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Effect of Vignette-Based Demonstration on Preschool Teachers' Awareness of Intentional Teaching

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Intentional Teaching

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MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, Oklahoma State University, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Early childhood programs enhance children's knowledge and skills when teachers intentionally engage with children during free play. Preschool teachers' ability to notice and capitalize on teachable moments has been questioned in the literature. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the efficacy of professional development designed to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play, and teachers' intentionality in responding to those opportunities. The study was grounded in Vygotsky's principles of socially constructed learning, including teachers adjusting their intentional interactions to accommodate the thinking of learners. Qualitative data were collected using reflective journals kept before and after the vignette-based professional development sessions and focus group responses by 11 preschool teachers in the Southwestern United States. Chi square analysis of qualitative findings revealed significant positive change in teacher intentionality for the themes of daily schedule, awareness, and scaffolding. Vignette-based professional development coupled with reflective journaling appears to be an effective method to increase teacher awareness of intentional teaching, which may positively influence the education of preschool children.

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Dedication

I am dedicating my dissertation to my family starting with my husband, Jairo Jose Soto, the one person who sacrificed the most during this process. The many nights he cooked dinner and cleaned the kitchen while I sat in the office reading and writing. Jairo always believed in me and supported me throughout my journey, but also in our journey of life. Jairo, I love you and thank you! To my parents, Glen and Jane Harvey, who have been my biggest fans my entire life and have cheered from the sidelines very loud and proud. Mom and Dad, I love you and thank you! To my three wonderful children, Jordan Marie, Lauren Elizabeth, and Hunter Glen, you all inspired me to become a better person, a better mother, and I love you with all of my heart. To Chase Hudson, thanks for all the supportive text messages throughout the process, and I want you to know that I love you just like my own. Lastly, to my sister Jan Jaree Harvey, you left us long before I started this process, but I know there were times when you were probably the reason I kept going. Being able to sit here today on my 28th wedding anniversary writing this dedication makes all the hard work and sacrifices worth it again. Thank you to my family with love and dedication. With love, Dr. Jill Marie Soto.

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Completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my family and my doctoral committee. First, I would like to thank my husband, Jairo, and my children, Jordan, Lauen, and Hunter, for you ongoing support, encouragement, and sacracfic during the time it took to complete this process. I want to thank my parents for the example you provided me of what hard work and perseverance look like.

I want give a very special thank you to my chair, Dr. Patricia Anderson, for always being supportive throughout the entire process. Dr. Anderson, during the process you have become a not only my mentor, but my friend. Every Saturday morning for the past two years you have been a constant in my life. We have laughed, I have cried, and you have always been there for me. Thank you seems so insignificant for the feelings I have for what you mean to me. Thank you my friend!

An enormous thank you to my amazing committee. Dr. Patricia Anderson, Dr. Beryl Watnick, and Dr. Chris Cale were supportive and committed to helping me complete this journey.

I also want to thank my community partner and the participants of my study who agreed to write reflective journals, attend focus groups, and participate in professional development sessions on their own time to improve themselves as early childhood teachers. Thank you to Matt Hubbard for your support during the study and for being my friend. A special thanks to Jana Cornelius for providing the professional development associated with my study. I also want to thank my son, Hunter for checking all of my mathematical calculations and answering my many math questions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The term *intentional teaching* is used to describe teachers' role to provide learning opportunities that meet the individual needs of children in their classroom (Nasser, Kidd, Burns, & Campbell, 2015). Teaching is complex and requires self-reflection, connecting theory to practice, and scaffolding children's learning (Linn & Jacobs, 2015). Effective early childhood teachers are able to notice and respond to the teachable moments presented by children (Hamre, Hatfield, Pianta, & Jamil, 2014). According to Vygotsky (1962), the ability of teachers to connect theory to practice requires complex skill and is why teaching is so difficult. According to Osmanoglu, Isikal, and Koc (2015), teachers need to be given opportunities to become aware of their own practice.

In this study, I addressed the problem of lack of teacher awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments. During child-centered play, children often must take the initiative to seek out teacher input (Booren, Downer, & Vitiello, 2012). Hedges and Cullen (2012) stated that teachers require an awareness and understanding of development, learning, and teaching to be intentional with young children. Pianta et al. (2014) found that children typically receive mediocre to low quality teacher and child interactions.

In this study, I looked at teachers' understanding of intentionality and their awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments during times when children are engaged in independent play. This chapter provides the background and conceptual framework for the study, key terms used in the study, and the possible

significance of the study findings. The study was unique because it may provide evidence that teachers' ability to become more aware of their intentional interactions with young children is a skill that can be taught.

Background

According to Hamre et al. (2014), children learn more when teachers intentionally interact with children while they are participating in learning. Kilderry (2015) found that intentional teaching is demonstrated in moments when teachers are purposeful and deliberate in interacting with young children. Fleer (2015) stated that the adult must be an active participant during children's play, rather than acting as an observer or supporter outside the play. Children's learning is increased when teachers take active and intentional roles during play. Further, Wood (2014) noted that children need planned and purposeful play.

Pianta et al. (2014) stated that the quality of teacher interactions with children could improve with increased professional development. Intentional teachers look for strategies to develop skills for young children (Leggett & Ford, 2013). Leggett and Ford (2016) also stated that teaching and learning is an active process and requires intentional teacher-child interactions. Vu, Han, and Buell (2015) stated that teachers working in early childhood classrooms might not know how to include play in the classroom. Professional development can be an effective strategy to increase teacher awareness and to ensure teachers are more purposeful and intentional in their work with young children. Teachers' lack of intentionality and lack of awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments was the problem addressed this study. I examined whether targeted

professional development could increase teachers' intentional interactions during children's independent play. The literature indicated a gap in connecting video footage as a professional development tool with efforts to improve intentional teaching practices.

Problem Statement

Intentional teaching requires purposeful and thoughtful interactions with young children. To be an intentional teacher is to act in a purposeful and meaningful way with an established end goal (Epstein, 2007, 2014). Kilderry (2015) said intentional teaching involves teachers interacting with young children in a purposeful and thoughtful way, and requires planning and engagement on the part of the teacher. Leggett and Ford (2013) stated that intentional teaching increased teachers' level of professionalism and increased teachers' ability to engage young children in learning. Leggett and Ford said that teachers' ability to guide, scaffold, support, and co-construct meaning with children increases children's learning. In this study, I sought to determine whether teacher awareness of intentionality could be increased through professional development opportunities.

Teachers who are effective at scaffolding and supporting young children influence child outcomes and enhance play experiences (Trawick-Smith, Swaminathan, & Liu, 2016). Bodrova, Germeroth, and Leong (2013) found that without intentional teacher support during independent play, children often did not improve skills and in some instances regressed. Cross and Conn-Powers (2014) stated that an intentional teacher must know child development theory, but also must connect theory to practices involved

in sharing content knowledge. Research indicated children need intentional interactions from adults to connect learning during play (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2013).

Lack of intentionality among teachers is evident in practice. At a recent National Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) conference, one participant stated that during ERS observations teachers often do not engage in meaningful interactions with young children ERS author, personal communication, April 12, 2016). In my own work, I have found that teachers in early childhood classrooms often monitor the classroom during independent play time, instead of interacting with young children. A teacher may be close to child-directed activities to monitor children, but only interacts with children if there is a problem to address. According to Booren et al. (2012), when teachers merely monitor children and do not interact with them for the purpose of teaching, it diminishes teachers' influence of children's learning.

Current findings suggested teachers are often present during child-directed activities, but their presence does not include intentional teaching interactions (Booren et al., 2012; Fleer, 2015). Teachers often miss children's requests for support in learning and miss opportunities to share subject knowledge in spontaneous teaching. Relatively little empirical research has focused on teachers' awareness of how they interact with young children (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014). According to one observation I made in a preschool classroom, a child held two triangle blocks in his hands in a way that made a square shape and said to the teacher, "Look what I made, teacher." The teacher had the opportunity to recognize the child's discovery and acknowledge the cognitive leap that two right triangles make a square. However, the teacher simply said, "Oh, that is nice,"

and moved on. Her response illustrates teachers' lack of intentionality and awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments, and may reflect a broader misunderstanding of a teacher's role during children's independent play.

According to Pianta et al. (2014), the lack of quality teacher-child interaction can be remedied through professional development interventions. Pianta et al. (2014) suggested a model of professional development that includes a balance of discussion coupled with child development theory. Pianta et al. (2014) suggested that teachers' skills can be improved through watching teacher-child interactions on video footage embedded in professional development workshops. Because teachers' lack of intentionality and lack of awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments was the problem addressed in the study, I explored whether targeted professional development based on video vignettes could increase teachers' intentional interactions during children's independent play.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of a plan designed to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and increase the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. I used a quasi-experimental design. The dependent variable was teachers' descriptions of their intentional teaching following a treatment comprising professional development with embedded video-based treatment experience (independent variable). Invited participants included all teachers of 3- to 5-year-old

children who registered for a professional development offering, which formed a purposeful sample.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Data collection occurred over a 2-week period. The participants wrote in logs during the work week prior to attending a Saturday 2-hour vignette-based professional development session. Participants again wrote in logs during the following work week and ended the second week of data collection by attending an additional Saturday 2-hour vignette-based professional development session. The participants participated in focus group discussions as part of each vignette-based professional development session. This data collection protocol was employed to seek answers to four research questions (RQs) that guided this mixed-methods study:

RQ1: Prior to vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children?

RQ2: As part of vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe intentionality as it is socially constructed during a vignette-based treatment?

RQ3: Following a vignette-based treatment, how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during children's independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children?

RQ4: Is there a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children and in follow-up discussions?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment.

Hₐ: There is a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment.

Vygotsky (1962) argued that the role of the teacher is to equip children with the tools and skills needed to learn and develop through intentional interactions between the teacher and the child. These research questions were grounded in Vygotsky's theoretical framework that teachers must adjust their intentional interactions to accommodate the thinking of learners.

Theoretical Foundation

Vygotsky (1962 argued that the complex relationship between learning and development indicates why teaching is so difficult. Vygotsky (as cited in Ugaste, 2013) suggested that both the teacher and child are involved in a reciprocal process of teaching and learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is more than the ability to think; it is a process of thinking about thinking. Vygotsky (1962) asserted that the role of the teacher is to provide children with the tools and skills needed to learn and develop so that they are better prepared for thinking. Teachers' intimate role in shaping children's thinking means teachers must constantly adjust their methods to accommodate learners faced with specific challenges. The teacher's role in scaffolding is to provide support to children so that they can be successful in completing the task (Engin, 2013). Learning is an active exchange of knowledge between the teacher and the child (Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) describes this accommodation challenge. The ZPD is defined as the distance between what the child can do alone and what the child can do working with a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD provides a framework for the teacher to determine which children can provide peer support to help other children complete the task (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher working with a child in his or her ZPD can provide intentional instruction by creating a learning environment that stretches the child's thinking through teacher interactions and by supporting children's interactions with their peers. Vygotsky (1978) criticized educational interventions focused on children's established thinking abilities instead of focusing on emerging functions and capabilities. Teacher instruction is used to increase knowledge in young children (Vygotsky, 1962) and requires intentional engagement by adults. Intentional teaching represents the means through which children's learning and knowledge are advanced.

Edwards and Cutter-Mackenzie (2013) suggested that teachers who intentionally support children's learning based on the framework of the ZPD increase children's ability to communicate with peers and adults because children are encouraged to cooperate with others. Interacting with children and supporting their peer interactions is difficult to accomplish in practice, and requires a more sophisticated understanding of development, learning, and teaching than teachers ordinarily possess (Hedges & Cullen, 2012). Teachers use both interactions and the classroom to create an environment that supports learning (Hamre et al., 2014). Cross and Conn-Powers (2013) noted that intentional teaching involves planning of goals and strategies so that teachers include both child

development and content knowledge to support children's learning in the various content areas. Effective early childhood teachers must be able to recognize cues about children's interests and level of understanding so they can interact with children appropriately (Hamre et al. 2014).

Nature of the Study

I employed a pretest-posttest mixed-methods design to test the ability of vignette-based professional development to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments and teachers' intentionality in responding to children's cues with supportive interactions. Nominal data were gathered in the form of teacher logs kept before and after the vignette-based treatment and of transcribed discussions conducted as part of two focus group sessions. Mixed data sources, such as quantitative data coupled with qualitative data, help researchers triangulate the analysis (Boudah, 2011). This use of qualitative data to answer research questions usually considered to require a quantitative design, such as those addressed in this study, was supported by Boudah (2011). According to Boudah (2011), chi-square analysis is a reasonable tool to compare the number of responses with two time periods when comparing nominal data. Linder et al. (2016) used a mixed-methods approach to determine the influence of professional development on early childhood practice.

Eleven teachers of children ages 3 to 5 years were asked to keep a daily log of their interactions with children during independent play for a period of 5 days. The teachers then participated in a professional development session during which they watched and discussed video vignettes of three different scenarios in which a teacher

demonstrated three different levels of self-awareness of teacher intentionality. I guided the social construction of the concept of intentionality in teaching during a focused group discussion prior to the participants using the video-vignette-embedded professional development as a shared experience; the video-vignette-embedded professional development session constituted the treatment phase of the study. Following the professional development session, teachers were asked to keep a log of their daily interactions with children during independent play for a period of 5 days. Teachers then met for another video-vignette-embedded professional development session followed by a focus group session to discuss their experiences and insights gained through the study activities.

I analyzed teachers' logged descriptions of their interactions before and after the treatment session, searching for emerging themes. Audio transcripts of the two focus group sessions were also analyzed for emergent themes. I used chi-square analysis to compare thematic trends before and after the treatment session to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. Vu et al. (2015) employed a similar method in their study of professional development, in which teachers were asked to reflect on their interactions with young children and how these interactions improved children's learning.

Data collected during focus groups was socially constructed within the group. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a researcher must be aware that the interactions within the group may influence the data collected. With this in mind, the teachers in this study were asked to keep personal logs reflecting their individual awareness of intentional teaching practices. Reflective journaling includes the teachers'

account of their actions, experiences, and beliefs regarding their practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and provides a counterpoint to the ideas socially constructed by the group.

Definitions

Intentional teaching: Acting with purpose and an end goal and with a specific plan to accomplish it (Epstein, 2014).

Scaffolding: A framework for teaching that enables the learner to become more knowledgeable regarding the amount of assistance needed to perform a task (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Scaffolding refers to the role of the teacher in a joint problem-solving activity with young children (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010).

Teacher-child interactions: Exchanges between teachers and children throughout the day that include both social and instructional interactions (Hamre et al., 2012).

Teachable moments: Unplanned opportunities in the classroom that provide teachers with a chance to extend children's learning (Epstein, 2014).

Teacher noticing: Teachers observing important features in a classroom environment that allow teachers to interpret classroom interactions with an appreciation of how this information can be applied to teaching (Osmanoglu et al., 2015).

Zone of proximal development (ZPD): The gap between the learner's actual development and the learner's potential development with assistance by a more abled peer (Engin, 2013).

Assumptions

An assumption of the study was that teachers accurately recorded their interactions with children in the reflection logs. Another assumption was teachers fully

participated in the discussion sessions. Because participation of teachers was voluntary, an assumption of truthfulness during the discussion sessions was reasonable. I also assumed that perceptions expressed in the discussions would be stable over time.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was teachers' ability to become more aware of their intentional interactions with young children. I used a pretest-posttest design to test the ability of video vignette-based professional development in intentional teaching to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments and teachers' intentionality in responding with supportive interactions. The study included 11 preschool teachers in a metropolitan city in the Southwestern United States who volunteered to participate in the focus group sessions and who agreed to keep logs of teacher-child interactions for two periods of 5 days each in addition to attending the video vignette-based treatment embedded in professional development. Because the focus of the study was on a small group of teachers, results may not be generalizable to the entire population of preschool teachers in the United States.

Limitations

The small sample size was a limitation of this study. The results represented the opinions and experiences of a small subset of the population of early childhood teachers. A small sample size is typical in qualitative research; Krueger and Casey (2000) suggested no more than 10 participants in qualitative research. Because this study included a mixed-methods design, the small number of participants appropriate to the qualitative portion also meant a very small sample size for the quantitative analysis.

Additional studies including larger samples are needed to confirm the generalizability of this study's results.

Another limitation of this study was its location in a single geographical region of the United States and in an urban area. Further study in other regions and in suburban and rural locations will add to the generalizability of findings. Further, I relied on teachers' ability to be self-reflective and to enact personal change based on professional development learning, both of which may vary from participant to participant. In addition, children enrolled in teachers' classes may have varied in their engagement in play, resulting in more or fewer opportunities for teachable moments, which may have affected study results. These limitations reflected the real-life nature of the study and were typical of the qualitative research approach.

My role as facilitator of the focus group sessions and presenter of the vignette-based videos made have resulted in bias, both from the viewpoint of participants who may have been careful to provide answers they believed I wanted to hear, and from my viewpoint as an early childhood professional concerned about quality teacher-child interactions. To mitigate both potentials for bias, I took care throughout the focus group sessions to remain neutral in my comments and to avoid betraying personal perspectives. I undertook the coding of themes that emerged from the data with similar attention to my biases. The use of a professional transcription service helped to reduce bias in reporting data. Qualitative researchers are cognizant of their perspectives and admit that human endeavors are vulnerable to unavoidable bias (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Significance

Findings may reveal that teachers can recognize intentionality in a video vignette treatment embedded in a professional development workshop and apply this information to recognizing and acting on teachable moments during children's play. Allen and Kelly (2015) demonstrated that there is a need to "improve the quality, continuity and consistency of professional practice for children from birth through 8" (p. 5). Findings from this study may have positive effects on teachers' engagement with children and with their learning during independent play, which may increase children's cognitive and social development. Findings may help administrators recognize intentional teaching and be more successful in supporting intentionality among staff.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of a plan designed to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and of the intentionality teachers demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. Vygotsky's (1962) ideas provided the foundation for this study addressing the role of the teacher in providing children with the tools and skills needed to learn and develop so they are better prepared for thinking. A key assumption of the study was that the teachers participating would be reflective in their written journals and willing to share during the focus group sessions. The small sample size limited the ability to generalize findings. The potential significance of the study includes the possibility of increased effectiveness of professional development for early childhood teachers, with resulting benefits for children. In Chapter 2, I review the relevant literature

to illustrate the importance of this study by showing the gaps in the literature and supporting the methodology of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of professional development including video vignettes to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. In this study, I addressed the problem of lack of teacher awareness of opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments. The literature review provides the foundation for the study. Chapter 2 includes the following: literature search strategy, theoretical framework, intentional teaching, teachable moments, teacher noticing, the teacher's role, independent play, reflective practice, professional development, and video-based professional development. According to White and Maycock (2012), the notion of a teachable moment stirs academic discussion and interest, but researchers have not addressed what constitutes a teachable moment empirically. This study addressed the gap in the literature connecting video footage as a professional development tool to improve intentional teaching practices.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review was based on scholarly database searches of peer-reviewed articles and journals from ProQuest, ERIC, Academic Search, Education Research, and SAGE full-text articles and journals. The keywords in the search were *teacher training*, *teachable moments*, *teacher child interactions*, *scaffolding*, *Vygotsky*, *intentional teaching*, *intentional teaching theory*, *teacher's role supporting children*, *professional development*, *reflective journaling*, *video training*, *video professional development*, and

intentionality. I also conducted a reference search on Google Scholar, which required use of the Walden document retrieval system to locate access to the most current literature on these topics.

Theoretical Foundation

Vygotsky (1962) argued that children construct their own knowledge, which is influenced by interactions with teachers and peers. Researchers have confirmed that teachers support children's learning through the coconstruction of knowledge (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2013; Thomas, Warren, & deVries, 2011). Vygotsky (1962) argued the role of the teacher is to equip children with the tools and skills needed to learn and develop, so instruction and learning play a role in the child's acquisition of the tools for thinking. Young children benefit from increased skills or knowledge from teacher interactions that are meaningful in play (Hedges & Cullen, 2005; Salmon, 2016). In this study, I explored the ability of teachers to become more aware of their intentional teaching in their work with young children during independent play episodes. Vygotsky argued the role of the teacher is to support children, allowing them to do more than they could do alone.

Learning involves meaning making and inquiry processes through active participation in learning experiences that enable learners to participate in the coconstruction of knowledge with the support of the teacher. Ugaste, Tuul, Niglas, and Nendorf (2014) claimed that both teachers and children are involved in the process of teaching and learning. The role of a more experienced teacher or another child of either similar skill level or more experienced skill is to scaffold a task so that the novice learner

experiences success (Vygotsky, 1978). An example would be zipping a jacket. The task of zipping a jacket is known by the teacher or more experienced child, who supports the less experienced child with learning the new skill.

The idea of the teacher scaffolding learning is explained through Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the area between the level of independence and the level a child can achieve with assistance. The ZPD is the gap between the learner's actual development and the learner's potential development with assistance by a more able peer (Egin, 2013). The ZPD furnishes educators with a tool that provides a framework for understanding development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD includes those functions that the child has not yet mastered but will develop as he or she interacts with peers. The Vygotskian approach suggests that intentional instruction in preschool can and should foster the prerequisites for academic skills, but it should do so by promoting them through play (Bodrova, 2008). An experienced teacher is aware of the child's developmental level and uses this knowledge to extend learning. For example, a teacher who chooses to call a child's attention to the shape or color of blocks based on what she understands about the child's knowledge of colors or shapes has intentionally influenced the child's learning.

According to Osmanoglu et al. (2015), teachers must develop skills that enable them to notice the child's development so they can scaffold learning in an appropriate way. Effective scaffolding is demonstrated by an adult who is engaged moment by moment, adjusting interactions to meet the needs of the children (Bodrova et al., 2013). According to Vygotsky (1978), child development does not occur in isolation from the

teaching process. Fuligni, Howes, Huang, Hong, and Lara-Cinisomo (2012) emphasized the role of the teacher through modeling and scaffolding during play episodes with children, but Vu et al. (2015) noted that it takes professional development and experience to identify windows of opportunity for learning during center time.

According to Vygotsky (1978), play is the mechanism that increases development in children, and they can achieve their potential with the support of peers and teachers. The teacher meets the children where they are developmentally, and scaffolds each child toward specific goals. According to Hakkarainen, Bredikyte, Jakkula, and Munter (2013), teachers should be able to recognize the child's developmental level and provide support to help the child achieve goals at the higher end of the ZPD. Learning through play is how children increase development (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers observe children during play to provide the support needed to further their development. As the child increases in skill development, the teacher begins to withdraw support (Vygotsky, 1978).

Preschool children demonstrate what is in their ZPD when they achieve tasks with the support of a peer or teacher that they are unable to do alone (Vygotsky, 1978). Haug (2014) stated that when teachers capitalize on teachable moments and interact with children, it allows the teacher to scaffold the child from doing what he or she could do alone to a more advanced skill or at least to have a deeper understanding of the child's current level of understanding. The learning that occurs when children are in the ZPD is the nexus between their learning and the skills they develop with the support of their teacher. Learning is more than the ability to think; it is learning to think about thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers are partners in play and must use the ZPD as a framework

for increasing children's development through interactions with peers or teacher
(Hakkarainen et al., 2013).

  According to Singer, Nederend, Penninx, Tajik, and Boom (2014), for teachers to
scaffold instruction, they must be aware of children's thinking and their level of expertise
in their self-chosen tasks. Intentional teaching occurs when the teacher provides
opportunities for children to learn within the classroom environment (Nasser et al., 2015).
According to Sheridan, Williams, and Samuelsson (2014), teachers have to understand
both the learning objectives and the skill levels of children. According to Vygotsky
(1978), children develop an understanding of the world through play. Teachers must
intentionally plan the environment and scaffold learning (Massey, 2013; van de Pol et al.
2010). The rationale for choosing Vygotsky's theoretical framework was the guidance
and direction it provided for children's learning through social interaction and the role of
the teacher in children's learning.

  Vygotsky (1962) stated that the role of the teacher is to equip children with the
tools for thinking and the skills needed to learn and develop. To do that, teachers must
play an intentional role in the planning, interacting, and scaffolding of children's
learning. Teachers support children through planned and purposeful play that is aligned
with curriculum goals (Wood, 2014) and intentionally engage children in ways that foster
learning and thinking skills (Fuligni et al., 2012; Hamre et al., 2014).

  Utilizing Vygotsky's theoretical framework, I developed my research questions
and designed the study to ensure that I was collecting data about the role of the
intentional teacher and the interactions with children during teachable moments. Each of

the research questions focused on teachers' ability to recognize and capitalize on teachable moments during independent play. In the literature review that follows, I synthesize research on intentional teaching. Evidence from the literature on the differences between teachable moments and teacher noticing is also included, as is research on the teacher's role in children's independent play. In addition, I review literature related to the research methods used in this study.

Intentional Teaching

Intentional teaching requires teachers to plan and be purposeful in every aspect of teaching and supporting children's play (Epstein, 2007, 2014; Kilderry, 2015; Vu et al., 2015). According to Nasser et al. (2015), intentional teaching means that teachers provide opportunities to meet the needs of children and connect the prior knowledge of the children to their plans and interactions. Intentional teaching is defined as teachers being purposeful and strategic in their plans and interactions with young children (Leggett & Ford, 2013).

Intentional teaching requires teachers to plan their work with children keeping content goals in mind (Cross & Conn-Powers, 2014). Teachers are actively involved in the design of the classroom to increase children's development (Hamre et al., 2014). This intentional design includes planning lessons with learning objectives, applying effective instructional strategies, helping children accomplish objectives, interacting with children, assessing their progress, and adjusting lessons based on assessment results (Epstein, 2014; Mogharreban, McIntyre, & Raisor, 2010). According to Epstein (2014), intentional

teaching means that teachers act with purpose with specific outcomes about how children grow and learn.

The role of the intentional teacher requires the teacher to consider the balance of intentional curriculum and active participation in interactions between teacher and child (Leggett & Ford, 2013). Intentional teachers have the challenge of connecting children's thinking to learning (Salmon, 2016). Helping teachers to understand the underlying intention of their practice increases their understanding of their practice and assists their ability to help children gain knowledge (Haug, 2014; Marshall, Smart, & Alston, 2016; Ziv, Solomon & Frye, 2008). If the goal is for children to learn a new skill, teachers should be intentional in supporting, equipping, and guiding the learning of this new skill (Marshall et al., 2016; Ziv et al., 2008). Planning includes both an individual child's needs and potential experiences children will have while interacting with the materials the teacher has included in each of the learning centers.

During learning center time, children are able to have free choice of where to work; the learning centers offer a setting that may foster increased opportunities for responsive one-on-one conversational exchanges (Cabell, DeCoster, LoCasale-Crouch, Hamre, & Pianta, 2013). Additionally, teachers are intentional when they provide constructive feedback, scaffold learning, and ask open-ended questions (Blomberg, Sturmer, & Seidel, 2011; Marshall, 2016). Being intentional requires teachers to listen before entering children's play, to ensure scaffolding of learning as the child interacts with materials or as several peers are interacting with each other. The teacher could simply ask questions to understand the child's knowledge prior to providing new

information. The interactions between the teacher and child increase when the teacher

takes the lead from the child (Singer et al., 2014). The important role of teachers during

play is to encourage higher models of play (Hakkarainen et al., 2013).

Intentional teaching requires teachers to make informed and strategic decisions

about how children learn (Leggett & Ford, 2013). Although an intentional teacher looks

for opportunities to teach and seeks strategies that improve children's skills (Leggett &

Ford, 2013), intentional teaching does not happen by chance; it is planned, thoughtful,

and purposeful (Mogharreban et al., 2010). Although most activities are preplanned, it is

the responsibility of the teacher to look for teachable moments and to capitalize on these

moments to best meet the needs and interests of children (Obidike & Enemuo, 2013).

Evidence indicated that the quality of the teacher-child interaction is critical for

improving children's outcomes (Early, Maxwell, Ponder, & Pan, 2017).

Teachable Moments

A teachable moment occurs when children are interacting with materials, the

environment, or another child and there is an opportunity for the teacher to expand the

child's learning. The term *teachable moment* is used in practitioner-oriented childhood

books to describe the teacher's role, but it is difficult to find this term in the research

literature. Teachers need to capitalize on the opportunities that may arise when students

are excited, engaged, and ready to learn; highly skilled teachers are always on the alert

for teachable moments (Haug, 2014; Hyun & Marshall, 2003). Teachable moment refers

to the moment when the child is ready to learn and presents the teacher with an

opportunity to teach (Haug, 2014; Hyun & Marshall, 2003). White and Maycock (2012)

defined teachable moment as a moment when a person is likely to be disposed to learn something. A teachable moment provides opportunities to extend children's learning; the child presents the teacher with the perfect opportunity for teaching (Haug, 2014). The teachable moment occurs when a child is connecting new information to existing information. Teachable moments are defined as the act of a teacher connecting content to the child's actions, increasing knowledge of the child in the context of play (White & Maycock, 2012).

According to White and Maycock (2012), the notion of a teachable moment stirs academic discussion and interest, but little actual investigation exists as to what constitutes a teachable moment empirically. Several authors stated that key teaching skills include the ability to recognize teachable moments and to use them to engage in meaningful interactions with young children (Avery, 2008; Haug, 2014; Hyun & Marshall, 2003). The challenging aspect of teachable moments is the ability of a teacher to notice when these moments occur during play. According to Jamil, Sabol, Hamre, and Pianta (2015), in order for teachers to be able to distinguish between effective and ineffective interactions with children they first must be aware of their own practice. Teachable moments are the opportunities when the teacher capitalizes on the moment the child presents (Haug, 2014). The teacher must be aware of and react to the cue children present during their play (Jamil et al., 2015). Often times the child presents the teacher with a wonderful opportunity to acquire skills and provides learning in a meaningful way. According to Haug (2014) and Avery (2008), teachers need to learn how to recognize teachable moments and capitalize on the purposeful interactions with young children.

Jamil et al. (2015) found, however, that teachers often appeared to miss a child's subject inquiry cue and not use subject knowledge in spontaneous teaching. According to Haug (2014), it can be a long time between teachable moments, but it is often even longer between those moments upon which the teacher capitalizes. The need for teachers to recognize and become aware of a teachable moment and use that window of opportunity to engage with children in an intentional way forms the basis for this study. During the literature search for teachable moments it became clear that teachable moments are embedded in a broader notion of *teacher noticing*.

The research on teacher noticing has been based on interviews with teachers when they were asked to reflect on what they noticed after teaching a class (Talanquer, Tomanek, & Novodvorsky, 2013). Osmanoglu et al. (2015) stated there are three key aspects of noticing that include the ability to identify the important aspects of the situation, the ability to connect interactions to teaching and learning, and the ability to understand the reason for the classroom interactions. Talanquer et al. (2013) stated that noticing involves what teachers attend to and what they view is happening in the classroom. The basis of this study was to determine if teachers would increase awareness and notice more in their work with children; therefore, potentially being more intentional in their practice.

Blomberg, Strumer, and Seidel (2011) believed that knowledge-based reasoning improves teachers' ability to understand what they have noticed about their own practice. Video technology has been used to help provide details noticed during a teaching event (Nelson, 2012). It has been found that video case discussion on teacher practice can be

useful in helping teachers understand their role and how they can improve their practice (Osmanoglu et al., 2015).

Teachers' Role During Free Play

Vygotsky (1978) provided reasons for teachers to enter play because when they entered play they were assisting with learning as well as extending the zone of proximal development. A teacher's proximity to play allows for the ability to facilitate learning. When a teacher actively interacts with children during play they are fulfilling an essential job function (Fesseha & Pyle, 2016; Fleer, 2015; Hakkarainen et al., 2013). The role of the teacher during free play time is a critical phenomenon that should be investigated to make free play more effective and meaningful (Aras, 2016). Teacher interactions with children during play scaffolds the children's development and increases their learning (Trawick-Smith, Swaminathan, & Liu, 2016). Teachers' involvement during free play depends on how teachers value play (Aras, 2016). As teachers interact with children, they may promote deeper understanding and increased knowledge for young children (Trawick-Smith et al., 2016). Some teachers do not recognize that in pretend play children need someone who is aware of their skills and knowledge to be available to support and extend their play. Quality interactions with children during play have the greatest influence on children's development and increased skill level (Trawick-Smith et al., 2016). Research on play shows that teachers may struggle to acquire the skills needed to engage in quality interactions that support learning (Trawick-Smith et al., 2016).

According to Booren et al. (2012), it is possible that a teacher may be in close proximity of children during play, but only interact with children when problems arise,

instead of engaging in interactions that lead to learning. The teacher must be able to address both learning objectives and developmental needs of children (Sheridan et al., 2014). The teacher can get stuck in the classroom management role, merely moving from interest center to interest center, modifying behaviors and never becoming purposeful. Teachers who monitor the classroom for behavior engage in short interactions with children, only asking questions and not extending learning (Singer et al., 2014). Singer et al. (2014) found that most teachers in the classroom appear to be busy, but through closer observation it became clear that the teacher did not participate in quality interactions with children.

Teaching and learning are parts of an interactive process that requires interactions between children, teachers, and peers (Leggett & Ford, 2016). According to Kilderry, Nolan, and Scott (2016), reflective practice workshops assist teachers in becoming more familiar with their practice during children's independent play.

Independent play is when children use materials and equipment in the classroom to carry out their plan. According to Ugaste et al. (2014), the child is an active participant in the learning process and early childhood teachers value the notion that children learn through play. Play is the leading mechanism in children's acquisition of instruction and learning (Vygotsky, 1962). Child-directed play supports the construction of learning through children's interactions with the teacher, peers, and the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Play is a well-established component of early childhood education; children learn through play, and they also learn how to learn by engaging in play (Salmon, 2016; Trawick-Smith et al., 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). When children participate in play, all

aspects of children's lives emerge as themes in their games and in their understanding of what is being taught, as does the role of the specially trained adult who teaches them (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Fleer (2015), it is believed that teachers working with young children not only have to support development through play, but encourage children to move to higher forms of play. Vygotsky's theoretical perspective requires an understanding that both the teacher and the child are involved in teaching and learning (Ugaste et al., 2014). Teachers understand that children are active learners and learn from the interactions with peer and teachers through play (Ugaste et al., 2014).

Independent play is also known as free play. Free play is the time during the day when children choose their play. Sometimes teachers mistake free play with hands off play, meaning that the teacher does not interact with children; they do not scaffold or facilitate learning. The hands-off play strategy limits teachers' support of learning and their ability to recognize children's purposeful interactions with materials (Ho Fung, 2015). Teachers who believe that free play requires them to be effectively absent miss valuable opportunities to understand the intellectual capacities of young children (Ho Fung, 2015).

Teachers' Reflective Practice With Young Children

Reflective practice is defined as thinking deeply about what one does and why one does it (Isik-Ercan & Perkins, 2017; Nelson, 2012). Reflective practices encourage teachers to think about their beliefs, experiences, and practices when they work with young children (Linn & Jacobs, 2015). Reflective practices might be viewed as a

mechanism by which teachers find meaning in daily practice and strive for higher levels of quality in their teaching (Isik-Ercan & Perkins, 2017). Intentional teachers are those who reflect on their practice with young children.

Reflective practice takes time. Teachers must pause at the end of the day to consider the experiences and interactions that occurred throughout the day. Taking time to reflect throughout the day when the teacher could notice teachable moments is a critical aspect of reflective practice. Scaffolding and providing prompts have been used as a way of encouraging productive journaling and connecting the teachers' role in the process goals related to a teachers' role working with young children (Bayat, 2010). Reflecting on the day encourages the teacher to self-assess, and to ensure that the balance between being a classroom manager and a scaffolding instructor is maintained. If the teacher does not balance classroom monitoring, interacting, and enhancing learning, the teacher may find at the end of the day that all that was accomplished was classroom management. A reflective approach to new situations that arise in the classroom provides insight to the teacher who reflects on and develops her ideas about teaching (Jiang, Lin, Gao, 2016). It is important for the teacher to write down the various aspects of the day including both the successes and the challenges. Teachers will gain understanding into their teaching practices through reflective journaling and processing their work with young children.

Teachers' awareness of their practice is the focus of this study with the aim to improve preschool children's learning and education opportunities (Kilderry et al. 2016). According to Cherrington and Loveridge (2014), there is relatively little empirical

research focused on the influence of teachers' thinking and reflection on their teaching

interactions with young children.

Effect of Professional Development

The process of professional development refers to how professionals move from

awareness to practice improving their professionalism (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013; Sheridan et

al., 2009). According to Blasé and Fixsen (2013), early childhood researchers are

investigating components of professional development that are most effective.

Professional development can be effective for improving teacher interactions with

children, but it needs to be purposeful and on-going to provide the best outcomes (Hamre

et al., 2012). Professional development needs to be high quality to produce high quality

outcomes, comprising intentionally-selected components as part of a successful short-

term professional development opportunity that has potential to positively effect program

quality and student outcomes (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2016). Teachers are more likely to

invest time and energy in professional development activities they think will benefit them

in the long run (Early et al., 2017).

Professional development should focus on how teachers might plan for teachable

moments and how to capitalize on them (Haug, 2014). According to Linder, Bembert,

Simpson, and Remey (2016), when planning professional development, it is important to

communicate the learning objectives, provide opportunities for group discussions, and

offer activities to create an environment that enhances learning for adults. Conventional

wisdom suggests that training be focused on improving interactions within true-to-life

contexts in which teachers currently demonstrate their least effective interactions.

Teacher awareness of missed opportunities, as a less-effective practice currently, could become an intentional focus of professional development (Cabell et al., 2014). When early childhood teachers engage in material with potential to meet practical challenges, the strategies they learn during professional development are more likely be applied successfully (Swim & Isik-Erean, 2013). According to Early et al. (2017), advancements in early childhood professional development are still needed, thus affirming the need for this study incorporating video vignettes. Understanding which components of professional development are most associated with improvements in teacher interactions with children provides an opportunity to develop professional development that is effective and allows for improving scalability (Williford et al., 2017).

Teachers learn how to teach when they watch examples of effective teaching. According to Trawick-Smith et al. (2016), teachers should participate in professional development opportunities that involve strategies that encourage purposeful play interactions. The focus of professional development for this study will be video based professional development. Findings suggest that video cases are a useful professional learning tool for teachers to examine and improve their teaching (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014). Emerging evidence suggests that video examples can enhance teachers' ability to implement new practices (Jamil et al., 2015).

Providing teachers with the opportunity to reflect on the video footage of play interactions enhance their professional development experience (Trawick-Smith et al., 2016). The influence of using video footage to enhance teachers' practices can be examined to understand better how the teacher understands her practice and to implement

change (Osmangola et al., 2015). Using video footage can provide clarity into the complexity of teaching and how to improve classroom practices (Hamre et al., 2012; van Es, Tunney, Goldsmith, & Seago, 2014).

Further examination of video-case examples as a means of professional development with a focus on teachers' practice needs to be conducted to see if it can change practice (Haug, 2014, Jamil et al., 2015; Osmanoglu et al., 2015). It has been shown that teachers who can detect effective interactions on video examples have more education and years of experience thus causing them to also have more interactions with young children (Jamil et al., 2015). Due to the fact that video footage is becoming more popular as a tool for teacher professional development, it is incumbent on the research community to better understand how to take advantage of video footage to support teachers' efforts to improve practice (van Es et al., 2014).

The research shows a gap in the literature connecting video footage as a professional development tool to improve intentional teaching practices. Several research studies (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014: Choe, 2016; Curry, Blacklock, Graves, & Lilienthal, 2016; Osmanoglu et al. (2015) discussed the connection between professional development and use of video footage, but none included intentional teaching practices. According to Cherrington and Loveridge (2014), more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of using video-recorded episodes of teacher practice as a means for the increased understanding of practice. The influence of video footage on teachers' practice can be examined to help teachers understand their practice and change their instruction to align with effective teaching practices (Osmanoglu et al., 2015). Research has shown that

video examples promote learning by allowing the observer to closely examine and analyze the quality of interactions and it provides examples of what high-quality interactions look like and sound like (Hamre, et al., 2012; Sherin, 2002). Choe (2016) recommended further investigation of the effects of scaffolded video analysis as part of teacher professional development. Using video footage to share practice provides a professional learning community structure that potentially provides teachers the opportunity to work together when embedded into professional development (Curry et al., 2016). While there are examples of using video-based professional development in the literature, there were no studies that used video-based treatment embedded in professional development to increase teachers' understanding of intentional teaching.

Summary and Conclusions

Evidence shows teachers require awareness and understanding of development, learning and teaching to be intentional with young children. The lack of intentionality and lack of awareness of opportunities for teachers to capitalize on teachable moments formed the basis of the study. Vygotsky's ideas suggested that the role of the teacher is to provide instruction and learning to aid in the child's acquisition of the tools for thinking (Vygotsky, 1962).

The literature clearly indicated what a teacher needs to be intentional, but was limited in describing what an intentional teacher does to capitalize on a teachable moment. Choe (2016) recommended further investigation of the effects of scaffolded video analysis as part of teacher professional development. There are examples of utilizing video-based professional development, but there were not studies that used

video-based treatment embedded in professional development to increase teachers'

understanding of intentional teaching.

Chapter 2 provided a review of the related literature on intentional teaching as

well as an overview of teachable moments during independent play. The focus of the

literature included both professional development and video-based professional

development. Leggett and Ford (2013) stated that teacher intentionality strengthens the

profession, and enhances the teachers' ability to scaffold children's learning. Chapter 3

provides a discussion of the study's methodology and data collection processes.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of professional development including video vignettes to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. I used a pretest-posttest design including thematic data to test the ability of vignette-based professional development in intentional teaching to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments and teachers' intentionality in responding with supportive interactions. Nominal data were gathered in the form of teacher reflective journals written before and after the vignette-based professional development and the transcribed documents of the focus groups. This chapter includes a detailed description of the setting for the study, the research design, and the role of the researcher.

Setting

The setting included child care centers in a metropolitan location in the Southwestern United States. The child care center teachers participating in the study reflected on their practice focusing on intentional interactions with children during free play time. Participants were recruited to participate in the study after they registered to attend a professional development session advertised on a public statewide training calendar. All of the participants who registered for the professional development session were given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in the research study.

Research Design and Rationale

A mixed-methods approach was necessary to investigate teachers' understanding of the notion of intentional teaching and the effectiveness of professional development based on video vignettes in increasing that understanding. The same data were used for the qualitative and quantitative analysis, and therefore were collected concurrently. Qualitative analysis of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 was conducted first to establish themes and patterns within those themes, followed by quantitative analysis of thematic findings to measure potential differences in teachers' understanding before and after the video vignette-based training. The four research questions that guided this study were the following:

RQ1: Prior to vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children?

RQ2: As part of vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe intentionality as it is socially constructed during a vignette-based treatment?

RQ3: Following a vignette-based treatment, how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during children's independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children?

RQ4: Is there a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children and in follow-up discussions?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment.

Hₐ: There is a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment.

In this mixed-method study, teachers completed reflective journal forms using the online platform SurveyMonkey (see Appendix A) for 5 days, focusing on their practice with young children during interest centers. After a week of completing the reflective practice on the form provided in SurveyMonkey, the teachers participated in a focus group prior to attending a professional development session with embedded video vignettes that portrayed intentional practice associated with a teachable moment scenario presented to a teacher by a child. The participants completed the reflective practice forms for 5 more days after participation in the professional development session.

After the professional development session and second round of reflective journaling, a second focus group was conducted. During the second focus group, the same questions were asked as in the first session with additional items to debrief the process. When participants have such an opportunity to debrief, it helps them to process their experiences as participants in the study (Fern, 2001). I encouraged the participants to share general information about their teaching experiences at the beginning of the focus group session to help them feel comfortable with the group process. Nominal data were gathered in the form of teacher reflective journal forms kept before and after the vignette-based professional development as well as the transcribed focus group sessions.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to develop the reflective practice forms within the SurveyMonkey platform as well as to set up the scheduled reminders. I used SurveyMonkey to distribute the forms to the teachers each day for the first week of data collection. During the focus group session, I served as the moderator. Both focus group sessions were audio recorded using multiple microphones so that I had a high-quality recording that could be accurately transcribed. According to Fern (2001), the focus group moderator plays an important role in determining the magnitude and types of effects the research setting has on cohesion of group members. The local community partner located in the target city in the Southwestern United States sponsored the professional development session and sent recruitment letters about the study to all attendees who registered for the training. Attendance at the professional development session with embedded video vignette demonstrations was considered an inclusion criterion for participating in the study.

One issue identified as a potential threat to the study's validity was that my voice is heard on an asynchronous entry-level child care training that is required within the first 90 days of employment in early childhood education in the target state. As a result, participants may have recognized my voice and may have believed they had a relationship with me even though we had never met. The video footage in this online course was filmed in 2002, but I am still recognized by child care providers because this online course was still in use in 2017 at the time of data collection.

In a mixed-method study, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected either simultaneously or sequentially, and one type of data supports the other type of data, adding strength to both (Creswell, 2012, 2014). The reflective practice forms were used for both the qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data analysis included chi square calculations for each of the themes identified during the qualitative data analysis. The release statement for participation was comprehensive so that the participants would understand the collection of both types of data. I maintained the confidentiality of the participants to protect their identity.

There were potential threats to the validity of the data from focus groups through factors of compliance, identification, and internalization. According to Fern (2001), compliance occurs when the respondents respond in ways they think the questioner expects, identification occurs when a respondent responds similarly to those to whom she is personally attracted, and internalization refers to deeply ingrained opinions that are personal and less susceptible to group influence. These threats are unavoidable in a focus group but may be mitigated by probing questions provided by the moderator or by other focus group participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The local community partner sent recruitment letters for the study (see Appendix B) via e-mail to persons registered to attend a professional development session sponsored by the community partner. This letter provided those registered for the professional development session with a synopsis of the study and with my contact

information so individuals could volunteer to participate. As each potential participant

contacted me, I confirmed that each fit the criterion of a teacher of 3- to 5-year-old

children. I then visited in person each of the teachers who volunteered to participate in

the study to review the reflective journal form and describe the timeline of the study.

Eleven teachers made the initial contact, and all confirmed their willingness to participate

and were accepted into the study.

My goal was to recruit at least 10 to 12 teachers to participate in the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended when determining sample size that it is

important to have sufficient participants so the data they provide begin to tell the same

story. This need for data saturation suggests that recruitment can continue as data are

collected. Because the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated

when no new information is forthcoming (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Following the

process outlined above, I recruited 11 volunteers to participate in the study, hoping to

have adequate information to ensure data saturation. It is typical in qualitative research to

include only a few individuals; Krueger and Casey (2000) suggested no more than 10

participants.

Instrumentation

I used the following data collection tools as part of this mixed-methods study:

reflective journals, focus groups, and the Teacher Intentionality of Practice Scale (TIPS).

The reflective journals were personal documents that the teachers compiled as a record of

their intentional teaching with young children. Video vignettes were used to anchor the

focus group questions both before and after the vignette-based professional development

session (see Appendix E). The teachers signed informed consent forms at the beginning of the study stating they would provide all reflective journals completed as part of the study and participate in the two focus groups so that I could analyze the effectiveness of the vignette-based professional development session they had registered to attend.

The goal of the vignette-based professional development session was to provide treatment to the teachers through a video experience. The focus group sessions elicited the participants' reactions and understandings of intentional teaching and teachable moments; these sessions were audio recorded, which provided transcripts for data analysis. The TIPS needs assessment was developed by Marshall (2016). I received permission from Marshall to use the scale on February 19, 2017 (Appendix C). The TIPS needs assessment provides a scale by which to score a teacher's level of intentionality during his or her interactions with children in the classroom. The scale was designed to be used with the K-12 population. Because some of the items on the scale are not appropriate for early childhood teachers, I adapted the instrument with Marshall's permission to suit the early childhood teacher population (Appendix D). According to Marshall et al. (2016), the TIPS needs assessment is based on a growth model defined by a detailed description rubric so teachers can set professional development goals. The scale provides a way to gather pre- and posttreatment data on a variety of teaching practices to offer a valid and reliable assessment of professional development effectiveness (Marshall et al., 2016). Marshall et al. called for additional research on professional development designed specifically to support teachers in increasing their pedagogical content knowledge.

The TIPS needs assessment was used to compare the themes identified in the reflective journal forms completed by the teachers. Following the first reflective journal data collection period, the teachers participated in a focus group session and a video-vignette treatment embedded in a professional development event. The teachers completed a second round of reflective journaling for 5 subsequent workdays, describing their awareness of the intentional interactions they used to scaffold children's learning during independent play. The teachers then participated in a second focus group session.

Procedures for Recruitment of Participants

The training sponsor e-mailed recruitment letters to people who had registered for a professional development session located in a metropolitan city in the Southwestern United States. Once participants expressed interest in the study, I explained to them that I wanted volunteers to participate in keeping reflective journals for two 5-day cycles and participate in a focus group in addition to the professional development session they registered to attend. The goal was to accept the first 12 volunteer participants from the group of registered participants. Once I assembled my participant pool, I visited with each of the teachers who volunteered for the study. During our face-to-face meeting, I explained the process and expectations of the study. After they understood the expectations of the study and were still willing to volunteer, I asked them to complete the informed consent form. I also informed them that if they wanted to end participation at any time they could exit the study by not participating in the focus groups, not attending all sessions of the vignette-based professional development, or not completing the reflective journals.

Intervention/Treatment

        The intervention for this study was the professional development session that included video vignettes demonstrating varying levels of teacher awareness. The video vignettes showed the varying levels of teacher intentionality in a single scenario repeated three times with the different levels of intentional interactions on the part of the teacher with a child. The video vignettes depicted a teacher who was not aware of the teachable moment the child presented to her, a teacher who did not engage in the teachable moment presented by the child but who went back later to capitalize on the moment, and a teacher who fully engaged with the child when the teachable moment was presented. These three short video clips showing potential teachable moments with the teacher reacting with varying levels of teacher intentionality were existing video vignettes created by Thermacube for the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development at the University of Oklahoma, and used by permission (see Appendix E). The participants engaged in a two-part 4-hour professional development session in which they were asked to watch the video vignettes and participate in discussions about the teachers' interactions with children participating in independent play. I sought to determine whether the viewing and discussion of these video vignettes increased the teachers' awareness of intentional teaching as measured by the analysis of the reflective journal forms and the transcription of the focus group discussions.

Procedures for Data Collection

        At the initial face-to-face meeting with each teacher, following her signing of the consent form, I described to the participants they would receive an e-mail each day to

complete the reflective journal form in SurveyMonkey. I distributed the reflective journal guidelines for completion (Appendix A). I provided a short overview of the form and answered any questions the participant had before beginning the process. The participants were given an e-mail to use if they had questions. The participants were able to contact me during the journaling process. During the face to face meeting I also provided a timeline of the study with start dates for beginning round one of reflective journaling, the focus group dates and times, and the dates of the second round of reflective journaling.

The teachers all started their reflective journals on a designated Monday and completed them each day of the week. I sent scheduled reminder e-mails to them beginning on Sunday and sent a reminder message every day of the week. The participants completed SurveyMonkey reflective journals, which did not require them to do anything for delivery. Each participant simply completed the reflective journal form in the online SurveyMonkey interface and they were finished. The first focus group occurred before the vignette-based professional development session that occurred on a Saturday at the end of the first week of reflective journaling. The participants completed the second week of journaling in the week following the video-vignette treatment embedded professional development session and the first focus group. I sent reminder e-mails before each day during the second round of journaling as I had during the first round of journaling. Again, the participants completed the reflective journal forms in SurveyMonkey that were delivered to them each day via e-mail with scheduled reminders. The second focus group took place on Saturday morning following the second

week of reflective journaling and the second part of the video-vignette treatment

embedded professional development.

The focus group and video-vignette treatment embedded professional

development sessions occurred on the designated Saturdays from 9:00 am 12:00 pm with

snacks provided. Both focus group sessions were audio recorded and were transcribed by

SameDay Transcription, a transcription service. Both focus group sessions were located

at a known training location in the metropolitan city, where the video-vignette treatment

embedded professional development session was being conducted.

Data Analysis Plan

I employed a pretest-posttest design to test the ability of vignette-based

professional development about intentional teaching to increase teachers' awareness of

teachable moments and teachers' intentionality in responding with supportive

interactions. Nominal data were gathered in the form of teacher reflective journal forms

kept before and after the vignette-based professional development and the transcriptions

of the focus group discussions. Teachers' intentionality represented the dependent

variable in this study and the independent variable was the vignette-based professional

development training.

Focus group transcripts and reflective journal entries formed the integrated data

set used in answering all four research questions. Prior to data analysis, I conducted

minor adjustments to grammar and spelling as necessary to capture the sense of the

discourse presented. Data were reviewed for emergent themes, using hand coding.

Following thematic coding, the *TIPS* needs assessment was used to group the themes into

concepts. As described previously, themes and concepts that emerged from the data set formed the basis for both qualitative and quantitative analysis with which to answer research questions 1, 3, and 4. Research question 2 asked for participants' socially constructed definition of intentional practice and so did not yield emergent themes.

Thematic analysis was conducted by reading through focus group transcripts and reflective journal entries and using pens and highlighters to flag recurrent themes. These were compiled into a master list, to which the concepts of the *TIPS* needs assessment were then applied to help organize the data. Once themes were established for the entire data set, the data were divided by the point in the treatment at which they were expressed, prior to, during, or after the completion of the vignette-based training.

To answer research questions 1 and 3, regarding how teachers described their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments before and after vignette-based treatment, comments made as journal entries formed the data set, supplemented by focus group discussion transcripts. Information gleaned from the reflective journals was used to determine the teachers' level of intentionality in the classroom and if that intentional practice changed with vignette-based professional development. To answer research question 2, regarding teachers' understanding of the concept of intentionality, I evaluated teachers' descriptions of intentionality offered during the two focus group sessions for evidence of growth in thinking possibly as a result of the professional development training.

To answer research question 4, "Is there a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment in logs kept

by teachers of their interactions with children and in follow-up discussions?" data from the first focus group provided the baseline knowledge of the participants' understanding of intentional teaching and data from the second focus group were used to determine if understanding of intentional teaching and teachable moments had changed based on the information from reflective journaling, focus groups, and vignette-based professional development. I used chi-square analysis to confirm or reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment I conducted a series of chi-square analyses by hand and used a data table to determine the significance of each result. A chi-square was determined for each of the common themes, which generated the degree of significant difference for each category post-test over pre-test. Because chi-square delivers information on whole-group outcomes, it was not necessary to match pre- and post-test responses by participant. Using whole group pre- and post- analysis allowed me to maintain the confidentiality of the participants

Threats to Validity

In a mixed method design the researcher establishes both quantitative validity and qualitative validity. Some of the potential threats to validity in a mixed methods design include unequal sample size, but in this study the sample size was used for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection. Reaching a point of saturation or redundancy means that responses repeat themselves over the course of the data analysis so that no new insights are expected to be forthcoming with additional data (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016). To that end focus group discussions continued until it seemed that the conversation had become redundant and no new ideas were offered by participants.

Threats to internal validity affect the confidence with which a researcher can state that the independent variable is related to an effect on the dependent variable (Boudah, 2011). The primary threat to internal validity in this study was that participants were asked to complete their reflective journal forms using the online platform SurveyMonkey. Because participants might have lacked comfort or skill to complete the reflective journal online, this threat to internal validity was ameliorated by offering participants a paper copy of the reflective journal questions so they could consider them offline.

Threats to external validity in this study included the small sample size which limits the generalizability of the findings; in addition, the study was located in a single geographic area of the United States. Additionally, the pool of possible participants was limited to those persons who had registered to attend a professional development session, persons who may have been more open to professional development or more interested in intentional teaching than others who did not register for the training session. As Boudah (2011) indicated, choosing participants because they are convenient, or because they happen to be at the right place at the right time, threatens external validity. These threats are recognized as important issues in evaluating the usefulness of the results of this study for other settings and with other populations, but also represent necessary compromises made in the interest of completing this small scale, exploratory study.

Threats to construct validity include the degree to which a researcher truly measures the construct of focus in the study (Boudah, 2011). The key construct in this

study was intentional teaching as portrayed in the video vignettes. Because the vignettes were created by a major university and represent the construct of intentionality as understood by that university's faculty, I accepted the validity of the vignettes in portraying intentional teaching as pre-established. In addition, in order to minimize the threat to construct validity presented by the *TIPS* needs assessment, I used two data collection mechanisms, reflective journals and focus groups sessions, to provide evidence of teachers' understanding of intentionality.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Using qualitative and quantitative data collection supports the strategy of triangulation to enhance internal validity. Transferability or external validity in this study was supported by the participant selection process, in which all 11 teachers who wished to participate were included in the study. However, because the participants represented a single geographic area of the United States, the findings may not generalize to other locations.

To ensure credibility in the study I paid careful attention to the coding process. Saldana (2016) recommended a three-step protocol: (1) initially code while transcribing interview data; (2) maintain a reflective journal on the research project with copious memos; and (3) check interpretations developed with the participants themselves. I employed these strategies during the coding process of both the journals and focus group transcripts. I coded the focus group transcripts as I read through the transcription the focus group for the first time. I kept notes in a notebook throughout the data analysis process. I also sent an e-mail to the participants with the identified themes to see if they

made sense to the group. The participants who responded indicated that the themes made sense to them. Using multiple sources of data corroborates the coding and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings (Saldana, 2016).

Dependability in the study is supported through triangulation of the data. In order to triangulate the data, I used both reflective journal logs and focus group transcripts as well as conducting two different types of data analysis. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010), confirming evidence is often obtained through triangulation, the process of comparing different data sources.

To maintain confirmability, I kept research logs of my coding and sorting since I did not conduct a formal audit. However, I did have the participants review the themes to determine if the themes seemed relevant based on their perceptions of their reflective journal logs and the focus group discussions. I will keep all related materials from the study in a password protected cloud-based storage for five years. According to Boudah (2011), having the materials for review at any time, if questioned, is an asset to confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

I received a signed letter of cooperation from the training organization, which I provided to Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). After receiving approval of my research proposal from IRB on September 27, 2017 (approval #09-27-17-0365553), I proceeded with participant recruitment as described earlier, and following ethical protections included as part of the IRB approval process. Prospectus participants received a one-page description of the study that included my e-mail address and phone

number. Additionally, the participants were told they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants were assured that their responses made as part of the study would remain confidential. Participants signed a consent form that outlined these protections and was approved as part of the IRB application.

The focus group audio recordings were enabled by Thermacube. The Thermacube audio technician signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix F), since he was in contact with the participants. The audio files were sent to be transcribed by SameDay Transcriptions. SameDay Transcriptions uses transcription specialists who are NIH and CITI trained and certified in protecting human subject research participants. SameDay Transcriptions also provided a written nondisclosure agreement to protect the confidentiality of the subjects in my study.

The participant reflective journal forms, audio-taped footage from the focus group sessions, and the transcriptions of the focus groups were kept throughout the process in cloud-based storage that is password protected. These materials will be kept for five years in password-protected digital storage.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the effectiveness of professional development with embedded video vignettes to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and of the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. Eleven participants engaged in two weeks of reflective journaling guided by a vignette-based professional development event and two focus group discussions.

In Chapter 4, I will present the findings and provide analysis of the study including the data collected from both qualitative and quantitative methods. Chapter 5 will conclude this study with an examination of the findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the effectiveness of professional development with embedded video vignettes to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and of the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. The population studied included 11 participants who currently teach preschool children and who attended a professional development session featuring the embedded video vignettes. My goal with RQ1 and RQ3 was to determine any change in understanding of intentionality and in the ability to recognize teachable moments during independent play. For RQ2, I focused on gathering a socially constructed definition of intentionality. The focus of RQ4 was to determine whether there was a significant difference in the teachers' descriptions of their intentionality in their interactions with young children before and after the vignette-based professional development. Chapter 4 includes a description of the setting, demographics, data collection, treatment, data analysis, results, and evidence of trustworthiness. I conclude with a summary.

Setting

Data in this study were collected from a purposeful sample of preschool teachers attending a professional development session with an embedded video vignette-based treatment. All 11 participants registered for and attended the professional development sessions sponsored by a training provider in a city located in the Southwestern United States. The professional development sessions had a total of 18 participants, so more than half of the session participants also volunteered for the study.

Demographics

All of the participants in the study were teachers of preschool children between 3 and 5 years of age. The participants did not complete demographic information as a part of the study, but all participants presented as female. Additionally, three of the participants worked in Head Start programs, seven worked in National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited programs, and one worked in a part-time preschool program. The education background of participants was not collected as a part of the study.

Data Collection

I received a signed letter of cooperation from the training organization, which I provided to Walden University's institutional review board (IRB). After receiving approval from the IRB on September 27, 2017 (approval #09-27-17-0365553), I began to work with the training organization to determine the dates for the two sessions that included the 2-hour vignette-based professional development, which occurred on October 28, 2017 and November 4, 2017. Registration for all attendees ended on October 18, 2017 to ensure that I would be able to meet with the 11 participants 1 week prior to the first 2-hour session, and data collection in the form of pre-session reflective journaling could begin on October 23, 2017.

Eleven preschool teachers volunteered to participate in the study after registering for the professional development session they located on the statewide training calendar. The title of the professional development session was Overview of Intentional Teaching, and individuals registering for the training session received 4 hours of training that would

go toward meeting the annual training requirement for teachers working in licensed child care programs in the target state. The sponsoring training organization sent an e-mail to the attendees to inform them of the opportunity to participate in this study. Each of the volunteers contacted me via e-mail or phone to inform me of their interest. I met with each of them to describe the study and receive their signed informed consent, and I informed them that they would begin reflective journals via SurveyMonkey on October 23, 2017.

All 11 preschool teachers completed reflective journals from Monday, October 23, 2017 until Friday, October 27, 2017, before attending the professional development session on October 28, 2017. The participants completed reflective journal forms each workday instead of all five weekdays because some of the participants in the study worked four 10-hour days instead of the typical 5-day work week. The reflective journal form was e-mailed each day to the participants with two scheduled reminders per day to complete the form. On the day of the first 2-hour professional development session, participants arrived 1 hour early to participate in a 30-minute focus group that I moderated. At the conclusion of the focus group session, the seven attendees who were not study participants were allowed to enter the training room while the audio equipment was taken down. I provided bagels and juice as a part of the focus group session and included enough for all attendees of the scheduled professional development session presented by the sponsoring training organization. The focus group was audio recorded. All attendees then participated in the first 2-hour professional development session, Overview of Intentional Teaching.

Following this first professional development session, the participants completed reflective journal forms on each workday from October 30, 2017 to November 3, 2017. The participants then attended the second 2-hour session of professional development with all of the session attendees on November 4, 2017. At the conclusion of the second 2-hour professional development session, the second focus group was conducted. This second focus group was audio recorded and was scheduled to last for 30 minutes, but the participants had so much to say it continued for almost 60 minutes.

The data collection process occurred as described in Chapter 3 except that instead of the reflective journaling every day for 5 days it occurred every workday because there were several participants who worked four 10-hour days instead of a traditional 5-day work week. It did not make sense for participants to complete reflective journals on days that they did not interact with children. There was no way to have predicted that members of the participant group worked nontraditional schedules. There was one additional change to the data collection process: Instead of arriving 30 minutes before the professional development session, the participants were asked to arrive 1 hour early because the technician had to be able to remove the audio equipment before the professional development session started. Even though the first focus group session started an hour before the professional development session was scheduled to begin, there were still some attendees who arrived before the focus group had ended, but they were not allowed to enter the training room so their presence did not interfere with the integrity of the study.

The audio recordings for the first and second focus group sessions were recorded by a professional recording organization with a signed confidentiality agreement. The professional recording organization set the audio equipment up and took it down before and after each focus group session. There were eight microphones set up so that no matter the location of the participant, the audio was clear and easy to record for all participants. In addition to recording the focus group sessions, the professional recording organization also processed the audio file into an acceptable format for SameDay Transcriptions to provide transcripts of the audio files. There were two different audio files processed, one for each of the focus group sessions. SameDay Transcription returned both audio files to me, and those files were saved on a password-protected cloud-based computer and will remain there for the required 5-year period.

I used the online service SurveyMonkey to create the reflective journal form, to set up daily reminders to complete the journal requirement, and to access the forms once participants had submitted their reflective journals. SurveyMonkey also e-mailed me each time a participant had submitted a reflective journal form so that I could track participants' activities. Participants' reflective journal forms were retrieved from SurveyMonkey and saved to the same password-protected cloud-based computer.

Treatment

The treatment for this study consisted of the video vignettes embedded in the professional development sessions provided by a local training organization. The professional development session was listed on the statewide training calendar, so it was open to all child care providers across the state. The video vignettes embedded in the

training portrayed teacher intentionality in a single scenario used three times with variation in the level of intentional interactions from the teacher to the child. In the first scenario, the teacher was presented a teachable moment by a child; the teacher did not engage meaningfully with the child and showed no awareness of the teachable moment opportunity presented to her. In the second scenario, the teacher was presented the same teachable moment by a child and did not immediately engage, but the teacher came back to the child within a couple of seconds and took advantage of the teachable moment. In the third scenario, the teacher was presented the same teachable moment by the child and immediately engaged with the child to capitalize on the teachable moment. The participants were only included in the study if they attended the professional development sessions, which was the treatment portion of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of moving from raw data to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for a published report (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The purpose of data analysis is to codify data, or arrange them in a systematic way (Saldana, 2016). I employed the Rubin and Rubin (2012) 7-phase cycle for my data analysis. The steps included transcribing, coding, sorting, comparing and summarizing, integrating, creating conclusions, and generalizing.

I started the data analysis phase after the transcribing process because I did not transcribe my focus group recording. The next step in the process was reviewing reflective journal entries. During the initial read through of the reflective journals, I made notes of words or phrases that I thought might become codes, as suggested by Rubin and

Rubin (2012). The first round of words and phrases in the reflective journals were reviewed from the perspective of identifying the main ideas without any attempt to narrow down the topics. I e-mailed the participants the themes and asked them to report whether they felt the themes with the definitions were representative of the things they talked about or wrote about during their reflective journal. I organized the overarching ideas in two different categories that included what children are doing and what teachers are doing. The themes that evolved later developed into a continuum of what teachers are doing. The categories were then broken out between the two themes, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Categories and Themes Emerging From Data

Categories	Themes
What children are doing	children's play
	daily schedule
What teachers are doing	monitoring
	observation
	teacher questions
	scaffolding
	awareness

Once the themes were identified, I developed working definitions of them prior to the coding process. I decided to include the daily schedule code as a part of the theme what children are doing because teachers talked about what the children were doing with the materials in the learning centers rather than what the teacher was doing to enhance learning in the learning centers.

Sorting and resorting included developing working definitions of the evolving themes and patterns. Data were then grouped by code (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and sorted so that they could be counted. Initially, I counted the codes for the reflective journals each day and grouped them by journaling week (i.e., the week before or the week after the first professional development session). The concepts and definitions used for the reflective practice journals and focus group transcripts are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes, Definitions, and Codes Applied to Data

Themes	Definition	Codes
Children's play	Descriptions of children interacting with the environment, each other and the materials	Play, interactions between children
Daily schedule	Descriptions of the learning center and the materials included in the learning center	Materials, environment, schedule, center name
Monitoring	Descriptions of teachers dealing with classroom management or behavior issues	Behavior, challenging, checking in
Teacher questioning	Descriptions of the questions and conversations teachers engaged in with children during interest centers, but surface level questions	Open-ended, closed, inquiry
Observation	Descriptions of teacher observing children while they were engaged in play during interest centers	Observing, listening, watching
Scaffolding	Descriptions of teachers scaffolding children's learning through intentional questions and conversations connected to standards and skills	Supporting, peer to peer, teacher to child
Awareness	Descriptions of teachers self-identifying awareness of teachable moments both missed as well as capitalized upon, as well as describing being more intentional in their practice	Realized, aware, remembered
Missed concept	The code used when teachers answered the reflective journal with either none or not applicable	None, not applicable

All of the themes with the exception of *awareness* and *missed concept* aligned with the *TIPS* needs assessment. The seven classroom tested practices are research-based, field tested teacher actions that increase the likelihood of student success (Marshall, 2016). The seven classroom practices are measured on the TIPS needs assessment, and are described in the book, *The highly effective teacher: 7 Classroom-tested practices that foster student success* (Marshall, 2016). The seven classroom practices knowns at TIPS are shown in Table 3 with the themes from the data.

Table 3

Alignment of Marshall's 7 Classroom Practices and Themes From the Data

Marshall's 7 Classroom practices	Themes from the data
Coherent, connected, learning progression	Daily schedule
Strategies, resources and technologies that enhance learning	Daily schedule
Safe, respectful, well-organized learning environment	Monitoring
Challenging, rigorous learning experiences	Scaffolding
Interactive, thoughtful learning	Teacher questioning
Creative, problem solving culture	Children's play
Monitoring, assessment and feedback that guide and inform instruction and learning	Observation

The code of *awareness* is about the teacher's self-identification of her practice, it did not align with strategies for being intentional but was the result of being intentional, which was captured in the other six concepts. The concept *daily schedule* is aligned with two parts of the *TIPS* needs assessment because the concept *daily schedule* includes both the

materials and the equipment a teacher adds to the environment as well as the activities and opportunities planned for children during interest center time. However, even though *daily schedule* included activities and opportunities planned for children, the teachers' descriptions of those activities and opportunities focused on what the children were doing rather than what the teacher did to be intentional in her practice. Here are three teachers' quotes from the first round of reflective journals to illustrate how the concept *daily schedule* was applied to the data:

> Teacher 7: "I placed a different type of manipulatives, blocks and puzzles in the environment. The children explored the materials at the table on trays independently while others carried their work to various learning centers";
> Teacher 6: "Dramatic play: Super heroes (girls wear capes too), science: combined snack into our mils and experimented texture and absorption, Math: Jake the Pirate Memory, Art: pumpkin face, outside: make a tent, Blocks: animal barn";
> Teacher 10: "Fall discovery at sensory table, puzzles, manipulative, dress up dolls, drawing.

The examples were taken from the first week of journaling, before the first professional development session. It shows that teachers described the areas and materials children were playing with during interest center time but not the teachers' own interactions with the children during play.

After the themes were identified and defined, the second phase of data sorting began by aligning the themes to the seven strategies of intentional teaching as defined by

Marshall (2016). The seven classroom practices are the criteria evaluated within the TIPS

needs assessment. Considering that the *TIPS* needs assessment is a reliable and valid

instrument aligning the themes from my data provides credibility to my data set.   The

alignment process of themes connected to Marshall's 7 classroom practices provided a

different lens to view the data from my study. Marshall labeled each classroom practice

as a TIP and then the *TIPS* needs assessment measures the effectiveness of the TIP.

Marshall's first TIP, *coherent, connected learning progression*, seems simple. A

coherent lesson that flows logically, but if this is not accomplished the success of

everything falters (Marshall, 2016); similarly, if the teacher does not have an effective

daily schedule or does not provide the needed equipment and materials for the classroom

the success of everything else is diminished.

Marshall's second TIP, strategies, *resources and technologies that enhance

learning*, involves more than just randomly placing wonderful resources in front of

children with the hope that amazing results will occur, rather it requires the teacher

couple the equipment with intentional actions (Marshall, 2016). In a similar way the

theme daily schedule requires more than just adding materials and equipment to the

learning center, it also requires that the teacher couple the materials and equipment with

quality interactions.

Marshall's third TIP, *safe, respectful, well-organized learning environment,*

includes both classroom management and using effective procedures with challenging

children (Marshall, 2016). The theme monitoring also includes classroom management

and dealing with challenging children.

Marshall's fourth TIP, *challenging, rigorous learning experiences*, focuses on the ability of the teacher to match the challenge to the current ability (Marshall, 2016). This is the same idea with the theme scaffolding because an intentional teacher will know the developmental level of the child and provide activities that allow them to scaffold the children's learning.

Marshall's fifth TIP, *interactive, thoughtful learning*, looks at both the interactivity between the teacher and child as well as the purpose for the engagement (Marshall, 2016). The teacher questioning theme was used to code items when the teacher asked questions or asked a question of the child so again the theme is closely aligned with Marshall's classroom practices.

Marshall's sixth TIP, *creative, problem-solving culture*, provides information about being creative and creating a classroom culture of problem-solving (Marshall, 2016). In the early childhood classroom, the teacher sets up problem-solving scenarios when children play. Additionally, teachers provide opportunities for children to be creative during children's play.

Marshall's seventh TIP, *monitoring, assessment, and feedback*, guides and informs instruction and learning provided by teachers to children (Marshall, 2016). In the data the most closely aligned theme was observation because the teachers were watching children's play to gain understanding of the child's development. The alignment between the themes and the categories within the sevens tips was shown above in Table 3.

Sorting and comparing each of the themes allowed the nuances of the data to become clearer so that I could then begin to see the bigger picture of what the data were

saying and how they related to my research questions. The themes were identified within each of the categories.

The focus group questions had fewer items to code because some of the focus group questions were designed to gain definitional information from the group on terms such as *intentional teacher* and *teachable moments*. The definition questions were directly linked to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. The remainder of the focus group questions were directly linked to RQ1, RQ3, and RQ4. I used the same methodology in coding the focus group questions that I used for the reflective journals on the questions that were asked of the participants related to them describing examples of practice.

The research process included documenting the coding process in Survey Monkey with color coded words, which were then exported into Microsoft Excel, which made the counting easy using filters on the themes. The coding of the transcripts from the focus groups was a bit more challenging. I cut the transcripts apart and sorted out all of the statements that included definitions of intentional teaching and teachable moments. I then grouped the remaining statements on chart paper by code so that I could see the information in an organized manner.

The category *what teachers are doing* included the themes *monitoring, observing, teacher questioning, scaffolding and awareness;* I began to see that teachers were balancing their work between monitoring and awareness. The more I thought about the data, I began to notice that the themes increased in teacher intentionality from monitoring to becoming aware of their practice. It seemed like the themes were a continuum of what teachers do with young children. The analysis of the data showed that what teachers do

with young children moves along a continuum and progresses from teachers monitoring classrooms to becoming more aware of their practice. The continuum of what teachers are doing progresses from monitoring, observing, teacher questioning, scaffolding to ultimately full awareness of how to not only meet the children's needs, but also teach young children, as shown in Figure 1.
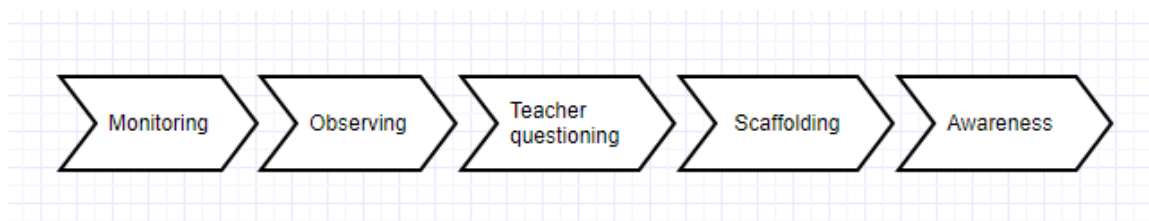
Figure 1. Continuum of what teachers are doing

During the first week of reflective journaling and at the first focus group the teachers either talked or wrote about how they monitored the classroom but provided minimal examples of observing, teacher questioning, or scaffolding of learning. Additionally, they rarely used the word "awareness" or described scenarios that showed they were aware of those teachable moments. Thinking about *what teachers are doing* from the perspective of a continuum suggests that teachers whose focus is primarily on preventing or remediating challenging behaviors find themselves stuck in the classroom monitoring role. Teachers spending time observing play time or merely moving from interest center to interest center, and never becoming purposeful in their work with young children could potentially get stuck in observing. Teachers that begin interacting with children during free play and begin asking questions could lead to scaffolding learning and eventually gaining awareness of practice.

Results

The results from the focus group participants and the reflective journals are summarized below by research question. Within each of the research questions I provided evidence from both the focus group transcripts and the reflective journals. Quotes from the focus group as well as the reflective journals are used to illustrate the results. Confirming evidence was obtained through triangulation, the process of comparing different sources of data such as the focus groups and reflective journaling (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

According to Morrow (2005), a researcher must make an active search for data that run counter to the preponderance of evidence and then compare any disconfirming data to confirming data and ascertain what new information is provided by the discrepant findings. In the current study, discrepant data included teacher responses of "not applicable" in journal descriptions of children's play activities. Such dismissive responses to the possibility of making an intentional overture to children were coded as a "missed concept." "Missed concept" was included as a theme in the chi-square analysis

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: Prior to vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children? RQ1 focused on how teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during independent play.

Defining teachable moment. In order to determine if teachers recognized or capitalized on teachable moments it was critical to first find out from the group their understanding of a teachable moment. During the first focus group I asked the teachers to define a teachable moment. Teacher 2 stated, "A teachable moment could just be anything." Teacher 4 seemed to agree, saying, "I think teachable moments can happen at any time in any situation throughout the day and in any area." Teacher 3 supported this holistic view of the nature of a teachable moment, adding, "to me, a teachable moment is - it really encompasses every area of development." Teacher 5 shifted the focus to the teacher's role by saying, "I agree with Teacher 2, but it's also to ask the child questions and get their mind going, not just give them information." Teacher 1 suggested that identifying a teachable moment might be difficult in practice since, as she said, "I think that sometimes teachable moments may be missed or maybe overlooked based on what's happening in the classroom at the time."

The definitions the participants used during the first focus group supported the comments made in their reflective journals during the first week. When analyzing the reflective journal prompt, *please describe if you were able to identify any teachable moments that were missed during free play*, the participants' responses evolved over the week. On Monday of the first reflective journal period, participants stated they did not miss any teachable moments with the exception of two, who stated that they might have missed some teachable moments. At the beginning of the first week of reflective journaling the teachers shared examples of children playing together that seemed to lack rich details about teacher and child interactions. Teacher 1 wrote: "a little girl and little

boy were playing together and they don't normally play together; they started building separately, but determined if they combined their blocks they could make a structure even cooler than the ones they were building on their own." In this example, the teacher did not participate in the interaction or at least her participation is not included and it is also difficult to determine why the example was shared. Additionally, Teacher 3's reflective journal included "today we played with playdough and we were able to talk about our shape cookie cutters." Teacher 3's example stated that they used playdough and were able to talk, but does not provide descriptions of the conversation so it is unknown if the teacher participated in the conversation or if it was just among children. Teacher 7 continued to provide examples of sharing about materials and equipment by writing, "we got out our large block set and combined it with our community helper dolls and wooden cars." Another example again provides evidence of children playing with materials, but it does not provide descriptions of what the teachers do with children during their block play or any details of the conversations. Teacher 11 extended the description beyond just describing the materials and equipment by also including the child's feelings in her description by saying, "I had a little girl sitting at the table cutting with scissors and it was very emotional because she had really been working on her scissor skills all week."

In each of these examples, teachers' descriptions focused on what the children were doing and the materials the children were using, rather than on how the teacher participated in the interaction. Teacher 9 hinted at an understanding of teachable moments when she stated, "I wish I could have talked more about the shape creating today, but another instance arose across the room before we were able to talk about it

much more." With the exception of this single expressed wish, teachers only described scenarios in which children were playing and provided only details of the children's play or details of the materials used, without providing anything more than brief descriptions of their own presence. These descriptions focused on observable actions, such as "we got the blocks out" or "we played with playdough," and did not include information about teachers' in-the-moment reflection on children's thinking or about teachers' interactions with children to support children's thinking.

Recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments. As part of the analysis for RQ1 the teachers were asked during the first focus group to describe how they usually recognize and capitalize on teachable moments during interest center time. The overall responses focused on what teachers physically do, not what they do intellectually; responses were largely that teachers moved from center to center listening or observing children playing. In the first focus group Teacher 9 said, "I try to take out a specific center each day and try to focus on the interactions among children." Adding to the idea, Teacher 3 stated, "recognizing a teachable moment, it's kind of a combination of observation and interaction." Teacher 8 added, "I'm watching what they're doing. I'm watching how they're interacting with other children, but I'm not interjecting." Teacher 2 said, "I spend a lot of time helping children to use their words, and that's what I spend my time doing." Teacher 4 wrote in her reflective journal that teachers in her classroom took turns moving from center to center, occasionally talking with and playing with children, but without any reference to intentional scaffolding of children's thinking during those conversations or play.

Teacher 5 provided some reasons why teachers miss the opportunities to capitalize on teachable moments, saying,

> If you are heightened in the moment because you have children that are
>
> high emotions your emotions increase and you are not able to recognize
>
> teachable moments you just react to them…you have to check your
>
> emotions to realize teachable moments.

Teacher 2 added, "I just think it depends on the type of children that you serve, because where I work, I deal with more behavior problems than I deal with anything else." As noted in the previous subsection, Teacher 4 wrote, "I wish I could have talked more about the shape creating today but another instance arose." Teachers 2, 4, and 5 provided insight into a foundational problem occurring in child care programs in that teachers must deal with an increase of challenging children in classrooms.

Summary of results regarding RQ 1. Based on the data collected during week 1 of reflective journaling and the first focus group it seems that the teachers were not reflective enough about their own practice to describe their intentionality in recognizing or capitalizing on teachable moments with children during independent play. The teachers were able to describe their role when monitoring children and were also able to describe the materials children used, but the participants did not provide descriptions of what they were doing as a teacher.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: As part of vignette-based treatment in intentional practice, how do teachers describe intentionality as it is socially constructed during a vignette-based

treatment? The results for RQ2 utilized only data collected during the two focus groups to determine how the teachers described intentionality in a socially constructed group setting. The first focus group started when Teacher 1 stated, "I would define intentional teaching as teaching with a purpose, teaching with a certain development goal that you're trying to have the children meet or something that you're trying to introduce or teach them." The definition provided by Teacher 1 mirrored the definition offered by Epstein (2014), that "intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes or goals in mind for children's development and learning" (Epstein, 2014, p. 1). It is interesting that the first person who spoke provided a near perfect definition of intentional teaching, but the participants in the first focus group did not build upon it. The majority of the participants' definitions focused on planning and activities. For example, Teacher 5 said, "intentional teaching is, for me, what I had planned for the week and making sure my class is set up." Teacher 6 further explained, "intentional teaching for me would be, say, you plan an activity and say, we're studying—our focus is on leaves, you follow the child's lead and the child starts talking about leaves." Teacher 11 agreed with the previous participants and added,

> It would most likely be a preplanned—for me it would be preplanned either before that day or, let's just say, I saw the children interested in something so then I would extend it with something that they can learn, but it would be intentional versus a spur of the moment kind of thing.

Teacher 7 provided a little different perspective by describing how being an intentional teacher might look by stating, "intentional teaching is being on their level, getting down on the floor, being at the level of the child and doing everything that you've all said."

To the extent that teachers knew of the Epstein definition of intentional teaching, they may have not understood that by "goals" Epstein did not merely mean a teacher's agenda for the day or week, but also included the instructional strategies used to accommodate the different ways children learn. To that point, Epstein wrote intentional teaching requires wide ranging knowledge about how children typically develop and learn (2014). During the first focus group, all of the participants, except for Teacher 1, focused on activities or planning and did not include their instructional strategies or conscious engagement necessary to be an intentional teacher.

The second focus group started with the participants again defining intentional teaching. Teacher 7 stated that intentional teaching happens in "a very purposeful moment in the classroom when you are with the children and you make it something meaningful for them." Building on that Teacher 8 added, "intentional teaching is the things I know I am going to do that day before I even get into the classroom and being purposeful." Teacher 4 added, "the classroom is an engaging classroom where there are lots of conversations going on and interaction and where the children are just being able to be themselves and express themselves through purposeful play." Lastly, Teacher 3 added, "I still feel like it is what I thought of in the first session - which is interacting with the children in your classroom, providing developmentally appropriate activities that you have provided for them, but also those moments that arise that are not necessarily

what you have intended to teach." The addition of this final phrase represented a shift in Teacher 3's thinking since the first focus group.

The participants in the second focus group provided more detailed descriptions of intentional teaching, in that all of them included the fact that the intentional teacher must plan and must be purposeful, and most of them also included the idea that interactions with children, while purposeful, cannot be pre-planned but happen as opportunities arise. While the changes between the first focus group and the second focus group are slight, it was apparent from the answers during the second focus group that the socially constructed definition of intentional teaching was understood on a deeper level by the group as a whole.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked: Following a vignette-based treatment how do teachers describe their intentionality in recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments during children's independent play, as recorded in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children? RQ3 focuses on how the teachers described their ability to intentionally recognize and capitalize on teachable moments after the video-vignette based professional development. The same seven themes *children's play, daily schedule, monitoring, observation, teacher questioning, scaffolding,* and *awareness* were analyzed and were identified for RQ1.

Definition of teachable moments. The teachers were asked to describe teachable moments during the second focus group as well as in their entries during the second week of journaling. In the second focus group Teacher 8 said a teachable moment occurs by, "having the children guide their own learning…versus me guiding their learning."

Adding to that description, Teacher 3 said, "a teachable moment is a moment in which you see a child is engaged in your - you can see something that you can add to or build on that learning they are doing in the moment." However, Teacher 5 added, "it is also spontaneous." Building upon the idea of spontaneity, Teacher 11 said, "a teachable moment is an unplanned learning experience to extend what the children or child is doing." Further expanding the idea, Teacher 4 stated, "I think teachable moments can happen at any place at any time at any given moment. It is a spontaneous thing to see where the child's curiosity goes." Collectively the group shared a definition of teachable moment that has some of the key words included in the definition used in this study for teachable moments. They used words and phrases like *spontaneous, see something that you can add to or build upon,* and *unplanned learning experiences*. The working definition of teachable moments for the study was as follows: teachable moments are unplanned opportunities in the classroom that provide teachers with a chance to extend children's learning (Epstein, 2014, p. 1).

Reflective journaling challenges. The participants said that the amount of time needed to complete the reflective journals each day was challenging. According to information gleaned from the SurveyMonkey analytics, the average time teachers spent on the reflective journal each day was 30 minutes. Teacher 11 said in the second focus group, "my greatest challenge has been - honestly, it has been time, just because I have double duties where I work." Teacher 10 added, "time was my biggest challenge and putting too much pressure on myself to make sure that it was perfect every day." The suggestion that teachers took the

journaling process seriously was reiterated by Teacher 6, who said, "my challenge was also time, and I was trying to write down everything as the children did it and I had way too much so I had to figure out how to cut back on the writing." Some teachers solved the problem of time for journaling by completing this task after the children had gone home, but this meant they needed to remember what happened Teacher 2 said, "another thing was just remembering the thoughts and the things that did occur during the day because I did not have the time to sit down and write during the day." Adding to that idea, Teacher 3 said, "I agree that remembering every detail was hard because I am sitting in the classroom and everything is happening and I'm like there is going to be so much to write tonight."

Shift in understanding. Once the definition of a teachable moment was established during the second focus group, the focus shifted to the evidence that teachers were able to recognize and capitalize on teachable moments during children's play in interest centers. Additionally, the teachers were asked to provide in their journals examples of their responses to teachable moments during interest center time. Teacher 9 said "sometimes I have to help children get started in play if they are having a hard time and I notice they are having a hard time." Building upon helping children Teacher 7 stated, "being right there talking to children, calming them down, being supportive to them during play." Teacher 5 added, "knowing the children is a big deal and knowing their skill level." These teachers provided examples of teacher behaviors of being intentional as described in the literature review, in that teachers were intentional when

they interacted with materials, understood the children's knowledge, asked questions, and looked for teachable moments.

Teacher 2 shifted the conversation from supporting children to describing how she has changed when she said,

> I feel that I am taking more advantage of teachable moments in the classroom and realizing that teachable moments are everywhere, all the time, in the classroom. It is just that I don't have enough time to take advantage of those teachable moments but they are there.

Adding to the idea of how the teachers changed, Teacher 4 stated, "I always did pay attention, but I pay attention more and sometimes it is more like intentional teaching because sometimes I plan for those teachable moments; I have learned a lot through the last two weeks." Building upon Teacher 4's comments about teachable moments, Teacher 3 added, "you just see so many more and you really become aware of all of them and you are kind of in the moment and it is hard to be a part of all the teachable moments." Adding to the idea of recognizing teachable moments, Teacher 5 said,

> You become hyper-aware of all those moments that are happening and just trying to be a better teacher and a better - scaffolding their play and just being present and unfortunately kind of feeling guilty when you can't continue something or the classroom does not allow you to support those teachable moments.

Continuing with the idea about recognizing teachable moments, Teacher 3 added, "I think for me the teachable moments in the classroom did change a little with the fact that I tried to let the children work things out even more so than I did before."

Teacher 7 changed the subject to share how the professional development session impacted her by stating, "I think we all take away a sense of - a real sense of professional training here and it is something that we can share with our families and let them know we know how to teach their children because this is a true profession." Teacher 4 provided affirmation for the process of participating in the study, "I am walking away with a greater purpose because it has taught me a lot and gave me a better insight and brought a light of how to be more intentional teacher in the classroom." Teacher 2 provided additional evidence of the impact of the reflective journaling process had on her as a teacher, saying, "I actually learned a lot from writing the journals and I was more observant in the classroom. I feel like now, from this, I am going to be able to take advantage of the opportunities presented to me when teachable moments arrive." Connecting prior knowledge to the new learning was best described by Teacher 8,

> Even though I know that I know what teachable moments are and I feel like I am very intentional in what I do in my classroom, there is always room to grow and always room to be more aware and I feel like this really did help me to even look at it in a different way with a lot more confidence and I was able to capitalize on some of those more educational related teachable moments.

 A statement that connects both the teachable moments and the affirmation of the process was made by Teacher 1, who said,

> There is a lot of purposeful teaching that we do and I think that what this
>
> class just confirms that I am not a babysitter. I actually teach, I want them
>
> to learn, I plan activities so that they can grow so they can experience
>
> things and learn and discover and so what this will encourage me to keep
>
> doing is keep planning, keep coming up with purposeful ways of teaching
>
> and also expanding on the teachable moments.

The participants not only described their increased awareness of recognizing teachable moments, but also shared how being a part of the process affirmed them as teachers rather than merely serving as babysitters.

Summary of results regarding RQ 3. RQ3 results included detailed examples of how teachers believed they had changed how they viewed their own work with children. They began to describe how being an intentional teacher and capitalizing on teachable moments make them feel more professional about their work. The teachers stated they felt validated in their work with young children and even said they were professionals and not babysitters.

Research Question 4

RQ4 asked: Is there a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and after vignette-based treatment in logs kept by teachers of their interactions with children and in follow-up discussions? To answer this question, I analyzed reflective journals from each of the weeks as well as the transcripts from both of

the focus group sessions. The coding of the reflective journals from each week yielded 732 entries; more than half of the items were included in the category of *what children are doing* and the rest were split across the themes within the category *what teachers are doing*. The items within the category *what teachers are doing* were distributed across the five themes *monitoring, observation, teacher questions, scaffolding* and *awareness*. *Monitoring* was the theme with the majority of entries in the category of *what teachers are doing*, *monitoring* was the coded theme 41% of the time when items were coded within the category of *what teachers are doing* it indicated that teachers were describing a lot of their time as monitoring the classroom and children. Following the continuum illustrated in Figure 1, the themes within the category *what teachers are doing* that have the greatest potential effect on children's learning are *teacher questions, scaffolding*, and *awareness* because they require that the teacher be involved in teaching children and in children's learning. Thirty-one percent of the items coded within the category *what teachers are doing* described teachers' interactions with children through either teacher questioning or scaffolding of children's learning. However, when taking all coded entries into consideration, in only 14% of the items did teachers describe their role as either teacher questioning or scaffolding of children's learning. The data from both reflective journal data sets show that teachers capitalized on teachable moments or engaged in intentional teaching only a small percentage of the time available during interest center time, according to their own accounts from both weeks of daily reflections. The results of this coding process are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Coding of Reflective Journals

Categories/themes	Counts	Totals
What children are doing		398
Children's play	295	
Daily schedule	103	
What teachers are doing		334
monitoring	136	
observation	18	
teacher questions	76	
scaffolding	29	
awareness	75	
Total		732

In order to determine any change in teachers' thinking before and after the vignette-based professional development, a series of chi square tests of independence were used to compare each of the seven themes of *children's play, daily schedule, monitoring, missed concept, awareness, observation, teacher questions, and scaffolding* represented in reflective journal entries from week 1 and week 2 regarding. The *p* value equals 3.841 for each of the themes in the study.

At an alpha of .05, the analysis indicated a statistically significant difference between the number of entries in the first and second reflective journals for three themes: *daily schedule* ($\chi^2 = 6.497$)*, awareness* ($\chi^2 = 22.371$)*,* and *scaffolding* ($\chi^2 = 76.000$). The expected values were counts of the coded items from the first week of reflective journal writing, which formed a baseline. The observed values were counts of the reflective journal items from the second week of journal writing. Utilizing the chi square on the

entire group allowed for whole group comparisons before vignette-based professional
development and after. These results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Output from Chi-Square

Theme	Observed	Expected	*df*	.05 p <	χ^2	Significance
children's play	143	152	1	3.841	2.219	
daily schedule	43	60	1	3.841	6.497	*
monitoring	65	71	1	3.841	1.748	
missed concept	53	50	1	3.841	0.360	
awareness	48	27	1	3.841	22.371	*
observation	8	10	1	3.841	0.444	
teacher questions	34	42	1	3.841	2.626	
scaffolding	24	5	1	3.841	76.000	*

There was sufficient evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis, which states
there is a significant difference in teachers' descriptions of their intentionality before and
after vignette-based treatment, in the themes of *daily schedule, awareness,* and
scaffolding.

The significant development of themes of *awareness* and *scaffolding* was an
outcome that was expected since the premise of the study was to determine if vignette-
based professional development could affect teachers' awareness of teachable moments,
but the theme *daily schedule* was unexpected. However, since intentional teaching
includes teachers' deliberate selection of the materials and equipment they make
available to children, teachers' plans for the day – that is, the daily schedule – might
logically be affected by an increased level of intentionality. Intentional teachers can be
expected to add materials and equipment to enhance children learning based on children's
interests and on their skill development.

Additional Finding

One finding that emerged from the data that was not expected is that sometimes children need more time to learn and that allowing children ample time is a part of being an intentional teacher because all children learn differently and part of being intentional is recognizing the unique needs of each child. Awareness of children's individual time to learn was provided by Teacher 3, speaking in the second focus group. Teacher 3 said that on the day she described the children were engaged in shaving cream play:

[A] little girl with sensory issues watched the shaving cream play for a long time; she finally took her hand and put it in the shaving cream and she freaked out and said, "I wash, I wash, I wash," but I reassured her that it was going to be okay. We were singing the ABC's and I would draw the letter in the shaving cream and then erase it and write another. She watched and watched and then she started playing in the shaving cream. We were doing this for almost an hour and then she said, I paint my tummy and I let them take off their shirts and paint their tummies. I would normally not have allowed this, but they were having such a great time and she was all in on using the shaving cream and the last one to be cleaned up. It was a big moment for her and me because I allowed them to just explore it to whatever extent they wanted to, and sometimes as a teacher I feel like it's hard because you know it takes so much time to allow them to get so deep into play or to be really messy and it takes over the time of something else that you are doing so it just –I think overall

with all of this, that something that I learned too was just to expand on that

teachable moment.

The experience described by Teacher 3 provides a great example of what it takes to be an

intentional teacher because an intentional teacher makes purposeful decisions that

enhance children's learning. In the previous example Teacher 3 realized that the child

with sensory issues could engage in shaving cream play if given enough time to be ready

to participate. Teachers often move children to the next activity to quickly or just because

it is time for another activity, based on the clock instead of taking cues from the children.

Teacher 10 added, "it has taught me to kind of slow down and really think about not just

teachable moments for children, but for me, that every day I need to take way

something."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness careful attention was made during the coding process. I

followed most of the Saldana (2016) three-step protocol, but I did not transcribe my own

focus group sessions. I sent them to SameDay Transcription so the first step of coding

took place during the first read through of the transcripts as well as during my reading of

the reflective journals. I took notes in the margins of the transcripts and kept notes in a

coding journal. I sent the themes to the participants of the study to see if the themes

seemed representative of their statements during the focus groups and their reflective

journals. All participants responded that themes seemed aligned with what they said and

wrote during the study. Saldana (2016) stated that using multiple sources of data, as I did

in this study, corroborates the coding and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings.

The themes from the data were consistent across both the reflective journals and the focus group transcripts, providing evidence and justification for the themes I identified. The fact that themes were consistent across both data sets allowed for triangulation of the data, thus adding validity to the study.

Credibility was established through member checking of the themes to ensure they were representative of the thoughts and ideas of the participants. The participants reported back that they felt that the identified themes represented their ideas. Additionally, triangulating the data from multiple sources helped to ensure credibility of the study. I was able to triangulate data because I had data from both reflective journal logs and focus groups. My use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis of the same data set provided greater credibility for the study than using only one analysis method or using different data for each analysis. Another way of I establish credibility was through peer debriefing with my fellow dissertation classmates.

Transferability or external validity for this study was not compromised by having only 11 participants instead of the target number of 12, since saturation of ideas appeared to be reached with 11 participants. While these participants represented a single geographic area of the United States, the child care centers at which they were employed included a diverse group of programs including Head Start, faith-based, part-time, corporate, and employer sponsored child care programs. The variety of programs represented in the study expands the possibility of generalizing my findings to various facilities types.

Dependability was also established through the triangulation of the data. The qualitative data dependability was strengthened by quantitative data analysis. Both types of analysis were needed to support the dependability of the study.

Confirmability was implemented through member checking to ensure the participants ideas were properly represented in the analysis of the study. Additionally, all coding documents are maintained in a password protected cloud-based storage for future reference if needed, since a formal audit of the raw data was not conducted.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

In Chapter 4, I presented results I obtained in answer to the four research questions that guided this study. In answer to RQ1, that asked about teachers' description of intentionality in reflective journals kept prior to the first vignette-based treatment, teachers provided little evidence of their understanding or use of teachable moments in their work with young children. In answer to RQ2, about teachers' ability to describe what is meant by "intentional practice" during the two vignette-based treatment sessions, results showed that teachers understood the concept of intentional teaching on a deeper level at the second treatment session than they had demonstrated at the start of the first treatment session. Results for RQ3, which asked about teachers' descriptions of intentionality in reflective journals kept following the first vignette-based treatment session, suggest that at the conclusion of the study teachers felt more aware of their ability to recognize teachable moments and capitalize on them. An analysis of data using chi square tests of independence in an effort to answer RQ4 showed statistically significant positive change following the vignette-based professional development for the

three themes of *daily schedule, scaffolding* and *awareness.* This analysis suggests that at the end of the study teachers were more aware of intentional teaching and teachable moments, of their ability to deliberately adjust the daily schedule in response to their intentional observations, and of their ability to scaffold children's learning to match children's interests and skill levels than they had been at the start of the study. In chapter 5, I present interpretations of these results, along with limitations of the study and recommendations for further action.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of a plan to increase teachers' awareness of teachable moments in their informal interactions with young children during independent play and of the intentionality they demonstrate in responding to those opportunities. I used a quasi-experimental design with a mixed-methods approach. According to Trawick-Smith et al. (2016), when teachers are aware of teachable moments and their intentionality and are therefore effective at scaffolding and supporting young children during independent play, they are able enhance children's outcomes through play experiences. Results of this study suggested that vignette-based professional development can be an effective strategy to increase teacher awareness and to ensure teachers are purposeful and intentional in their work with young children.

Interpretation of the Findings

A key finding in the study associated with RQ1 was that when teachers describe their ability to recognize and capitalize on teachable moments, they focus on what children are doing in their areas of interest and the materials they are using rather than on teachers' efforts to be intentional in scaffolding children's learning. White and Maycock (2012) defined teachable moments as a teacher's act of connecting content and increasing children's knowledge in the context of play. The teachers in this study, prior to the vignette-based professional development, seemed unaware of their teaching role during children's play, and merely described what children were doing in their areas of interest and in the materials, they were using. Jamil et al. (2015) stated a teacher must be aware of and react to the cues children present during their play. The teachers at the beginning of

this study lacked the awareness needed to describe their teaching role with children during free play.

The key finding for RQ2 with regard to teachers' definition of intentionality was that there were slight changes in the socially constructed definition of intentional teaching from the first to second focus group; the answers from the second focus group provided evidence that teachers' understanding of intentional teaching had improved. Teachers in the second focus group said that an intentional teacher must plan and be purposeful. Most teachers also said that interactions with children were a defining part of intentional teaching.

The fact that teachers in the second focus group added information about interaction with children to their definition indicated that they gained an understanding of intentional teaching that is closely aligned with the literature. An intentional teacher looks for opportunities to teach and seeks strategies that improve skills within children (Leggett & Ford, 2013). Intentional teaching does not happen by chance; it is planned, thoughtful, and purposeful (Mogharreban et al., 2010). During the second focus group discussion and following two weeks of journaling, teachers' definition of intentional teaching included these ideas.

The key finding from RQ3 was that as a result of the study experience, teachers felt validated in their work with young children and felt that they were more aware of teachable moments and of their ability to be more intentional and aware of their practice. The data for RQ3 focused on the teachers' descriptions in the second week of journaling as well as the second focus group. The findings supported Jamil et al.'s (2015) statement

that for teachers to distinguish between effective and ineffective interactions with children, they first must be aware of their own practice. Teachers in the current study used words and phrases such as *spontaneous*, *building upon*, and *unplanned learning experiences*, which provided evidence of increased awareness of teachable moments and increased awareness of intentional teaching mirroring the thinking of White and Maycock (2012), who said a teachable moment is an educational opportunity at a time in which a person is likely to be ready to learn. Additionally, results for RQ3 indicated that video case discussions on teacher practice can be useful in helping teachers understand their role and how they can improve, confirming the advice of Osmanoglu et al. (2015).

The key finding from RQ4 was sufficient evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis for the themes of daily schedule, awareness, and scaffolding. It was not initially clear why daily schedule significantly changed from the first week of reflective journaling to the second week. However, after I reviewed the literature, it became clearer why daily schedule would be included with the other themes that changed significantly. Vygotsky (1962) argued that the role of the teacher is to equip children with tools and skills needed to learn and develop so instruction and learning play a role in the child's acquisition of thinking. Intentional teachers design the classroom to increase children's development (Hamre et al., 2014). The important role of teachers during play is to encourage higher models of play (Hakkarainen et al., 2013). Teachers who are intentional plan a purposeful daily schedule, provide materials, and plan activities that can assist them in scaffolding children's learning.

The fact that the themes of awareness and scaffolding changed significantly was not surprising because the purpose of the study was to determine whether vignette-based professional development could change teachers' awareness of teachable moments. The significant result for scaffolding confirmed findings from the literature that linked intentionality with providing constructive feedback, asking of questions, and customizing teaching through scaffolding (Blomberg et al., 2011; Haug, 2014; Ugaste et al., 2014). Scaffolding may have been the only outcome that was primarily based on the vignette-based professional development session, but because the vignette-based treatment was coupled with reflective journaling, the singular effect of vignette-based treatment could not be determined from this result.

The theme awareness was a significant finding, which was consistent with the literature. According to Avery (2008) and Hyun and Marshall (2003), teachers need to learn how to recognize teachable moments and capitalize on the interactions with children. This means that teachers must be aware of and react to the cues children present during their play (Jamil et al., 2015).

Based on the results of this study, vignette-based professional development coupled with reflective journaling appears to be an effective method to increase teacher awareness of intentional teaching. Because of the limitations of causal-comparative research, experimental research is needed to determine more conclusively the effect of vignette-based professional development, perhaps using an experimental design. Analysis of the three areas of significance (daily schedule, scaffolding, and awareness) pointed to a Venn diagram in which the area where all three converge is the point at which teachers

achieve intentionality in their work. The overlap of the three areas of significance

represented Epstein's (2014) idea that intentional teachers choose which learning

activities, contexts, and settings to use with reference to children's development and the

classroom, and teachers are able to capitalize on spontaneous learning opportunities to

scaffold children's learning. The convergence of the three significant themes is depicted

in Figure 2.
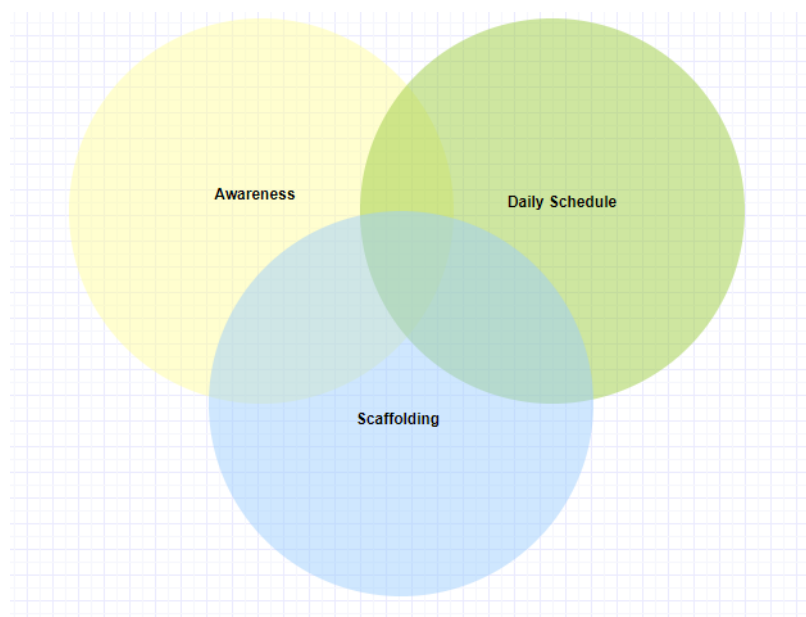
Figure 2. Effective intentional teaching components Venn diagram.

Limitations of the Study

The study was small with only 11 preschool teachers participating; therefore, the

results may not be generalizable to the entire population of preschool teachers. Another

limitation of the study was that because I coupled reflective journaling with vignette-

based professional development, there was no way to determine which of these two

experiences increased teachers' awareness of intentional teaching. I included both

experiences in this study based on the ideas of Linn and Jacobs (2015) and Choe (2016),

but doing so made it impossible to tell which was more important in enhancing awareness of teachable moments, or if the combination of experiences elicited that result. I did not ask questions of the participants to determine whether they had the book or had received training on intentional teaching. Additionally, participants were not asked if they were attending other professional development sessions during the study time, so it is possible that the results of the study were influenced by other professional development. During the study, the teachers were allowed to attend other professional development training sessions that could have influenced the results of my study.

Additionally, the time period for the study was very short, with only 2 weeks of reflective journaling and two focus groups, in addition to the vignette-based professional development. Results may have stemmed from this intense focus on intentional teaching and teachable moments. The saturation of information during the 2-week period may have resulted in a temporary increase in awareness that might not persist in teachers' practice. A longer period of training and reflection may yield a more durable change in teachers' understanding of intentional teaching. It is unclear what effect the length of the study may have had on the results.

Recommendations

According to Osmanoglu et al. (2015), teaching preschool children requires teachers to be knowledgeable and aware of their own practice. The purpose of this study was to determine whether vignette-based professional development would increase awareness of intentional teaching among a group of preschool teachers. The results

indicated that vignette-based professional development coupled with reflective journaling increased awareness of intentional teaching, but there is a need for additional research.

Because I coupled vignette-based professional development with reflective journaling, researchers may examine whether the same results could be obtained by either vignette-based professional development or reflective journaling alone. Second, research combining vignette-based professional development with reflective journaling with a larger sample would increase generalizability of the results. A third recommendation is to replicate this study with minor modifications, such as providing the professional development on 1 day instead of 2 so participants would have all of the information prior to the second week of reflective journaling. Researchers could also conduct the study over a longer period of time to determine whether the results were sustainable. A follow-up study to determine the application of intentional teaching to classroom practice and the longevity of any positive effect would be helpful in determining the long-term effect of vignette-based professional development with reflective journaling.

Implications

Embedding video vignettes in professional development on intentional teaching appears to be a simple and effective way to inspire early childhood teachers to greater awareness of their instructional practice. The results of this study provided further evidence that video examples can enhance teachers' ability to implement new practices. Several previous studies (Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014: Choe, 2016; Curry et al., 2016; Osmanoglu et al., 2015) indicated the connection between professional development and video footage, but none focused on intentional teaching practices. Cherrington and

Loveridge (2014) stated that more research was needed to determine the effectiveness of using video-recorded episodes of teacher practice as a means of increasing the understanding of teacher practice. Findings from the current study provided a contribution to the literature on professional development and for intentional teaching practices. The findings confirmed the effectiveness of vignette-based professional development coupled with reflective journaling.

Recommendations for practice include adding vignette-based treatment and reflective journaling to professional development sessions offered to early childhood teachers. Vignette-based treatment provides consistent content that can be delivered in different settings, including online. Reflective journaling appeared to contribute to teachers' understanding of the vignette-based content and provided them an opportunity to apply what they had learned. Teachers' comments on the time and effort applied to journaling suggested they found this aspect of the training valuable.

In this study I found significant positive effects of vignette-based professional development for preschool teachers' awareness of intentional teaching. Teachers of preschool children are required to engage in annual continuing education so efforts to enhance the effectiveness of professional development benefit the early childhood field. In addition, by facilitating training in intentional teaching, this study may result in greater levels of teacher awareness of children's learning, greater recognition of teachable moments, and better application of scaffolding of children's learning throughout the daily schedule and periods of children's independent play. By suggesting a method by which teachers may become more aware of *what the teacher is doing* in contrast to their

management of *what the children are doing*, teachers may be more effective in their work, to the benefit of the children in their care.

Conclusion

Results from the study demonstrated slight change in teachers' ability to articulate their understanding of intentionality as it applies to their awareness and capitalization of teachable moments during children's independent play. Significant differences in teachers' descriptions of their intentional practice before and after vignette-based treatment was found in the areas of *daily schedule*, *awareness*, and *scaffolding*. In addition, participants spoke of the changes they saw in own work from the first focus group to the last and expressed interest in discovery of their intentional practice through the mechanism of reflective journaling. Because professional development is an essential component of early childhood teachers' ongoing education the finding of this study that vignette-based professional development can be effective may be important in increasing professional development excellence for all teachers. The increase in excellence of teacher training, resulting in the development of teachers' intentionality and awareness of teachable moments, has great potential benefit for the education of preschool children. Quality early education needs quality teachers. Vignette-based professional development can create the highly trained teachers' young children need.

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Appendix A: Reflective Journal Form

Guidelines for completing the Reflective Journal Form

Studies have shown that reflection upon one's practice is key to a full learning experience. For this reason, you will be required to keep reflective journals as part of the research study.

- **Reflective Journal Form – Interactions During Free Play—is to be completed each day for five days. Reflecting on the days' interactions with preschool children.**

How long will it take?
As a rough guide, each journal entry should take approximately 20-30 minutes. You may take more or less time depending upon your time constraints and the amount of detailed information you wish to include. Feel free to add comments but the minimum requirements are included in the template.

What should I write?
Don't worry about how you write. Spelling, punctuation, grammar etc are of no concern whatsoever to the program. We are trying to access experience and thoughts.

Don't worry if you discover your answers overlap or if you feel one question has already been answered in response to another. Try to write something, no matter how brief your response may be to each question.

You are not limited to space provided in the template, each section expands to accommodate different amounts of information.

When do I submit them?
You will complete the reflective journal form in Survey Monkey and will do not have to do anything else after you answer each of the questions. You will receive the link to complete the survey each day in your e-mail inbox.

Confidentiality
All information completed in journals is confidential. It is used for purposes of the study. There is no requirement to identify yourself personally if you choose not to. You may also prefer to edit your journal entry before submission, this is fine as long as all required fields are completed.

The reflections on the interactions during free play will be retained by the researcher. If you have any questions or concerns about your Reflective Journal Form please don't hesitate to discuss with the researcher at 405.326.2147 or jill.soto@waldenu.edu

Sample Reflective Journal Form – Interactions During Free Play

(the actual reflective journal will be done via Survey Monkey)

Date	
What occurred during free play today?	
Describe the interactions with children during free play?	
Were you able to identify any teachable moments during free play?	
What were the three most important interactions during free play today? 1. 2. 3.	

Where you able to identify any teachable moments that were missed during free play?

Provide any additional information about the intentional interactions during free play today:

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Date

Name
Address

Dear Preschool Child Care Teacher,

Since you have registered to participant in a professional development titled, "What does intentional teaching look like?" sponsored by Rainbow Fleet. We wanted to inform you of an opportunity for you participate in a research study conducted by Jill M Soto, a doctoral student at Walden University. If you would like more information about participating in the research study, please contact Jill M Soto at 405.326.2147 or jill.soto@waldneu.edu.

Sincerely,

Carrie Williams

Appendix C: TIPS Permission

Jeff Marshall marsha9@clemson.edu   Feb 19

_____

to me

You are welcome to use the instrument. Just please cite the book and the validation article found on the website: https://www.clemson.edu/education/inquiry-in-motion/research-evaluation/tips.html

Best of luck in your work,
_____
Jeff C. Marshall, PhD

Jeff Marshall   Mar 25 (8 days ago)

to me

Hi Jill,
You have my approval to use the Needs Assessment as an instrument. I do not necessarily agree that your changes are substantial or needed. TIP 1 is about planning. Play is a significant part of EC but not the only part of planning for EC particularly around grade 2—unless you are only looking through a developmental lens such as Reggio. Changing words from students to children does not seem necessary because they are one in the same. We chose the language carefully so that it would largely be appropriate for K-12 classrooms. In the end, you don't need my approval to use a modified version of my instrument, but you need to cite where the idea came from and be clear regarding what changes you made if you use a variation. Hope this helps. Good luck with your study.

_____
    Jeff C. Marshall, PhD
Clemson University, Professor & Chair
Department of Teaching and Learning
404-B Tillman Hall
marsha9@clemson.edu
Office: (864)-656-2059

Appendix D: TIPS Needs Assessment—EC

		Questions	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly
1a	Opportunities for play are well aligned (standards, objectives, lesson/ activities, and assessments all clearly aligned, and well sequenced)				
1b	Opportunities for play require students to engage with both process skills and content.				
1c	Opportunities for play connect to other disciplines and within my discipline.				
1d	Opportunities for play makes connections to student lives and the real world				
2a	Children are actively engaged during instruction and abstract ideas are tied to concrete experiences.				
2b	Teaching strategies are child-centered.				
2c	Classroom materials and resources make abstract ideas concrete and visual.				
2d	Classroom materials, resources, and strategies are purposeful and meaningful.				
3a	Transitions are efficient and smooth and students respond promptly to cues (including visual daily schedules)				
3b	Routines flow smoothly; my classroom almost "appears" to run itself.				
3c	I convey a solid presence, positive affect, and patience with my students and my students also engage in positive, respectful interactions.				
3d	I am approachable, supportive and respectful during all interactions with students.				
4a	I establish and communicate appropriate expectations for ALL students.				
4b	I model and students demonstrate persistence, perseverance, and self-control.				
4c	I ensure that ALL students are appropriately challenged (regardless of ability).				
4d	I differentiate and scaffold learning for ALL learners based on varied levels of readiness.				
5a	I stimulate participation and involvement of all students throughout the classroom.				

5b	I facilitate conversations, engaging. and motivating interactions throughout the classroom.			
5c	My teacher/child interactions are purposeful and personal.			
5d	My students are challenged to explain and reason interactions with others.			
6a	I model creative approaches and students are encouraged to find new ways to communicate, share, present, and or discuss ideas.			
6b	I create a culture of curiosity and questioning in my classroom.			
6c	I set up my classroom so children are fairly self-directed and actively seek solutions to open-ended problems.			
6d	My students are encouraged to consider multiple perspectives or alternative solutions/explanations.			
7a	I provide specific, focused interactions (not just make responses like yes/no or correct).			
7b	I provide frequent feedback in order to scaffold learning.			
7c	I use child assessments to inform teaching and learning.			
7d	Opportunities for play are well aligned (standards, objectives, lesson/ activities, and assessments all clearly aligned, and well sequenced)			

Appendix E: Video Vignette Permission

March 1, 2017
Jill M Soto
717 Pine Circle
Blanchard, OK 73010

Dear Jill,

I am writing to give you permission to use the "Intentional Teaching" video vignettes created by Thermcube, LLC for Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD), University of Oklahoma. Thermcube, LLC has been creating video's for CECPD for the past six years and hosts all their online child care courses.

Sincerely,

Matt Hubbard, Owner

Appendix F: Confidentiality Agreement

Project title: The Effect of Vignette-Based Demonstration on Preschool Teachers'
Awareness of Intentional Teaching

I, _____, have been hired to record the audio and provide an audio file for both
focus groups for the research study conducted by Jill M Soto.

I agree to:

1. keep all research information share with me confidential by not discussing or
   sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. tapes, transcripts)
   with anyone other than the *Researcher.*

2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., tapes, transcripts) secure
   while it is in my possession.

3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g. tapes, transcripts) to the
   Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.

4. after consulting with the *Researcher,* erase or destroy all research information in
   any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the
   Researcher (e.g. information stored on computer hard drive)

Thermacube Employee
Print name: _____
Signature: _____   Date:_____

Researcher, Jill M Soto

Print name: Jill M Soto
Signature: _____   Date:_____

Appendix G: Focus Group Pre-Professional Development Questions

1. How would you define the term "intentional teaching"?

2. How would define your role during interest center time?

3. How would define the term "teachable moment"?

4. What has been your greatest challenge in writing reflective journals this week?

5. What has been your greatest interaction with preschool children during interest center time?

6. Let's talk about the needs of children during interest center time. How do you recognize teachable moments during interest center time?

7. Think about all that we have talked about today. What do you think is the most important aspect of teachers work with children during interest center time?

Focus Group Post-Professional Development Questions

1. Now that you've had this experience, how would you define the term "intentional teaching"?

2. After this experience how would define your role during interest center time?

3. Based on your experiences, how would define the term "teachable moment"?

4. What has been your greatest challenge in writing reflective journals this week?

5. What has been your greatest interaction with preschool children during interest center time?

6. Let's talk about the needs of children during interest center time. How do you recognize teachable moments during interest center time?

7. Thinking about teachable moments. How do you respond to teachable moments during interest center time?

8. Please describe your overall impression of the experience or any personal take-aways from the experience.