy is often considered able to confer on individuals benefits through its acquisition, however when considered from a cultural perspective, its power is related to its context and use. Economic mobility and personal agency, as a literacy benefit, results from the relationships and networks associated with the types of literacy found in schools and other dominant culture settings (Bartlett, 2008). It is towards engaging in these types of settings, where literacy is valuable, that these Head Start teachers and the "Entity of Head Start" encourage and support parents to become involved. It is through the relational and cultural influence of literacy

development of Head Start teachers on the context of urban African American boys living in poverty that the cycle of poverty is addressed. The implications of Head Start teacher agency as an influence on micro and macro literacy are discussed in the following section.

Implications

The implications of this study include opportunities for understanding successful teachers' practices, the value of school-family-community partnerships to the success of African American children living in poverty, and the value of using sequential explanatory methods to consider the agency of teachers. The findings of this study suggest that a broadening of the definition of teacher practice would assist in developing a framework for understanding successful teaching of students living in poverty.

In the context of research on Head Start, this study embodies a different perspective than is usually presented in the literature. Research on Head Start tends to draw on large data sets and to be based on the premise of confirming or denying that Head Start is meeting its mission (Hammer, Farka, & Maczuga, 2010.) This study does not adopt a deficit model related to Head Start teachers' beliefs and practices. The views of these participants are meant to exemplify successful teachers in Head Start. This study takes the perspective of considering what Head Start may already be doing well. The voices of Head Start teachers regarding their successful literacy practices are seldom heard in the literature on Head Start (Hammer, Farka, Maczuga, 2010).

There seemed to be a force at work in the agency of Head Start teachers that was present in the data that was not considered in the application of Bandura's model (1997) to the methodology. This aspect of the context of agency was described as the "Entity of Head Start."

The Head Start program, as implemented in the study sample, seemed to create a setting in which

teachers, as proxies for Head Start, acted upon or influenced student environmental factors through their relationships with students' families. In the cases of the participants, the matter of teacher agency seemed to extend beyond traditional perspectives on teacher knowledge, expectations, and beliefs, as well as beyond teachers' skills, practice, and self-efficacy. By requiring home visits, Head Start sets up the opportunity for "A Closer Relationship" between the teacher and the students' families. The act of moving out of the school context into the homes of students' families combined with the personal experiences of these teachers influenced the creation of identities that enhanced their agency with students and parents. The nature of this relationship, while often described as professional, enabled these teachers to feel they had some influence on factors that put "Learning on the Back Burner" for parents and families. This relationship, in combination with the services Head Start has to offer through family engagement coordinators, created a way in which Head Start teachers' agency extended beyond emergent literacy practices into affecting the student factors that influence learning.

The implications of the participants' descriptions about the engagement of parents reflect Epstein's (2001) dimensions of the school-family-community partnerships. There are six types of involvement of schools, families, and communities. 1. Support for parenting including parenting skills and supporting understanding of child development. 2. Communication and establishment of lines of communication channels between home and school. 3. Volunteering in classrooms. 4. Home learning activities. 5. Shared decision making by families and schools, including the setting of goals for students and priorities for schools. 6. Collaborating with the community to coordinate services for families (Epstein, 2004). The codes "On the Same Page", "A Closer Relationship", and "Learning and Surviving" describe interactions between parents and teachers similar to those in Epstein's framework. The findings of this study align with current research

that finds school-family-community partnerships compensate for some of the stressful negative student factors that the participants described as preventing students from learning. These types of partnerships have also been found to support academic achievement and social competence in African American children (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010).

If it is true that the “Entity of Head Start” is building school-family-community partnerships through its’ processes, it would appear this is happening in an insular fashion. The partnerships and processes do not seem to move beyond the Head Start program though the participants expressed hopes that they would. In addressing the literacy development of students living in poverty, the implications of this study are that K - 5 schools could move towards a more culturally relevant approach to working with families by creating the conditions for school-family-community partnerships. These collaborations could include teachers conducting home visits, shared decision making by families and schools, and engagement of community resources in meeting the basic needs of the students and families. Engagement of schools at the micro, as well as the macro, level of literacy would help to support the protective factors Epstein (2001) describes as well as create the conditions for literacy as a benefit to students and parents.

In applying Bandura’s (1997) model of agency to the context of successful teaching it is important to consider not only the actions of the teacher but also how the teacher describes practices (O’Connor, 2001). In this study, as the participants described their approaches to difficult subjects they seemed to move back and forth between the first person, “I” and second person “you” in describing how to get the parent, child, and teacher “On the Same Page”. In using the “I” the participants seemed to fully embrace the perspectives they were describing. The implications of adopting the “you” in telling their stories implies that the participant could be generalizing about their experience, inviting the researcher with similar experiences into their

lifeworld, inviting empathy from the audience, or involving their identity in the telling of the story about their experiences (O'Connor, 2001). The process of reflection on how Head Start teachers describe how to be, to act, and to understand as a teacher contributes to understanding the perspectives of successful teachers as they enact their teaching practice.

This study was also valuable in exploring a methodology that considers the situational perspectives of teachers. As evidenced by the code, "Learning and Behavior", how teachers, especially, those of young children, discuss their practices can be highly dependent on the context and content of the discussion. By providing teachers the opportunity to respond to a theoretical construct, in this case culturally relevant teaching and then asking them to explain their responses to the construct, the knowledge gained was enhanced. Research structured in this way informed not only the understanding of the participant but also the understanding of the theoretical construct. There were several instances in which the participants in this study seemed reluctant to respond to items on the survey or responded as assimilationist to the survey item and then they readily addressed the same topics differently in the interviews. For example, when asked about communal responsibility in the culturally relevant survey item, "3F. I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track." Jasmine responded to this item that she "Strongly Disagreed" but in the interview discussed students learning from each other and in one instance engaging a student who was upset about his father in helping another student learn their colors. By presenting the two responses next to each other it is clearer that it is not the idea of communal responsibility that troubles Jasmine but possibly the idea of holding children responsible for each others' actions, especially in an early childhood classroom.

Limitations

As with any social science research, this study embodied limits to its reliability and validity. Due to the integrated methods utilized in answering the research questions, it faced limitations associated with quantitative and qualitative approaches. The general limits of the methodology included the application of the findings beyond the study sample and the value of quantitative instruments towards their application to the study methodology as described in chapter three. The influence of researcher bias on the design and implementation of the study was also a threat to its credibility or trustworthiness.

The quantitative limitations included the relative value of the emergent literacy screening in identifying successful teachers. This step in the methodology was not fully realized due to the small sample size (see chapter four). It is not known if the methods of calculating success were effective. The limitations of using the Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs (CRTB) survey included the inherent biases of survey research including self report as a potentially unreliable form of data collection. However, the limitations of self report were qualified through triangulation of the participants' beliefs with the survey and the two rounds of interviews.

Limitations associated with qualitative research were also present in the attempt to create a trustworthy study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The concerns associated with this type of research include credibility or truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality (Tuckett, 2005). Part of the credibility of this study rests on its' limited ability to identify successful teachers for purposeful sampling. Because of the limited number of participants that agreed to be interviewed this step in the methodology was not fully utilized. Credibility or truth value is also dependent on the researcher's ability to follow the participants into their stories in order to discover their truth. This is highly dependent on the skill of the researcher and in this study combined with the steps

taken to ensure rigor. The researcher may have missed cues of the participants that would have enabled a deeper understanding of the lifeworld of the participant. Processes included in the methodology to address issues of rigor included constant comparison, member checking, and triangulation. The peer reviewer served as a method of audit and check for researcher bias in interpreting data. The limitation of Bandara's model of reciprocal causation (1997), as a theoretical guide, applied to the design and interpretation of the study methodology may have led to bias in the collection and interpretation of the data. The risk to consistency was addressed by triangulation and the utilization of a peer reviewer. Thick descriptions were elicited from the participants combined with follow-up interviews and member checking to address this limitation. An inherent limitation of the qualitative interviews in educational research is that a researcher can't be sure if teachers' descriptions reflected what they actually do in their classrooms (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

The potential for researcher bias was a concern in the study. The researcher has deep practical experience in the topic studied, emergent literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty, which could have led to bias in collection and interpretation of data. The differentness that is valuable in supporting a sense of neutrality in qualitative research (Enosh, Ben-Ari, & Buchbinder, 2008) is largely missing in this study. Shared mutual experiences of the participants and the researcher could prevent the researcher from hearing the language of the participants in an unbiased manner. Neutrality was addressed through the drafting of memorandum to the research methodologist, principal investigator, and the peer reviewer after each step in the analysis of the qualitative data. There were pre-existing relationships between the researcher and the participants that could lead to biased collection and interpretation of data and difficulties in the process of reflexivity. This limitation was addressed

through the application of caring reflexivity to the design and implementation of the study (Malone, 2003; Rallis & Rossman, 2012). The limits described could lead to a misinterpretation of data that could cause this study to be less than trustworthy.

Future Research

The findings of this study suggest three areas for fruitful research in understanding the successful practices of teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. First, the value, process, and development of school-family-community partnerships towards emergent literacy development is an area that can be studied from multiple perspectives. Second, the effects of home visits on the formation of teachers' identities has not been studied and may be of interest from a cultural perspective. Third, the application of a sequential explanatory methodology to the study of successful teachers' practices is an area of research that could provide more accurate knowledge of teacher agency. The strong connections that participants described in their relationships with parents may be unique to working with students living in poverty. The importance of these relationships to the participants and their successful practice would not have been discovered if the methodology had ended with the implementation of the CRTB survey.

At the inception of this study it was expected that successful emergent literacy teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty would describe emergent literacy practices that were exemplary in some way. Instead descriptions of literacy practices seemed uniform and unremarkable. It was interesting to note that the participants described similar perspectives on emergent literacy development. Neither Pam nor Candice, as successful teachers as defined by the study, or Sara and Jasmine as successful within the context of Head Start described literacy activities that were particularly different from each other. The differences that

were described were primarily in how the teachers thought about their approaches to their teaching. Pam and Sara seemed to describe evidence of learning as when students gain information in one context and transfer it to another context. Jasmine and Candice described evidence of learning as engagement and performance in activities related to emergent literacy. The participants seemed to describe their literacy practices almost out of hand, as simply what they do in the classroom. What the participants did want to talk about were relationships they had with parents and the ways in which they addressed student factors that affected learning. In following the participants into their stories future research should address how successful teachers of students living in poverty consider relationships with parents, families, and communities.

The data collected seemed to exhibit three patterns of communication by the participants that become evident through a meta-analysis of the participants' language. The teachers interviewed seemed to utilize two forms of communication in describing their experiences that warrant further research. The first is the use and non-use of teacher professional language or "edspeak" (Ravitch, 2007). The participants used a number of terms that have particular meaning to teachers in general and Head Start teachers specifically. Some of these terms included "active learning", "individualize", "small-group", and "circle time". These terms were used liberally by the participants during the interviews. This use of professional terms was combined with the use of colloquialisms and catch phrases to communicate about their experiences. For example, a participant might use the euphemism, "a lot going on" to describe the stress caused to parents by the challenges of poverty such as providing their family food and clothing along with the stress of living in neighborhoods where violence and drug use are present. The participants seemed to demonstrate a pattern of using colloquialisms and catch phrases when describing experiences

with parents and students that occurred or had to do with the world outside of the school. This was especially present in descriptions of the effects of poverty. This imprecise pattern of communication provided a challenge to understanding the content and purpose of language used in the interviews. The aspect of these teachers' practice that employed imprecise language seemed to have to do with the parts of Head Start teachers' experience that encompassed the "social work on the side" associated with working within the context of Head Start with families living in poverty. A trained social worker, describing the same conditions and experiences of the participants, may employ a body of language that more accurately reflected the participants' perspective. Research that considered early childhood teachers language in reference to their teaching and learning could help to inform understanding of how teachers view them self and their practices.

As described in the code, "On the Same Page: The Parent-Child-Teacher Communication Triad" the participants demonstrated throughout the interviews a process of taking on the perspectives of others in their descriptions. The teachers interviewed would occasionally adopt a different voice or first person tense to describe perspectives of students, parents, themselves, or others using dialogue. This approach seemed to allow for the inclusion of multiple voices by the participants. The voices hint at the complex situational realities of these particular teachers as they work in their respective contexts. The language of the participants, when considered through a lens of discourse analysis (O'Connor, 2001), helped to inform their stories related to agency in developing the emergent literacy of urban African American boys. The participants seemed to express a complex way of thinking about their practice as the participants took on the voices of students, parents, and community members. The application of discourse analysis to

successful teachers' descriptions of their practices would benefit research on teacher agency and effectiveness.

It might be valuable in exploring the agency of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty to follow this study with a single - subject investigation of a successful teacher's practice. Much of the interpretive knowledge gained from this study rests on descriptions of emergent literacy teacher practice. In following a single participant as they develop the emergent literacy of students and families the field could gain a deeper understanding of the application of beliefs to practice (Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, & Ostrosky, 2009). As was explored in this study, the participants' beliefs about boys differed but their practices were very similar. A single subject approach would explore the challenges of interpreting the application of teacher practice to their effectiveness (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Future research should consider the application of the process of sequential explanatory mixed methods to better understand the practice of successful teachers. While the current educational reform movement seems to be moving in the direction of calculating the value-added by teachers based on student assessment data (Hancock, 2011) it is well worth considering how highly successful teacher differ in their practice. The participants in this study described the value of relationships with parents as one of the most important aspects of their agency. However, this aspect of teaching practice was not considered to be an important part of culturally relevant teaching beliefs in the survey. The implication of this is for a broadening of the definition of culturally relevant teaching and teaching practices on successful teaching of urban students living in poverty.

Summary

The role of culturally relevant beliefs of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty was integral to their practices. These beliefs were expressed through the CRTB survey and in rich and detailed fashion through two rounds of interviews. The most influential aspect of the participants' practices, engagement with parents, was hardly considered in the CRTB survey. This study explored a methodological step in the study of successful teaching through the exploration of the application of sequential explanatory integrated methods to the context of teacher agency. In applying quantitative methods to the task of identifying a purposeful sample of successful teachers and then utilizing qualitative methods to explore the context of teacher agency, this study offers an open-ended approach to uncovering how successful teachers view their practices.

The value of this inquiry into the context of agency of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty is found in the discovery of the participants' practice considered through a lens of success. The views of the participants concerning their culturally relevant teaching beliefs were similar. The primary differences were found in teachers' interpretation of learning and behavior.

The work of these Head Start teachers takes place in the context of sometimes conflicting cultural norms between the home and school. The building of strong relationships with parents in which communication is effective, where parents feel valued, and where students' needs in and out of the classroom are met was the primary concern of the participants. The participants described how their close relationships with parents worked to create opportunities for them to influence the student factors that can prevent engagement by students. They also described how these relationships supported opportunities for parents to engage with the dominant culture of the

school and to become involved in school-family-community partnerships, at least while involved with Head Start. The nature of these relationships seemed to offer benefits for parents, students, and teachers. As the participants described their practices, their professional identities permeated their descriptions. The salient aspects of these depictions of teachers' and parents' relationships were made possible through the crossing of the cultural border from the classroom to the home in order to form the bonds with parents that were central to their agency.

Head Start teachers in this study described their effective practices related to literacy at the micro and macro levels. They described development of emergent literacy skills through a range of child directed and teacher directed activities and through their relationships with students and parents. This study contributes to the field of early childhood literacy research through its consideration of the practices of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' of urban African American boys living in poverty. In asking the participants to describe what they do that makes them successful, they led the inquiry down a path that had more to do with acting with acceptance and insistence with students and parents than with specific emergent literacy activities or strategies. In locating success and agency in the relationships between parents and teachers and through communication within the triad of students, parents, and teachers, the participants tell a story that has rich implications for understanding the perspectives of successful teachers. The findings of this study seem to suggest that a broadening of the interpretation of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers' practices, beyond the simple goals of effective literacy instruction, would be a valuable step in understanding Head Start teacher agency in the context of urban African American boys living in poverty.

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APPENDICES

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: SUCCESSFUL EMERGENT LITERACY HEAD START TEACHERS OF POOR, URBAN, AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS

VCU IRB NO.:

SPONSOR: Dr. Michael Davis

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study staff to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to learn about Head Start teachers' culturally relevant teaching beliefs and their classroom practices.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a Head Start teacher.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

In this study you will be asked to complete an online survey of your culturally relevant teaching beliefs. Completing the survey will take approximately 15 minutes. After completing the survey you will be asked if you are willing to be contacted for an interview about the content of the survey. If you agree you will be asked to supply your contact information. If your survey responses indicate it would benefit the study for the researcher to meet with in person to conduct an interview you will be contacted by an independent party to arrange for the meeting.

If you decide to meet with the researcher, you will meet in a location of your choosing to conduct the interview. In the first interview, you will be asked to talk about how you became a Head Start teacher, your students' backgrounds, and your successful teaching practice. You will be asked to provide products from your classroom related to how you teach. In the second meeting you will be asked to talk about your culturally relevant beliefs and how they relate to your successful practice. You will also be asked to describe the products you have supplied to the researcher and their relevance to your teaching. The meetings will be digitally recorded so we are sure to understand you, but no names will be recorded on the recording device

Significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Sometimes talking about beliefs causes people to become upset. Several questions will ask about things that have happened in your classroom or your life. You do not have to talk about any subjects you do not want to talk about, and you may end the interviews at any time. If you become upset, the study staff will give you names of counselors to contact so you can get help in dealing with these issues.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS

You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but, the information we learn from people in this study may help us understand how best to teach the students you serve as a Head Start teacher.

You may possibly benefit from this study if you choose to be identified by name as a successful emergent literacy Head Start teacher.

COSTS

There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interviews and filling out the survey.

ALTERNATIVES

You may choose not to participate in this study

CONFIDENTIALITY

Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of surveys, interview notes and recordings, audiotapes of consultations and interviews, and data abstracted from previous Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening scores. Data will be collected only for research purposes. You will be identified by a six digit number unless you decide to meet in person with the researcher. Data, notes, and analysis will be secured on a password protected hard drive or kept in a locked drawer or cabinet. Your data will be identified by ID numbers and birthdates, not names, and stored separately from medical records in a locked research area. All personal identifying information will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted within one year of completion of the study. Other records such as the teacher products will be kept in a locked file cabinet for one year after the study ends and will be destroyed at that time. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data and safety monitoring plan is established.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by the sponsor of the research Dr. Michael Davis, or by Virginia Commonwealth University.

What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers without your consent.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us. But, if you tells us that someone has hurt or abused a child, or that you know of someone who may hurt someone else, the law says that we

have to let people in authority know so they can protect children.

The interview sessions will be audio recorded, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the session, you will be asked to use initials only so that no names are recorded. The tapes and the notes will be stored in a locked cabinet. After the information from the recording is typed up, the recordings will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

Your decision to participate, or not, in this study is in no way reflective of your feelings or commitment to RPS Head Start, the benefits of research, or your role as a teacher.

Your participation in this study may be stopped at any time by the study staff or the sponsor Dr. Michael Davis without your consent. The reasons might include:

- the study staff thinks it necessary for your health or safety;
- you have not followed study instructions;
- the sponsor has stopped the study; or
- administrative reasons require your withdrawal.

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

Michael Davis

Professor and Interim Dean

School of Education

Virginia Commonwealth University

804-828-3382

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research

Virginia Commonwealth University

800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113

P.O. Box 980568

Richmond, VA 23298

Telephone: 804-827-2157

You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm>.

CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.

Participant name printed

Participant signature

Date

Name of Parent or Legal Guardian

(Printed)

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent

Discussion / Witness ³

(Printed)

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent

Date

Discussion / Witness

principal investigator Signature (if different from above)

Date ⁴

APPENDIX B Consent Form II

Sample letter sent by peer reviewer to participant after analysis of CRTB survey and PALS

data:

Dear [REDACTED] Early Head Start / Head Start Teacher,

You recently agreed to being contacted about participating in a study about successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban, African American boys. After review of your answers to a survey of your Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs and analysis of your previous Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening scores for African American boys the researcher determined that you would be a good person to talk to about what you do in your classroom. Previously, the researcher has not known who will be selected into the study; he has only described the process of selection. Now, if you choose to participate in the study, you will meet the researcher.

At this point, the researcher does not know who you are but, after reading this letter, you will know who he is. If you decide to participate the researcher will be supplied your contact information and he will set up an interview. There are some possible risks that you may be faced with if you choose to participate in this study. As a reminder, the researcher does not know who you are and if you choose not to participate, will never know who you are.

Description of risks:

The researcher, John M. Holland is a child development specialist in the Head Start organization

where you are employed. During the interview process he will continue to function in this role. You will still be considered an [REDACTED] Head Start employee.

While it is important that you feel that you can be forthright with Mr. Holland, at no time will he put aside his role as child development specialist. All study data will be anonymous and interview recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. However, it is possible that because of your previous relationship with Mr. Holland and the nature of the questions in your shared profession that you might say more than you mean to or that you may want to take back.

Your decision to participate, or not, in this study is in no way reflective of your feelings or commitment to [REDACTED] Head Start, Mr. Holland, or your role as a teacher. The intention of this study is to learn from you, an accomplished emergent literacy Head Start teacher, what you do in your classroom. This study will be publicly available. Mr. Holland is publicly connected with the local university and [REDACTED] Head Start. It is possible that a reader could deduce the location of this study. You should know that this is a qualitative study that will likely include some of your words in the final report. You will have the opportunity to read and comment on all transcripts as well as the authority to strike anything you say from the final report. If a family member, friend, or close colleague were to read the final report it is entirely possible they will recognize you in your stories and choice of words. This is a risk that should be understood before agreeing to your participation. Your actual name will not be used, nor will other specifically identifying information about your school, or students. However, after completion of this study, you may choose to include your actual name so that you can be recognized publicly as a successful teacher by family, friends, and colleagues. The goal of this study is to understand what you do in

your classroom that makes you successful...

Please take some time to consider this decision. It is important that you feel that you can participate in this research project without feelings of apprehension, coercion, or conflict. If you have no reservations about participating in this project please indicate so by replying to this email. Your contact information will then be forwarded to the researcher.

(If the participant agrees the contact email will be supplied to the interviewer and appointment time determined through email.)

APPENDIX C: Example of Interview Questions

Interview I Questions

The final contact from the researcher to arrange a meeting time and place will include a final opportunity to opt out of the interview. It will also include more specific description of the interview process including place and time.

The interview will consist of three to five interview questions with follow-up questions. Before each new question you will be asked if you would like to continue or keep going with the interview. If at any time you wish to discontinue your participation in the study you may do so.

The interview will be recorded using a digital audio device. This will be used for transcription.

After the study is complete this data will be destroyed. Establish rapport with participant by asking questions about topics which the researcher and participant share common knowledge, such as day-to-day activities involved with the researcher and participant's respective positions, the interview will commence in earnest.

Questions:

I am here to learn about what you do in your classroom. What should I know, as a child development specialist, about your classroom? (This is a strategy to fix my role in the participant's mind and an attempt to protect against their accidental sharing of information that they regret. At the same time this question up front will get at the heart of the matter, what these teachers do that makes them successful. Finally, this question provides a context for all of the other questions. It will relate to the final question)

II. How did you come to be a Head Start teacher? Can you tell me a story about how that

happened? Follow-ups:

- A. Relationship to community of students
- B. When did you know you wanted to teach Head Start? Is the story continuous or fate/divine inspiration? Ex. I always wanted to teach vs. I had this experience and then...

Follow-up with how did that story lead you to Head Start.

III. What does learning look like in your classroom? I have paper and markers if you would like to draw or diagram your answer.

- A. What is happening in your classroom when you are really teaching well?
- B. Tell me about your students.
- C. What is it like where they live?
- D. Have you ever visited their home?
- E. What do they know before they come to school?
- F. How do you understand or address your students' backgrounds in your teaching?
- G. Tell me about how you address the needs of your students?
- H. What are the boys in your classroom doing when they are learning?
- I. What does it feel like to be a boy in your class? What do you want it to feel like?

IV. Can you rate your ability to help your boys be successful on a scale of 1 - 10 of? Why?

Can you give me an example of what that looks like?

- 1. What would a point higher look like in your classroom?
- 2. What are you doing on great day, on a day when you are performing maybe two points higher?
- 3. What about a point lower?
- 4. What is it like on a day when you are less effective? (Follow with boys?)

5. How would you rate today/yesterday? Why?

v. What would you tell a new teacher who was coming to teach next door to you about being successful?

- A. What should a new teacher know about your students? Your boys?
- B. What should a new teacher know about this community?
- C. What is the most important thing to do to be successful with the boys you teach?

APPENDIX D: Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs Survey

Culturally Relevant Teaching Beliefs
(Students culture is important to their success)

Culturally Assimilationist Teaching Beliefs
(Students must conform to dominant culture to be successful)

1. Knowledge

1.2. What I learn from my students is as important as what they learn from me.

1.5. One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts.

2. Students' race, ethnicity, and culture

2.2. The cultural background of my students plays an important part in my teaching. I bring their backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into my lesson planning.

2.3. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.

2.4. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences.

2.7. It is part of my responsibility to make connections between what happens in the world and who my students are.

1.1 It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students.

1.3. Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them.

1.4. I expect students to come to me with a particular set of prerequisites skills.

2.1. Knowing the race or ethnicity of historical figures does little to enhance the learning of students of color.

2.5. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.

2.6. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children.

3. Social relations in and beyond the classroom

3.2. Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well.

3.3. One student's success is success for the whole class, and one student's failure is failure for us all.

3.5. I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track.

3.9. I expect my students to be responsible for one another.

3.10. My underlying reason for using peer-learning strategies is to prepare my students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding.

3.1. Every year some students can be expected not to be a good match for me; they may, however, succeed with someone else who better meets their needs.

3.4. Some children I just cannot seem to connect with.

3.6. I encourage students to work independently more often than I ask them to work together.

3.7. The reason I use some form of peer learning in the classroom is because it's supposed to help lower achieving students learn the material better.

3.8. In general, it is more important for my students to be engaged in independent learning than in peer learning situations.

3.11. I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom.

3.12. Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom.

4. Teaching as a profession

4.1. My purpose for teaching is to give something back to the community in the same way I was given an education.

4.3. I teach in an urban public school because I want to.

4.6. Teaching is where I belong—I know it and the students know it, too.

4.7. Teaching urban children in public schools are where I belong.

5. Teaching practice

5.1. Teaching is like an art; it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding.

5.3. Students' responses determine where I go with a lesson; I just cannot put a time limit on good teaching.

5.4. A good lesson is only tentative.

5.6. Sometimes I play the role of student and allow students to teach the class.

4.2. Teaching is like paying my dues to society. When I'm through paying my debt, I'll probably retire or change professions.

4.4. Some one's got to teach these youngsters in urban schools; it might as well be me.

4.5. If I had other training I would probably change careers.

4.8. My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves.

5.2. Kids will learn what they want to learn no matter what I do.

5.5. As long as I follow my lesson plans, I can pretty much predict the success or failure of my students.

5.7. With enough repetition, drill, and practice, students will attain a passing grade.

5.8. Students who fail usually do so because they don't try hard enough; likewise, students who succeed do so because they put forth the effort.

5.9. Some students, no matter what I do, will inevitably fail.

6. Students' strengths and needs

6.1. The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons.

6.2. Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences.

6.3. Every student I encounter is successful at something.

6.4. Children basically learn in the same way.

6.5. Every child that comes to me, no matter how poor, is brilliant.

6.6. I work with some of the most important people in the world, my students.

APPENDIX E: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

palsTM Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

PreK
Fall/Spring Child Summary Sheet

Child's Name (First & Last) _____

Fall Assessment Date: _____ Spring Assessment Date: _____

► **Section I: Name Writing** (Use pages 5 and 6)

► **Section II: Alphabet Knowledge**
Part A: Upper-Case Alphabet Recognition

Fall

M	G	S	I
B	X	L	Q
H	W	T	R
J	C	O	V
P	F	D	U
A	Y	N	Z
K	E		

Spring

M	G	S	I
B	X	L	Q
H	W	T	R
J	C	O	V
P	F	D	U
A	Y	N	Z
K	E		

Upper-Case Score: (26 possible)

Upper-Case Score: (26 possible)

General Observations and Comments

Part B: Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition (administer only if 16 or more correct on Upper-Case Alphabet Recognition)

Fall

s	g	m	i
b	r	l	f
h	w	t	q
j	c	o	v
p	x	d	u
a	y	n	z
k	e		

Spring

s	g	m	i
b	r	l	f
h	w	t	q
j	c	o	v
p	x	d	u
a	y	n	z
k	e		

Lower-Case Score: (26 possible)

Lower-Case Score: (26 possible)

General Observations and Comments

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

Part B: Letter Sounds (administer only if 9 or more correct on Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition)

Fall

B	S	R	F	W
T	O	J	A	H
K	Sh	V	I	P
Z	L	C	Th	U
E	D	Y	G	N
Ch				

Spring

B	S	R	F	W
T	O	J	A	H
K	Sh	V	I	P
Z	L	C	Th	U
E	D	Y	G	N
Ch				

Letter Sounds Score: (26 possible)

Letter Sounds Score: (26 possible)

General Observations and Comments

► Section III: Beginning Sound Awareness

Fall

Beginning Sound: /M/		/S/		/B/	
Practice Items: man		sock		bag	
		sink			
1. _____ milk	6. _____ sick				
2. _____ ball	7. _____ meat				
3. _____ six	8. _____ bear				
4. _____ bird	9. _____ mop				
5. _____ map	10. _____ sad				

Spring

Beginning Sound: /M/		/S/		/B/	
Practice Items: man		sock		bag	
		sink			
1. _____ milk	6. _____ sick				
2. _____ ball	7. _____ meat				
3. _____ six	8. _____ bear				
4. _____ bird	9. _____ mop				
5. _____ map	10. _____ sad				

Beginning Sound Score: (10 possible)

Beginning Sound Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

► Section IV: Print and Word Awareness

Fall

+/-

- 1. points to the words in the title
- 2. points to **each** of the three words in the title
- 3. points to the word *Hey*
- 4. points to both words, *Diddle* and *Diddle*
- 5. points to word *The*
- 6. left to right directionality
- 7. moves finger along line of print
- 8. identifies either letter, *A* or *O*
- 9. each printed word matched 1-to-1 with each spoken word in order
- 10. points to white space between *The* and *End*

Spring

+/-

- 1. points to the words in the title
- 2. points to **each** of the three words in the title
- 3. points to the word *Hey*
- 4. points to both words, *Diddle* and *Diddle*
- 5. points to word *The*
- 6. left to right directionality
- 7. moves finger along line of print
- 8. identifies either letter, *A* or *O*
- 9. each printed word matched 1-to-1 with each spoken word in order
- 10. points to white space between *The* and *End*

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments

► Section V: Rhyme Awareness

Fall

+/-

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. mop | top | bike | can |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. sled | kite | bed | fruit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. bee | flag | tree | cup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. cake | bell | fruit | snake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. moon | spoon | cat | sock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. fox | wall | rain | box |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. man | book | can | pig |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. ring | swing | bed | mop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. clock | road | pen | sock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. rain | bell | train | box |

Spring

+/-

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. mop | top | bike | can |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. sled | kite | bed | fruit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. bee | flag | tree | cup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. cake | bell | fruit | snake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. moon | spoon | cat | sock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. fox | wall | rain | box |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. man | book | can | pig |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. ring | swing | bed | mop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. clock | road | pen | sock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. rain | bell | train | box |

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

► Section IV: Print and Word Awareness

Fall

+/-

- ___ 1. points to the words in the title
- ___ 2. points to **each** of the three words in the title
- ___ 3. points to the word *Hey*
- ___ 4. points to both words, *Diddle* and *Diddle*
- ___ 5. points to word *The*
- ___ 6. left to right directionality
- ___ 7. moves finger along line of print
- ___ 8. identifies either letter, *A* or *O*
- ___ 9. each printed word matched 1-to-1 with each spoken word in order
- ___ 10. points to white space between *The* and *End*

Spring

+/-

- ___ 1. points to the words in the title
- ___ 2. points to **each** of the three words in the title
- ___ 3. points to the word *Hey*
- ___ 4. points to both words, *Diddle* and *Diddle*
- ___ 5. points to word *The*
- ___ 6. left to right directionality
- ___ 7. moves finger along line of print
- ___ 8. identifies either letter, *A* or *O*
- ___ 9. each printed word matched 1-to-1 with each spoken word in order
- ___ 10. points to white space between *The* and *End*

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Print and Word Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments

► Section V: Rhyme Awareness

Fall

+/-

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| ___ 1. mop | top | bike | can |
| ___ 2. sled | kite | bed | fruit |
| ___ 3. bee | flag | tree | cup |
| ___ 4. cake | bell | fruit | snake |
| ___ 5. moon | spoon | cat | sock |
| ___ 6. fox | wall | rain | box |
| ___ 7. man | book | can | pig |
| ___ 8. ring | swing | bed | mop |
| ___ 9. clock | road | pen | sock |
| ___ 10. rain | bell | train | box |

Spring

+/-

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| ___ 1. mop | top | bike | can |
| ___ 2. sled | kite | bed | fruit |
| ___ 3. bee | flag | tree | cup |
| ___ 4. cake | bell | fruit | snake |
| ___ 5. moon | spoon | cat | sock |
| ___ 6. fox | wall | rain | box |
| ___ 7. man | book | can | pig |
| ___ 8. ring | swing | bed | mop |
| ___ 9. clock | road | pen | sock |
| ___ 10. rain | bell | train | box |

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

Rhyme Awareness Score: (10 possible)

General Observations and Comments

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

► Section I: Fall Name Writing

Name Writing Score: (7 possible)

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5

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

► Section I: Spring Name Writing

Name Writing Score: (7 possible)

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 CURRY
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



Appendix F: Alphabet Knowledge Weighted Gain Effect Size Calculation for Participants with Three Years of PALS Scores

Small	>.20
Moderate	>.50
Large	>.80

Key:

ID	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	0.060942	0.130282	0.161722	0.213814	0.243662	0.273974	0.301318	0.397817
0.060942	21	5.9648	3.0882	0.0000	-0.3288	0.3590	1.0323	-0.1678	0.2514	-0.8017	0.2641
0.130282	25	6.9066	2.7885	0.3288	0.0000	0.7325	1.4521	0.1766	0.5756	-0.5159	0.6420
0.161722	22	4.9625	2.6222	-0.3590	-0.7325	0.0000	0.7487	-0.5717	-0.0680	-1.2165	-0.1114
0.213814	15	3.0645	2.5832	-1.0323	-1.4521	-0.7487	0.0000	-1.3206	-0.6956	-1.8738	-0.8912
Pam	22	6.4355	2.6518	0.1678	-0.1766	0.5717	1.3206	0.0000	0.4262	-0.6917	0.4775
0.273974	21	5.1646	3.4260	-0.2514	-0.5756	0.0680	0.6956	-0.4262	0.0000	-1.0119	-0.0255
0.301318	23	8.3977	3.1220	0.8017	0.5159	1.2165	1.8738	0.6917	1.0119	0.0000	1.1346
0.397817	18	5.2398	2.4639	-0.2641	-0.6420	0.1114	0.8912	-0.4775	0.0255	-1.1346	0.0000
0.413376	26	3.7122	2.8998	-0.7712	-1.1452	-0.4600	0.2380	-0.9974	-0.4720	-1.5916	-0.5724
0.423353	20	6.7411	2.7474	0.2719	-0.0611	0.6794	1.4134	0.1161	0.5191	-0.5743	0.5893
0.520045	26	3.8325	2.3141	-0.8114	-1.2263	-0.4693	0.3262	-1.0748	-0.4756	-1.7123	-0.6063
0.619104	10	4.4031	2.1160	-0.5721	-0.9832	-0.2329	0.5788	-0.8386	-0.2556	-1.4378	-0.3696
0.688557	25	3.3190	2.4165	-0.9865	-1.4033	-0.6680	0.1054	-1.2594	-0.6465	-1.8686	-0.8074
0.75615	27	3.7489	1.6682	-0.9465	-1.4149	-0.5771	0.3445	-1.2679	-0.5597	-1.9411	-0.7548
0.776108	25	6.7397	3.3498	0.2450	-0.0553	0.5990	1.2205	0.1021	0.4758	-0.5223	0.5096
0.836908	19	5.0555	2.4010	-0.3351	-0.7205	0.0378	0.8268	-0.5572	-0.0375	-1.2142	-0.0779
Candice	26	4.3900	3.0018	-0.5293	-0.8855	-0.2063	0.4755	-0.7338	-0.2476	-1.3379	-0.3110
0.921831	20	3.7342	3.2445	-0.7226	-1.0823	-0.4290	0.2313	-0.9389	-0.4393	-1.5022	-0.5330
0.939273	12	5.3163	2.8336	-0.2230	-0.5834	0.1352	0.8679	-0.4248	0.0485	-1.0477	0.0303
0.946782	23	7.8406	3.6419	0.5664	0.2958	0.9244	1.5001	0.4496	0.7736	-0.1679	0.8379

ID	0.413376	0.423353	0.520045	0.619104	0.688557	0.75615	0.776108	0.836908	0.897768	0.921831	0.939273	0.946762
0.060942	-0.16	-0.17	-0.36	-0.58	-0.40	-0.20	-0.63	-0.36	-0.87	-1.11	-0.47	-0.79
0.130262	-0.22	-0.23	-0.43	-0.66	-0.47	-0.26	-0.71	-0.43	-0.96	-1.21	-0.55	-0.88
0.161722	-0.55	-0.57	-0.79	-1.11	-0.83	-0.60	-1.12	-0.78	-1.48	-1.78	-0.97	-1.32
0.213814	0.04	0.03	-0.17	-0.42	-0.21	-0.01	-0.46	-0.18	-0.73	-1.02	-0.30	-0.64
Pam	-0.27	-0.28	-0.48	-0.71	-0.52	-0.32	-0.75	-0.48	-1.02	-1.26	-0.60	-0.93
0.273974	-0.38	-0.39	-0.60	-0.89	-0.64	-0.42	-0.92	-0.60	-1.24	-1.52	-0.76	-1.10
0.301318	-0.19	-0.20	-0.41	-0.66	-0.45	-0.24	-0.70	-0.41	-0.97	-1.24	-0.54	-0.88
0.397817	-0.55	-0.58	-0.81	-1.25	-0.86	-0.61	-1.19	-0.80	-1.65	-2.04	-1.06	-1.41
0.413376	0.00	-0.01	-0.21	-0.46	-0.25	-0.04	-0.50	-0.22	-0.74	-1.01	-0.34	-0.67
0.423353	0.01	0.00	-0.20	-0.45	-0.24	-0.03	-0.49	-0.21	-0.75	-1.03	-0.33	-0.67
0.520045	0.21	0.20	0.00	-0.24	-0.04	0.17	-0.28	-0.02	-0.50	-0.78	-0.12	-0.46
0.619104	0.46	0.45	0.24	0.00	0.21	0.41	-0.05	0.22	-0.29	-0.68	0.14	-0.24
0.688557	0.25	0.24	0.04	-0.21	0.00	0.21	-0.25	0.02	-0.47	-0.76	-0.09	-0.42
0.75615	0.04	0.03	-0.17	-0.41	-0.21	0.00	-0.45	-0.18	-0.69	-0.96	-0.30	-0.63
0.776108	0.50	0.49	0.28	0.05	0.25	0.45	0.00	0.26	-0.20	-0.51	0.17	-0.18
0.836908	0.22	0.21	0.02	-0.22	-0.02	0.18	-0.26	0.00	-0.47	-0.75	-0.10	-0.43
Candice	0.74	0.75	0.50	0.29	0.47	0.69	0.20	0.47	0.00	-0.40	0.43	-0.01
0.921831	1.01	1.03	0.78	0.68	0.76	0.96	0.51	0.75	0.40	0.00	0.79	0.32
0.939273	0.34	0.33	0.12	-0.14	0.09	0.30	-0.17	0.10	-0.43	-0.79	0.00	-0.36
0.946762	0.67	0.67	0.46	0.24	0.42	0.63	0.18	0.43	0.01	-0.32	0.36	0.00

Appendix G: Print and Phonological Awareness Weighted Gain Effect Size Calculation for Participants with Three Years of PALS Scores

Small	>.20
Moderate	>.50
Large	>.80

Key:

ID	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	0.060942	0.130282	0.161722	0.213614	0.245662	0.275974	0.301318	0.307617
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0.130282	25	6.9088	2.7665	0.3288	0.0000	0.7325	1.4521	0.1766	0.5756	-0.5159	0.6420
0.161722	22	4.9625	2.6222	-0.3590	-0.7325	0.0000	0.7487	-0.5717	-0.0680	-1.2165	-0.1114
0.213614	15	5.0645	2.5652	-1.0323	-1.4521	-0.7487	0.0000	-1.3206	-0.6956	-1.8738	-0.8912
Pam	22	6.4355	2.6518	0.1678	-0.1766	0.5717	1.3206	0.0000	0.4262	-0.6917	0.4775
0.275974	21	5.1648	3.4260	-0.2514	-0.5756	0.0680	0.6956	-0.4262	0.0000	-1.0119	-0.0255
0.301318	23	8.3977	3.1220	0.8017	0.5159	1.2165	1.8738	0.6917	1.0119	0.0000	1.1346
0.307617	18	5.2398	2.4639	-0.2641	-0.6420	0.1114	0.8912	-0.4775	0.0255	-1.1346	0.0000
0.413376	28	3.7122	2.8998	-0.7712	-1.1452	-0.4600	0.2380	-0.9974	-0.4720	-1.5916	-0.5724
0.423353	20	6.7411	2.7474	0.2719	-0.0611	0.6794	1.4134	0.1161	0.5191	-0.5743	0.5893
0.520045	26	3.8325	2.3141	-0.8114	-1.2263	-0.4693	0.3262	-1.0748	-0.4756	-1.7123	-0.6063
0.619104	10	4.4031	2.1160	-0.5721	-0.9832	-0.2329	0.5788	-0.8386	-0.2556	-1.4378	-0.3696
0.888557	25	3.3190	2.4165	-0.9865	-1.4033	-0.6680	0.1054	-1.2594	-0.6465	-1.8686	-0.8074
0.75615	27	3.7489	1.6662	-0.9465	-1.4149	-0.5771	0.3445	-1.2679	-0.5597	-1.9411	-0.7548
0.778108	25	6.7397	3.3498	0.2450	-0.0553	0.5990	1.2205	0.1021	0.4768	-0.5223	0.5096
0.836908	19	5.0555	2.4010	-0.3351	-0.7205	0.0378	0.8268	-0.5572	-0.0375	-1.2142	-0.0779
Candee	28	4.3900	3.0018	-0.5293	-0.8855	-0.2063	0.4755	-0.7338	-0.2476	-1.3379	-0.3110
0.921631	20	3.7342	3.2445	-0.7226	-1.0823	-0.4290	0.2313	-0.9389	-0.4393	-1.5022	-0.5330
0.939273	12	5.3163	2.8336	-0.2230	-0.5834	0.1352	0.8679	-0.4248	0.0485	-1.0477	0.0303
0.946782	23	7.8408	3.8419	0.5664	0.2858	0.9244	1.5001	0.4486	0.7736	-0.1679	0.6379

ID	0.413376	0.423353	0.520045	0.819104	0.888557	0.75815	0.776108	0.836008	Candice	0.921831	0.939273	0.946782
0.060942	0.7712	-0.2719	0.8114	0.5721	0.9865	0.9465	-0.2450	0.3351	0.5293	0.7226	0.2230	-0.5664
0.130282	1.1452	0.0611	1.2263	0.9832	1.4933	1.4149	0.0553	0.7205	0.8855	1.0823	0.5834	-0.2958
0.161722	0.4600	-0.6794	0.4693	0.2329	0.6680	0.5771	-0.5990	-0.0378	0.2063	0.4290	-0.1352	-0.9244
0.213814	-0.2380	-1.4134	-0.3262	-0.5788	-0.1054	-0.3445	-1.2205	-0.8268	-0.4755	-0.2313	-0.8679	-1.5001
Pam	0.9974	-0.1161	1.0748	0.8386	1.2594	1.2679	-0.1021	0.5572	0.7338	0.9389	0.4248	-0.4496
0.273974	0.4720	-0.5191	0.4756	0.2556	0.6465	0.5597	-0.4758	0.0375	0.2476	0.4393	-0.0485	-0.7736
0.301318	1.5916	0.5743	1.7123	1.4378	1.8686	1.9411	0.5223	1.2142	1.3379	1.5022	1.0477	0.1679
0.397817	0.5724	-0.5893	0.6063	0.3696	0.8074	0.7548	-0.5096	0.0779	0.3110	0.5330	-0.0303	-0.8379
0.413376	0.0000	-1.0924	-0.0468	-0.2619	0.1600	-0.0159	-0.9873	-0.5086	-0.2342	-0.0074	-0.5723	-1.2898
0.423353	1.0924	0.0000	1.1846	0.9448	1.3632	1.3965	0.0005	0.6695	0.8304	1.0262	0.5295	-0.3456
0.520045	0.0468	-1.1846	0.0000	-0.2594	0.2215	0.0424	-1.0340	-0.5322	-0.2121	0.0365	-0.6136	-1.3599
0.819104	0.2619	-0.9448	0.2594	0.0000	0.4774	0.3749	-0.7856	-0.2927	0.0048	0.2364	-0.3777	-1.0836
0.888557	-0.1500	-1.3632	-0.2215	-0.4774	0.0000	-0.2126	-1.1953	-0.7375	-0.4001	-0.1510	-0.8037	-1.5073
0.75815	0.0159	-1.3965	-0.0424	-0.3749	0.2126	0.0000	-1.1668	-0.6678	-0.2706	0.0061	-0.7722	-1.5162
0.776108	0.9873	-0.0005	1.0340	0.7856	1.1953	1.1668	0.0000	0.5784	0.7545	0.9307	0.4679	-0.3220
0.836008	0.5086	-0.6695	0.5322	0.2927	0.7375	0.6678	-0.5784	0.0000	0.2461	0.4735	-0.1047	-0.9075
Candice	0.2342	-0.8304	0.2121	-0.0048	0.4001	0.2706	-0.7545	-0.2461	0.0000	0.2157	-0.3224	-1.0622
0.921831	0.0074	-1.0262	-0.0365	-0.2364	0.1510	-0.0061	-0.9307	-0.4735	-0.2157	0.0000	-0.5271	-1.2142
0.939273	0.5723	-0.5295	0.6136	0.3777	0.8037	0.7722	-0.4579	0.1047	0.3224	0.5271	0.0000	-0.7660
0.946782	1.2898	0.3456	1.3599	1.0836	1.5073	1.5162	0.3220	0.8075	1.0622	1.2142	0.7660	0.0000

Appendix H: Survey Items within the Knowledge Dimension of the CRTB by Participant Response (n=20)

	Knowledge	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
1A	It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students.	0 (0%)	18 (90%)	2 (10%)
1B	What I learn from my students is as important as what they learn from me.	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1C	Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them.	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)
1D	I expect students to come to me with a particular set of prerequisites skills.	11 (55%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)
1E	One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts.	16 (5%)	0 (0%)	4 (25%)

Appendix I: Item Level Analysis of the Students' Race, Ethnicity, and Culture Dimension of the CRTB (n=20)

Students' race, ethnicity, and culture Item	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
2A Knowing the race or ethnicity of historical figures does little to enhance the learning of students of color.	15 (75%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
2B The cultural background of my students plays an important part in my teaching. I bring their backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into my lesson planning.	16 (80%)	0 (0%)	4 (20%)
2C I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.	17 (85%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
2D Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences.	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)
2E I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.	5 (25%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)
2F I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children.	2 (25%)	14 (70%)	1 (5%)
2G It is part of my responsibility to make connections between what happens in the world and who my students are.	17 (85%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)

Appendix J: Survey Items within the Social Relations in and Beyond the Classroom Dimension of the CRTB (n=20)

Social relations in and beyond the classroom Items	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
3A Some students can be expected not to be a good match for me; they may, however, succeed with someone else who better meets their needs.	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
3B Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well.	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)
3C One student's success is success for the whole class, and one student's failure is failure for us all.	2 (10%)	14 (70%)	4 (20%)
3D Some children I just cannot seem to connect with.	14 (70%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)
3E I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track.	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	10 (50%)
3F I encourage students to work independently more often than I ask them to work together.	17 (85%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
3G The reason I use some form of peer learning in the classroom is because it's supposed to help lower achieving students learn the material better.	10 (50%)	3 (15%)	7 (35%)
3H In general, it is more important for my students to be engaged in independent learning than in peer learning situations.	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)
3I I expect my students to be responsible for one another.	7 (35%)	9 (45%)	4 (20%)
3J My underlying reason for using peer-learning strategies is to prepare my students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding.	15 (95%)	0 (0%)	5 (25%)

3K	I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom.	17 (85)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
3L	Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom.	0 (0%)	16 (80%)	4 (20%)

Appendix K: Survey Items within the Teaching as a Profession Dimension of the CRTB (n=20)

Teaching as a profession	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
4A My purpose for teaching is to give something back to the community in the same way I was given an education.	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
4B I teach in an urban public school because I want to.	17 (85%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
4C Teaching is like paying my dues to society. When I'm through paying my debt, I'll probably retire or change professions.	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	9 (45%)
4D Some one's got to teach these youngsters in urban schools; it might as well be me.	3 (15%)	3 (25%)	14 (70%)
4E If I had other training I would probably change careers.	2 (10%)	14 (70%)	4 (20%)
4F Teaching is where I belong-I know it and the students know it, too.	15 (75%)	0 (0%)	5 (25%)
4G Teaching urban children in public schools is where I belong.	14 (70%)	0 (0%)	6 (30%)
4H My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves.	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	4 (20%)

**Appendix L: Survey Items within the Teaching Practice Dimension of the CRTB
(n=20)**

Teaching practice Items	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
5A Teaching is like an art; it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding.	19 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
5B Students' responses determine where I go with a lesson; I just cannot put a time limit on good teaching.	15 (75%)	1 (0%)	4 (30%)
5C A good lesson is only tentative.	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	8 (40%)
5D As long as I follow my lesson plans, I can pretty much predict the success or failure of my students.	15 (75%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
5E Sometimes I play the role of student and allow students to teach the class.	3 (15%)	11 (55%)	6 (30%)
5F With enough repetition, drill, and practice, students will attain a passing grade.	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	8 (40%)
5G Students who fail usually do so because they don't try hard enough; likewise, students who succeed do so because they put forth the effort.	0 (0%)	15 (75%)	3 (15%)
5H Some students, no matter what I do, will inevitably fail.	14 (70%)	1 (5%)	5 (20%)

Appendix M: Survey Items within the Students' Strengths and Needs Dimension of the CRTB (n=20)

Students' strengths and needs	Culturally Relevant	Assimilationist	Undecided or Not Answered
6A The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons.	18 (90%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
6B Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences.	5 (25%)	8 (40%)	7 (35%)
6C Every student I encounter is successful at something.	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6D Children basically learn in the same way.	19 (95%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
6E Every child that comes to me, no matter how poor, is brilliant.	15 (75%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)
6F I work with some of the most important people in the world, my students.	17 (85%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)

Appendix N. Survey Items and Interview Participants' Responses

Domain Item

	Pam	Jasmine	Candice	Sara
1A	Agree	Agree	No Answer	Strongly Agree
	It is my job to disseminate knowledge to my students.			
1B	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
	What I learn from my students is as important as what they learn from me.			
1C	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree
	Students come to my class knowing very little about what I will teach them.			
1D	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
	I expect students to come to me with a particular set of prerequisites skills.			
1E	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
	One of the key elements that guide my teaching of content is that students have got to learn to think critically rather than just memorize facts.			
2A	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Undecided	Disagree
	Knowing the race or ethnicity of historical figures does little to enhance the learning of students of color.			
2B	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
	The cultural background of my students plays an important part in my teaching. I bring their backgrounds (race, culture, heritage, etc.) into my lesson planning.			
2C	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
	I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.			
2D	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer	Agree
	Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences.			

2E	I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2F	I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children.	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
2G	It is part of my responsibility to make connections between what happens in the world and who my students are.	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
3A	Every year some students can be expected not to be a good match for me; they may, however, succeed with someone else who better meets their needs.	Disagree	Disagree	No Answer	Strongly Disagree
3B	Testing is an individual assessment; however, test results of an individual reflect on the group's efforts toward helping the individual learn, as well.	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Undecided
3C	One student's success is success for the whole class, and one student's failure is failure for us all.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
3D	Some children I just cannot seem to connect with.	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
3E	I expect my students to be responsible for one another.	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Agree
3F	I expect my students to work as a team; if one person slacks off, it is others' responsibility to help this student get back on track.	No Answer	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Agree
3G	I encourage students to work independently more often than I ask them to work together.	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree

3H	The reason I use some form of peer learning in the classroom because it's supposed to help lower achieving students learn the material better.	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Agree
3I	In general, it is more important for my students to be engaged in independent learning than in peer learning situations.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
3J	My underlying reason for using peer-learning strategies is to prepare my students for collective thinking, growth, and understanding.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
3K	I hardly ever see or hear from parents of the children in my classroom.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
3L	Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
4A	My purpose for teaching is to give something back to the community in the same way I was given an education.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
4B	Teaching is like paying my dues to society. When I'm through paying my debt, I'll probably retire or change professions.	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Disagree
4C	I teach in an urban public school because I want to.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
4D	Some one's got to teach these youngsters in urban schools; it might as well be me.	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Agree
4E	If I had other training I would probably change careers.	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4F	Teaching is where I belong-I know it and the students know it, too.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
4G	Teaching urban children in public schools are where I belong.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
4H	My students need a good education so that they can move out of this community and have a better life for themselves.	(Not Answered)	(Not Answered)	Strongly Agree	Agree
5A	Teaching is like an art, it involves dramatizing from the concrete experience to the conceptual level of understanding.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
5B	Students' responses determine where I go with a lesson; I just cannot put a time limit on good teaching.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5C	A good lesson is only tentative.	Undecided	Undecided	Agree	Disagree
5D	As long as I follow my lesson plans, I can pretty much predict the success or failure of my students.	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5E	Sometimes I play the role of student and allow students to teach the class.	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
5F	With enough repetition, drill, and practice, students will attain a passing grade.	(Not Answered)	(Not Answered)	Strongly Disagree	Agree
5G	Students who fail usually do so because they don't try hard enough; likewise, students who succeed do so because they put forth the effort.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree

5H	Some students, no matter what I do, will inevitably fail.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
6A	The individual needs of the children are an important part of my planning effective lessons.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
6B	Excellence is a standard that exists independent of individual differences.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Agree
6D	Every student I encounter is successful at something.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
6E	Children basically learn in the same way.	(Not Answered)	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Strongly
6F	Every child that comes to me, no matter how poor, is brilliant.	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6G	I work with some of the most important people in the world, my students.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer

Appendix O: Second Round Interview Questions

Below are common themes expressed by all four teachers. It is proposed that the follow-up interview explore these themes as well as clarify specific puzzles that emerged from the survey and interviews.

- Parents' prior experience with school
 - Student needs before learning
 - Boys as more active than girls but not learning different than girls
 - Emotional development of boys
 - Student behavior as a measure of effectiveness
- 1) Parent/family involvement: Each of the teachers interviewed agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: Parents ought to be self motivated to help their child learn and to be actively involved in the classroom. Can you clarify why you might agree with this?
 - a) Why might a parent not be motivated to help their child learn?
 - b) Why might a parent be actively involved in the classroom?
 - 2) Have you ever found the need to talk about how children develop with the parents of the children you teach? Can you tell me about that? How do you explain how children develop to a parent?
 - 3) Have you ever helped a parent meet a basic need of a child you were teaching? How did that happen? Why do you think you needed to help that parent?
 - 4) Do all students learn from the same activities? Do you see any patterns of differences in effective lessons?
 - 5) What is your greatest challenge in developing your students' socially and emotionally? What are some of the ways you do that?
 - a) Does children's social and emotional development vary based on if the student is a boy or girl at all?

- b) Do you find you need to develop different skills in boys and girls?
- c) Have you noticed any patterns in how boys and girls experience stress, anger, or frustration?
- 6) Can you describe the emergent literacy skills students have the opportunity to practice in your class? Can you tell me the emergent literacy skills you teach?
- 7) One theme that emerged in the interviews was that teachers often described an effective day based on student behavior. When you think about the behavior in your classroom how is student behavior related to learning? Is positive behavior an indicator of student learning happening or is it a prerequisite to learning? Can there be learning without positive behavior?
- 8) I am going to read a scenario from the professional literature and I am going to ask you to respond to some questions. "When one of Ms. Second's students resisted standing and looking at the teacher (a part of the lining up procedure), she reminded, repeated, and referenced the possibility of a consequence by saying, "Everyone should stand up nice and tall and your eyes should be on me. Eyes on me. I would hate to move a clothespin." She was referring to her "stoplight" system in which a student's clothespin could be moved from green light (ready to learn) to yellow (caution) to red (loss of privileges or parent notification). When the student continued to resist the procedure, she moved the student's clothespin." (p. 4) (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, and Hambacher, 2008).
- a) What do you think the teacher was thinking during this interaction?
- b) What do you think the student who experienced this was thinking when their clothespin was moved?
- c) What do you think the other students thought about this interaction?

- d) What if this type of interaction continued to occur on a daily basis, what do you think the teacher would do then?
- 9) I wonder if we could talk more specifically about the types of learning situations that happen during the day to see if there might be a pattern in when student engagement is highest and lowest.
- a) When are students most engaged in learning?
 - b) When do you have the most behavior problems?
 - c) What would you say is the most effective way to teach your students; one-on-one, small groups, or whole groups? Why?
- 10) Why might someone consider student behavior an indicator of successful teaching in Head Start?

VITA

John M. Holland was born May 25th, 1971 in Prince George County, Maryland. He is a United States citizen who attended Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). He earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Sculpture 1995 from VCU, a Master of Teaching in 1997 from VCU, and a Doctorate of the Philosophy of Education in Educational Leadership in 2012 where he received the Seyfarth Family Scholarship in 2009 and 2010. As a National Board Certified Teacher, Early Childhood Generalist, he serves as a Head Start Lead Teacher who teaches 3-year-old children and supervises the child development service area of an Early Head Start program serving 60 at risk children age birth to 3-years-old. He is coauthor of the book, *Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools--Now and in the Future* (2010). He was a panelist for the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education Charles W. Hunt Lecture, moderated by Jon Snyder, with James Comer titled: *How Children Learn and Develop: What Ed Schools Should Teach* (February, 2011). John is a noted education blogger who has contributed articles to EdWeek, Pew Charitable Trusts, New America Foundation, and PBS Learning Matters Blog. He has presented at the Virginia Head Start Association Conference, the Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Virginia Association of Colleges of Teacher Educators Conference. He is a National Board Certification coach and has worked as mentor, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor in public schools for 15 years. His research interests include Early Childhood Education, Policy, and Planning; Teaching Quality, Teacher Leadership, Teacher Preparation; and Learning Ecology.