UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTIONS AND INDICATIONS OF THE GOALS AND UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS (FFS) CURRICULUM MODEL: A CASE STUDY IN A NORTH TEXAS PRIVATE PRESCHOOL

Lisa Jackey

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2017

APPROVED:

James D. Laney, Committee Chair and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Administration
Dina C. Castro, Committee Co-Chair
Stephanie Reinke, Committee Member
Lin Moore, Committee Member
Randy Bomer, Dean of the College of Education
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School

Jackey, Lisa. *Understanding the Perceptions and Indications of the Goals and Unique Aspects of the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model: A Case Study in a North Texas Private Preschool*. Doctor of Philosophy (Curriculum and Instruction), December 2017, 192 pp., 1 table, 6 figures, references, 124 titles.

This quantitative and qualitative case study examined the educators' perceptions of both the goals and unique aspects of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model. Specifically, this study was designed to explain the experiences of 55 early childhood educators and administrators who all had similar exposure to the FFS curriculum model. This study sought to understand the educators' perceptions of the specific goals of using pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology and the parallel process of content language, connecting the importance of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and learning standards and readiness for kindergarten. In the same way, the perceptions of the unique aspects of the value based curriculum, the use of reflective supervision and the use of design thinking were gathered and interpreted. This study looked closely into program successes, challenges and future implications of the FFS curriculum model. This study also considered the extent to which future implementations of the model could change the current interdependent relationship between early childhood education and the primary grades. The researcher analyzed the perceptions, utilizing the Likert-value survey instrument responses, the open-ended survey responses, along with the focus group responses to triangulate the findings. Common themes shared across all data collection were evaluated and described. The most apparent themes derived from the findings included the following: the importance of relationships; the importance of accountability and the role language plays; the necessity of the consideration of

children's interest for optimal development; and the recognition of intentional planning, revisiting and reflection to the process of the FFS curriculum model. Overall, the FFS curriculum model was determined to be a curriculum model that takes educators on a continuous journey of thinking and learning. Evidence was gathered for the FFS curriculum model that implicated the possibility for replication of the model in other schools, as well as further research using the model to measure student success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first and foremost thank my Heavenly Father for bringing me to this point in my life. He has shown me time and time again that NOTHING is impossible when partnering with Him. I also need to thank my earthly father for pushing me to take one last shot at being Dr. Lisa Jackey. He has always pushed me to be the best I can be! I would like to thank my mother for her unconditional love and support ALWAYS!!

I would like to thank all of my committee at UNT. Dr. Laney, I could not have done this without you! Dr. Castro, thank you for mentioning the work publish! Dr. Reinke, thank you for continuing to encourage me along the journey, believing in me all the way! Dr. Moore, thank you for telling me to not give up until I was finished!

I need to thank all of my church family who prayed me through. I especially want to acknowledge my Single Parent Group. You are all SUPERHEREOS!!

I would like to thank the GFECC and the JCC of Dallas. The foundations for success curriculum model was birthed in the beautiful place that I consider a home and with those of you I consider family!!

Last and most certainly not least, I would like to thank my babies, Bekah, Alisa, Elijah and Myracle. I love you all so much!! Thank you for all the days you were forced to stay inside and “find something to do” because I needed to be writing. Always believe that with God NOTHING is impossible!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Page

Tables

Figures

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Topic Overview

Many early childhood educators are presently in a state of confusion and/or dismay with the current state of our education system and the impact that may have on practice. Teachers and administrators are overwhelmed with the inherent disjoint between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) and teaching to the standards (French, 2004). They have become increasingly discouraged with the overemphasis on literacy and math instruction (McDaniel et al., 2005) and the surmounting pressures of the "accountability shovedown" (Hatch, 2002). Throughout the current atmosphere of our education system early childhood educators and other interested constituents have posed a myriad of questions, and simultaneously elevated concerns, confusion and disagreements about the most suitable curriculum and instruction model for teaching young children in preschool.

The fundamental conflict is most prevalent between the beliefs and practices associated with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), or other state and national standards and the beliefs and practices of DAP. According to the CCSS Initiative website (http://corestandards.org/about-the-standards) the goal of the Common Core is to:

> Provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live…These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers. (n.p.)

While the focus of this initiative is to ensure school readiness, there is a general feeling that the common core may pose threats to early childhood education (NAEYC, 2002). On the

other hand if utilized appropriately and integrated within the best instructional models, the common core may provide early childhood education with the opportunity to exert its collective research and experience into K-12 education (NAEYC, 2012). Considering the viewpoints of the two articles "Can You Really Say No? Standards and Good Practices *Can* Work Together? (French, 2004) and "The Press of Standardized Curriculum: Does a Kindergarten Teacher Instruct with Worksheets or Let Children Play?" (Wien 2002) the struggle that exists between these two schools of thought is real. This struggle is paramount for a union that could transform the world of education.

The implementation of the common core, and for research purposes, any set of developmental standards teachers are held accountable for, provide a unique opportunity for the early childhood education field to be "present and vocal," as Ryan and Goffin (2008) encourage, not just within early childhood education but also in the broader education system. In order for this conversation to occur, early childhood educators need to prepare to use the same language when discussing curriculum and instruction. Teachers and administrators need to understand that the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) (2002) does support standards for young children, and the benefits of these standards extend into the early elementary years and beyond. However, in that same position statement (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2002) the content of the standards is considered to be one piece of the larger education system, which must be coupled with providing necessary supports to teachers (in training and ongoing learning opportunities, as well as developmentally

appropriate curriculum materials) and valid assessment systems aligned to the standards to ensure that expectations for children's learning are developmentally appropriate.

Many researchers have examined the problems existing within the inherent disconnect between DAP and learning standards, as well as the curriculum and instruction methods that surround the conversation. There has not yet been a curriculum model presented that could potentially solve this problem, unite these latent polar opposites and guide our students to a successful future. There must be a curriculum model that builds a bridge and simultaneously provides a cohesive understanding of the differences that have created the separation. It is time for a curriculum model that gives questions and not answers for educators to construct an adventurous and intellectual journey for the students it touches.

Statement of Problem

An increasing number of early childhood educators understand the importance of a valid curriculum model that provides the theoretical framework needed to operate an effective preschool education program (Miller, 2011) and to provide opportunities for children to be ready to learn (Bauman, 2012). However, many of the existing models focus on a specific segment of the greater overarching picture, instead of a union of the multifaceted approach that is necessary, of uniting developmentally appropriate practice to learning standards through an approach to learning that serves our young children the best. The Creative Curriculum, the Bank Street Developmental Interaction Approach, the High/Scope Curriculum and the Montessori Method are four existing models that concentrate on several important elements of a curriculum model. Despite the strengths of each curriculum model, none of the

curriculum models have effectively bridged the two worlds of early childhood education and the primary grades. The biggest problem in integrating the two worlds has been the fact that the worlds speak two different languages to describe curriculum and instruction practices. In addition, they use two different methods to describe their teaching, namely developmentally appropriate practice and measuring learning standards. The constant struggle that both worlds share is to effectively prepare children for a lifetime of learning success. In order to build a bridge from early childhood education to the primary grades, a common ground must be identified and implemented through the agreement on a curriculum model that satisfies both. I am proposing the ability of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model to effectively accomplish these goals. Through this research, I propose to first give the historical development and basics surrounding the initial implementation of the curriculum model being studied. Furthermore, I propose to investigate through a survey, containing both Likert and open-ended questions, and a small focus group session educators' perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the FFS model and through this understand the implications for possible change within the world of education as we know it.

The goals of the curriculum model are to:

- Help educators use the same language when discussing curriculum and instruction best practices in ECE that is used in the primary grades when discussing the field and implementing the model and encouraging the parallel process of using content language with the children
- Connect the use, importance and interrelation of the concepts of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and learning standards
- Make sure children are prepared for kindergarten

The unique aspects of the curriculum model are:

- The use of value planning as a foundational pillar
- The use of reflective supervision to build authentic working relationships and support professional growth and building reflective capacity to increase intentionality within the teachers
- The use of design thinking as a method of continuous improvement for the model

Purpose of Study

This qualitative study is designed to explore 55 implementers' (both teachers and administrators) perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the FFS early childhood curriculum model in the 18 classrooms at a north Texas private preschool. With respect to FFS goals, focus will be placed on (a) FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology, (b) FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections, (c) FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." In the same way, with respect to the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, focus will be placed on FFS implementers' perceptions of the (a) value-based curriculum component, (b) use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice and the (c) use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. The program successes and obstacles will also be discussed as well as further insight for the future.

Research Questions

Based on the problem statement and purpose of study explained above, the following

two research questions were generated:

1. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model with respect to the three sub topics below?

    a. The FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology, as well as the parallel process of using content language with the children.

    b. The FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections.

    c. The FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."

2. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, with respect to the sub topics listed below?

    a. The value-based curriculum component

    b. The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice

    c. The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model

Significance of Study

A valid curriculum model provides the theoretical framework needed to operate an effective preschool education program and to provide opportunities for children to be ready to learn. Evans (1982) said that a curriculum model which provides "an ideal representation of the essential philosophical, administrative, and pedagogical components of a grand education plan" is a necessary basis for educational decision making. In 1991, with funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) launched the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, a multiyear

effort to achieve an articulated, coordinated professional development system (Bredekamp, 1992). In a document released at the 1993 NAEYC conference, the committee stated that "professional development experiences are most effective when grounded in a sound theoretical and philosophical base and structured as a coherent and systematic program" (NAEYC, 1993, p. 12) In the same way, the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) and NAEYC jointly developed guidelines on teacher certification in programs serving children aged birth to eight. Among the areas in which certified early childhood teachers should demonstrate professional knowledge and abilities were "curriculum development, content, and implementation" (ATE & NAEYC, 1991, p. 19). Even the use and understanding of the importance of reflective supervision has continued to have a place in the discussion of curriculum models. Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo (1996) indicated that the literature on the professional development of staff stresses the importance of enabling them to reflect upon their actions. For example, Goffin (1989) stated that staff training should place more emphasis on the preactive and reflective stages of teaching, not just on the interactive "how-to" stage. It is the purpose of the FFS curriculum model and the intent of this study to examine the understanding and ability of this model to accomplish those items considered best practice in curriculum. For it is only when educators of preschool programs adopt valid curriculum models and facilitate work with parents and community entities will we be able to fulfill the educational potential of the preschool experiences of our children.

Definition of Terms

- Design thinking – Tim Brown (2010) CEO of IDEO, an international design and

consulting firm that specializes in human-centered design, has written that design thinking is "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity."

- Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) – In the National Association for the Education of Young Children Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice (2009 ver.) defines developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP, as an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development. DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

- Emergent curriculum – In the book Emergent curriculum in early childhood settings, Stacey (2009) explains emergent curriculum as an invitation to learning. It is an organic process of approaching curriculum that is organic, not linear, and constantly growing and evolving. Emergent curriculum can also be circular, as educators observe, reflect, consider documentation, ask questions, plan and then observe again. Stacey (2009) relates the process to action research in that observations promote discussion among early childhood education practitioners who examine the documentation, the stories of learning from the children, and then frame questions to plan the curriculum and instruction.

- Perception – For the purposes of this study, perception constitutes the way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting those qualities of the curriculum model being studied.

- Reflective practice – Graham and Phelps (2003) describe reflective practice as more than just thoughtful practice. They describe reflective practice, instead, as the process of turning thoughtful practice into a learning situation. Reflective practice in this study is the continuous process of reflection, with the teachers, through the curriculum and instruction process that helps to inform both the direction and scope of learning experiences.
- Reflective supervision – Zero to Three (2001) defines reflective supervision as a supervisor – supervisee relationship that pays attention to the influence of relationships on other relationships, the parallel process, and empowers the supervisee to discover solutions/concepts through consciously using strategies that include active listening and waiting. The goal of reflective supervision is to support staff who then support families- and create a more effective working relationship.

Assumptions and Limitations

During the completion of this study, there are several assumptions that were made. It is an assumption that the implementers whose perceptions are being gathered will give candid, honest answers to the researchers' questions. This is particularly important during the focus group. During the history of the use of the FFS model, implementers have been asked to give their thoughts surrounding the use and effectiveness of the model through small "think tanks" or focus groups. Their feedback through these "think tanks" has been instrumental in revising the model, year to year, with the hopes of making the curriculum connection to the instructional practices implemented in the classroom more cohesive. This is the culture of the professional community of the school where the case study is being completed. Therefore, it is

logical to assume the implementers will be comfortable in sharing their true perceptions and opinions. In addition, it is an assumption that all implementers are utilizing the FFS model as it has been described to them through training and constant monitoring. Frequent observations of the implementers' use of the model to this point have shown this assumption to be valid. Most implementers have confidently adopted the model in the classroom and have allowed this to guide their teaching practices. Moreover, it is also necessary to assume that implementers' perceptions are an accurate representation of what they think and do. As previously stated a culture exists in the professional learning community that is being studied where implementers have been encouraged to share their thoughts and beliefs. As they share their perceptions, positive changes are often made to improve their experience. For this reason, it is important to assume that implementers will behave the same way throughout this research study.

On the other hand, there are several limitations to which this study is bound. First of all, this study is limited to the FFS implementers in one specific location. At the point of this research, the FFS curriculum model has been developed and implemented at the location being studied and perceptions will be gathered from the implementers' total experience using the model. Caution will need to be used when generalizing these perceptions to an additional location that may implement the FFS model. Due to the nature of the curriculum model, during the implementation process the journey of adopting the model may be perceived differently through the culture of each individual school. Furthermore, this study is also limited to measuring perceptions, not student achievement or other program outcomes. Looking at student achievement is considered a feasible next step following this research study, although throughout this study will be seen as a limitation.

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature related to the background of the model. There is a brief description of the historical background surrounding the creation of the model. In addition, this chapter reviews literature related to the current state of early childhood education and the apparent need for a curriculum model that bridges developmentally appropriate practice and early learning standards. The methodology of the study is discussed in Chapter 3. Also included in Chapter 3 is the explanation of the survey, both the quantitative and qualitative components, and the focus group questions. Chapter 4 presents the results from the Likert-value survey responses, open-ended survey responses, and an analysis of the focus group. This chapter also presents the review of mind maps created and explored during the coding process. The overall evaluation and challenges to the FFS curriculum model that were reported through the open-ended survey responses and conferred during the focus group are also reviewed. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of what the results in Chapter 4 relate to the overall purpose of the study. In addition, time is spent correlating and/or contrasting the results with past research and/or literature pertaining to the study. Chapter 5 also offers a summary and the discussion of any obstacles and/or limitation the study may have. In addition, the implications this curriculum model may have for the future and any insights provided are also presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the world of early childhood education, a very real struggle exists. There is the need for balance in understanding and use of developmentally appropriate practice as a foundation for best practice while remaining committed to the task of preparing young children for the school experience that awaits them after preschool. In the ongoing debate over education reform designed to improve academic performance of American children, preschools are under increasing pressure to offer instruction in basic academic skills (Marcon, 2002). Fundamental philosophical and political differences in beliefs about the purpose of schooling, value orientations, and cultural priorities are central to the debate on how to best prepare young children for formal schooling (Kessler, 1991). The struggle that exists currently shapes the interrelationship, or lack thereof, of early childhood educators and those responsible for education in the primary grades. Furthermore, it is the very real disconnect in the field of education that currently exists between early childhood education and the primary grades that seems to impede any relationship or collaboration from taking place. The foundation for success curriculum model was created and implemented with the hope of forming a bridge between the field of early childhood education and the primary grades for the future education and success of all students.

Historical Background of the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

Prior to the foundations of success curriculum model being developed and implemented, the preschool being studied was struggling with the role of emergent curriculum,

specifically how to implement emergent curriculum and still hold teachers accountable for material being presented to the children and make sure families could be confident that their children were ready for kindergarten. Furthermore, there was a deep desire from a curriculum and instruction point of view, to merge the two worlds of education, namely early childhood education and the world after, for the benefit of all teachers and families enrolled. It was important to find a way to help the teachers understand relevant curriculum and instruction terminology to help them become confident when using it to discuss their field, as well as the parallel process of using content language with the children for developmental growth. It was imperative for the early childhood educators within the school to embrace the excellence of education they wanted to deliver and confidently communicate this to families. It was important for the administration to find a way to encompass emergent curriculum and follow the interest of the child and on the other hand to measure the success of the children and optimize their development. Both teachers and administrators knew they no longer wanted to develop a fixed mindset with the children, but instead nurture a growth mindset, and were interested in the approaches to learning that help children learn best and simultaneously wanted to deliver developmentally appropriate instruction that could be measured to track success. After all, families very clearly wanted the best education for their children and teachers and administrators wanted to deliver excellent education founded in how children learn and grow best. It became apparent that the desired educational philosophy without a curriculum model for teachers to construct their curriculum and instruction practices had the school disjointed and unable to see the cohesiveness desired by the administration. It was at this point that the decision was made to create a curriculum that would accomplish all goals of

the curriculum for teachers, administrators and families. There was a desire to connect all the classrooms throughout the school, yet incorporate some truly unique aspects that would dramatically move the preschool away from traditional preschool thematic units and rote learning for basic academic preparation. This curriculum model would move children past a fixed model of success into a dynamic system that incorporated intellectual goals that would prepare them in deeper ways.

In addition to the educational goals of the model, there were very unique aspects to the culture of the school that needed to be foundational to the curriculum model. Foundational to the preschool was the Jewish faith, where Jewish life, traditions, holidays and culture were studied and incorporated into classroom activities. For this reason, It was important for the model to not only accomplish the goals of incorporating developmentally appropriate practice in conjunction with valuable state learning standards and preparing children for kindergarten but also to include a strong layer of infusing the Jewish way of life and culture. Through many conversations on how to achieve this, the conclusion was drawn to connect the use of Jewish values. The Jewish values were meant to form the consistency across classrooms needed to foster the culture of the school and simultaneously enrich the lives of the children who attended.

Also foundational to the school culture was the understanding that relationships were woven through every piece of the school. Healthy relationships were essential in the classrooms where co-teachers were expected to co-create the experiences for children each day. They were important between the co-teachers and the families that they became more and more a part of each and every day. In the same way, strong connections between teachers

throughout the age level teams and how they interacted overall with each other and the administration were crucial to the culture and climate of the school. The administrators knew that early childhood is an emotionally charged field and that the school, and specifically the curriculum model, had to find a way to consider these relationships and these emotions while constructing the plans for curriculum and instruction. It was through careful research and discovery that it was determined to use reflective supervision as a way to address and nurture healthy relationships throughout the school. In the same way, the reflective process used with the teachers could not focus only on the working relationships throughout the school; it needed to continue for the benefit of the classroom and throughout the interactions with the children. For this reason, reflective capacity of the teachers with and through the development of the child was also added to the model. Lastly, the school being studied had a vision for a professional learning community; a vision where the educators could also co-create their learning and development with their colleagues and the administration. The creation and constant evaluation of the curriculum model had to be shared by all. After all, it was the educators using the model that would be most able to help shape the best practices and implementation procedures. The administrators wanted to give the educators a voice in how the curriculum model would be used to shape the learning experiences of the children and most effectively aid their documentation of the success for their students. Design thinking became a natural way to discuss and think about the model. Piloting new pieces of the model became the norm and tweaking the model yearly became a unique aspect of the curriculum model. After all, education changes year to year because children change year to year. It was our job to make sure the way we intentionally planned and effectively documented their

learning stayed applicable to the current culture of educational society and the school. Thus, the value based learning, use of reflective supervision and reflective capacity, and use of design thinking as a way to evaluate the model naturally emerged as the unique aspects necessary to the curriculum model.

Theoretical Background of the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The theoretical background for the FFS curriculum model is multifaceted and truly unique to the education arena. The FFS curriculum model was created through the understanding of emergent curriculum and around the belief that children are constructivist learners. There are many different perspectives of constructivism, yet there are two theorists who most commonly are discussed, namely Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget (1983) focused on how humans make meaning in relation to the interaction between their experiences and their ideas. Within the FFS curriculum model it is important that children's ideas are considered as they emerge and that the learning planned is centered on these ideas. However, it is important to the FFS curriculum model that educators are not waiting for development to occur, like Piaget would have suggested necessary. Piaget anticipated many applicable educational strategies, such as this aspect of discovery learning with a greater importance of activity and play. However, Vygotsky (1978) integrated the importance of the surrounding social interactions and co-constructed learning to the theory of cognitive development. Through what Vygotsky called "dialogues," we socially interact and communicate with others to learn the cultural values of our society. Vygotsky also believed that "human activities take place in cultural settings and cannot be understood apart from these settings" (Woolfolk, 2004).

Therefore, the FFS curriculum model is more firmly rooted in the constructivist ideas of Lev Vygotsky. Unlike Piaget's belief that children's development must necessarily precede their learning, Vygotsky (1978) understood learning as a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function. Furthermore, it is possible for social learning to precede development.

As previously mentioned, the FFS curriculum model is based in constructivist theory and constructs children's learning through consideration of their ideas and experiences, however the intentionality of the planned experiences to result in necessary learning is also very important. Vygotsky (1978) explained the zone of proximal development as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. The FFS curriculum model was constructed with the understanding that children need to be guided to and through the development desired by the educators planning the experiences. Vygotsky believed that given proper help and assistance, children could perform a problem that Piaget would consider to be out of the child's mental capabilities. The zone is the area at which a child can perform a challenging task, given appropriate help (Woolfolk, 2004). By guiding children through their zone of proximal development, we offer them the understanding of learning strategies which they can internalize and use in areas of future development.

Moreover, the FFS curriculum model incorporates other important constructivist principles through the sequence of the intentional planning process. Central to the model is consideration for where the children are developmentally and how to get them to the next

level of development. Simultaneously, and true to emergent curriculum, is the importance of considering the interests of the children. All throughout the cyclical nature of the model, is the contemplation of the reflections of how children are responding to those activities being planned. Inherent to the planning process is also the desire for the facilitation of children's understanding of the social culture they live in and how to interact with others well. All of these layers are explored through the curriculum model and planned for in the instructional process. In the same way, mind mapping is used to gain a clear perspective of both the educators' and children's thoughts so meaningful learning can take place. Furthermore, The FFS curriculum model is based on vitally important pieces of Vygotsky's theory such as scaffolding, co-constructed knowledge, and dialogue between the children and the educators. Scaffolding involves providing the learner with hints or clues for problem solving in order to allow the student to better approach the problem in the future (Woolfolk, 2004). In addition, co-construction involves the process of children interacting during shared activities for the benefit of solving problems. When children receive help through this process by the educators they are surrounded by, they are usually able to utilize better strategies in the future when similar situations present themselves. Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) would indicate that co-constructed dialogues lead to internalization, which in turn leads to independent thinking. Both scaffolding and co-construction are instrumental to the planning process using the FFS curriculum model. The curriculum planning template in which educators are required to intentionally plan for the week incorporate the consideration of these techniques.

The last constructivist principle that the FFS curriculum model is rooted in is social constructivism, simply a more specific constructivist theory. Social constructivism not only

acknowledges the uniqueness of the learner, but actually encourages, utilizes, and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process (Wertsch, 1997). The FFS curriculum model believes there is an importance found within the social context of the school, specifically the social context within the larger context of the Jewish community. How children both interact with and engage within the social context they are surrounded in is vitally important and included in the curriculum model. Von Glaserdfeld (1989) emphasized that children construct their own understanding and do not simply mirror and reflect what they read. Children look for meaning and will try to find regularity and order in the world even in the absence of full or complete information. Within the FFS curriculum model, it is important that educators continuously think about the meaning of the social environment they are presented. They are required to go through a series of questions that allow them to contemplate the meaning of the values that guide their classroom. They are able to reflect on the language they will use and the activities they will provide to model the values they want to be a reflection of their social world. Social constructivism, strongly influenced by Vygotsky (1978), suggests that knowledge is first constructed in a social context and is then appropriated by individuals. The educators make the meaning of the social environment forefront through the use of Jewish values, as well as applicable content language, with the understanding that children will co-construct what this means for them and how they can then integrate it in their lives. According to social constructivists, the process of sharing individual perspectives, called collaborative elaboration (Meter & Stevens, 2000), results in learners constructing understanding together that wouldn't be possible alone (Greeno et al., 1996). Co-construction, again, is forefront to the FFS model and how it generates the children's learning experiences by requiring the educators to think

through how these experiences will be presented, what specific content language will be used, and then once presented, allow children to participate in the creation of the knowledge.

The FFS curriculum model is deeply rooted in constructivist theory for both the children and the educators. Constructivist theory says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. This model encourages educators and children to co-construct meaning to their experiences and simultaneously holds educators accountable for bringing children through the zone of proximal development. There is a parallel process that exists between how children are expected to learn and how educators use the curriculum model, as well as how content language, both used and understood, is woven through the intentional planning for the children. This duality of the model, grounded in constructivism, provides an opportunity for learning to occur with the children and professionally at the same time. This is a truly unique aspect of the curriculum model.

Curriculum Models in Early Childhood Prior to the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

Among the best known and most widely used early childhood curriculum models are the creative curriculum, the developmental interaction approach (also called the Bank Street approach), the high/scope curriculum, and the Montessori method. The descriptions for these models are found in great detail in Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo, (1996), Goffin and Wilson (2001), and Roopnarine and Johnson (2000). The details of these curriculum models will be reviewed to give a contextual background and history leading up to the development of the FFS curriculum model explored in this study.

The creative curriculum for preschool was developed by Diane Trister Dodge. Dodge (2002) first presented the creative curriculum in 1979 and founded Teaching Strategies, Incorporated for this purpose. Dodge stated that the curriculum provides a basic structure for a developmentally appropriate program. This specific curricular approach was developed based on her career experience in working with preschool educators. In conjunction with the curriculum model, she has provided a parent's guide for building the baby's brain during the first five years of life (Dodge, 2000a); an accompanying creative curriculum for infants, toddlers, and two-year olds (Dodge 2010b); and a creative curriculum for family child care (2009). Creative curriculum specialists acknowledge that support by trainers is desirable (Dodge, 1988, 2000b). However, teachers learn the creative curriculum primarily through self-instruction rather than through training (Dodge, 2002). The approach guides teachers to make their practices consistent with their goals for children by arranging their classrooms to support teachers' developmentally appropriate practice and children's active learning. The creative curriculum emphasizes social competence and provides guidance to teachers, defined as adults working with children, by focusing on 10 interest areas or activities in the program environment (Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo, 1996). Teachers arrange the learning environment into these ten interest areas: art, blocks, cooking, computers, house corner, library corner, music and movement, the outdoors, sand and water, and table toys (Dodge, 2010a). No matter what other curriculum models teachers may use, the creative curriculum can serve as the foundation for any program based on child development theory (Dodge & Colker, 1992, Preface). The creative curriculum is similar to the FFS model in that it also supports DAP and children's active

learning. Furthermore, the learning environment is set up using centers in the FFS curriculum model as it is in the creative curriculum, although it is not a central component of the model.

Another model worth exploring is the high/scope curriculum. The high/scope curriculum was developed in the 1960s and 1970s by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation staff under the leadership of David P. Weikart (Hohmann, Banet, & Weikart, 1979; Hohmann & Weikart, 1995; Weikart, 1997). Based on Piaget's constructivist theory of child development (Piaget, 1970), the high/scope curriculum was initially developed for use with disadvantaged preschool children in the Perry Preschool program (Weikart, 2005). The approach has now been disseminated nationally and internationally to many different types of children in every type of preschool setting. The high/scope curriculum advocates active learning and classrooms that are arranged with discrete, well-equipped interest areas (Epstein, 2006). It rests on the foundation that children are active learners who learn best when they plan their own activities, carry them out and then reflect upon them. The classrooms that utilize the High/Scope method are divided into interest areas and are arranged so that children can easily engage in the environment. According to Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo (1996), an important part of the curriculum is the "plan-do-review" sequence of the daily routine in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their own ideas, and then reflect on their activities with adults and peers. A significant piece of High/Scope is the identified list of key experiences. Teachers use these key experiences as a conceptual framework to help them plan activities, observe children, think about the day, and encourage the variety of experiences that are essential to young children's healthy physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth (Epstein, Schweinhart, & McAdoo, 1996). The elements

highlighted in this curriculum model are also used within the FFS curriculum model. However, there are additional unique aspects that make the FFS model innovative in nature that are not explored in high/scope.

Another popular early childhood curriculum model is the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach. This curriculum model was founded in New York City in 1916 by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (Shapiro & Nager, 2000) and is named because of its original geographic location. The Bank Street developmental-interaction approach was also named for its salient concepts: the changing patterns of growth, understanding and response that characterize children and adults as they develop; and the dual meaning of interaction as, first, the interconnected spheres of thought and emotion, and, equally, the importance of engagement with the environment if children, adults and the world (Shapiro & Nager, 2000). The foundation for success curriculum model also considers interactions important in the formulation of intentional experiences throughout instruction. In addition to the focus on interactions the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, according to Shapiro and Biber (1972), has an explicit purpose: to educate teachers and children within an educational frame which brings together concepts from dynamic-developmental psychologists, and progressive educational theorists and practitioners. In the same way, Mitchell (1953, p. 273) noted: "In 1916, two different kinds of work with children were just beginning: research organizations, studying child development and experimental schools. The essential and hitherto untried feature of the Bureau plan was to combine the two kinds of thinking and work within one organization in a functional relationship. The Bank Street developmental-interactional approach brought together the need for developmentally appropriate practice with the importance of

interactions for the benefit of the children. This combination is very similar to a portion of the foundational elements of the FFS curriculum model. In the same way the FFS curriculum model constructs a method of thinking through the interactions of the children, providing developmentally appropriate activities for the children, and the importance of social emotional learning, Shapiro and Biber (1972) explained the developmental-interaction point of view as constructing educational goals in terms of developmental processes. They described how the growth of cognitive function could not be separated from the growth of personal and interpersonal processes. Bank Street inspires teachers to use their own judgment about educational practices in light of their their understanding and observation of children's development (Biber, 1984; Hesse-Biber & Nagy, 2011).

The Bank Street developmental-interaction approach has one more similarity to the FFS model and that is the belief of the importance of creating a difference in children for the benefit of the society. The founder of Bank Street, Lucy Mitchell's dual emphasis on education as a route to social change and schools as a context to study child development appears very comparable to the way teachings of Jewish values and DAP comes together in the FFS curriculum model. Bank Street methods are comparable to the FFS model, yet again there are components unique to the FFS model that address additional concepts and methods of curriculum and instruction; the main difference being the accountability of the measurement or adherence to a developmentally appropriate set of learning standards.

The last curriculum reviewed is the Montessori method (Montessori & George, 1964). The educational philosophy and the curriculum of the Montessori method are based on both the writings and the work of the Italian physician Maria Montessori (1870-1952). The

Montessori method does not deal with a particular theoretical model of children's development. However, Maria was a perceptive observer who believed in the goodness and the individuality of children. Respect for the child and "autoeducation," the idea that children teach themselves through their own experiences, are important cornerstones of the Montessori method (Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo, 1996). Montessori believed in children having choice and freedom in the activities they engaged in, although her method is still an approach with structure. As Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo, (1996) go on to explain; a Montessori program provides a carefully prepared and ordered environment in which children naturally pursue their developmental "ascent." The environment is set up to guide the children's development in four areas: development of the senses, conceptual or academic development, competence in practical life activities, and character development. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator. As facilitator, the teacher introduces the children to the materials and demonstrates their proper use with a minimum of verbal instruction (Lindauer, 1993). The crucial goal of the Montessori method is to create competent children who also learn to behave as socially conscious citizens by respecting the world around them and those that are a part of it.

All of the curriculum models that have been explored are similar to the FFS curriculum model, the topic of this research study. All four models treat children as active learners and allow them to be partially responsible for their experiences. The FFS model does as well. The learning environment is also important to all models, as well is the way the children interact with the learning environment. The Montessori method involves a character development

component that asks children to recognize and interact responsibly with the world around them which is similar to the values component of the FFS curriculum model.

The biggest difference between these four models and the FFS model is that the FFS curriculum model is a multifaceted, multilayered approach to curriculum and instruction that delicately orchestrates a path for thinking and learning while facilitating a process for accountability of children's success. The FFS curriculum model helps construct the bridge between early childhood education and the primary grades by creating the roadmap for intentional plans of emergent curriculum that also plan to a group of developmental milestones. Here lies the overarching problem early childhood is faced with today. Although groups such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), National Association of Elementary Schools Principals (NAESP), and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) have formally endorsed developmentally appropriate practices for children from birth through age 8, there is still a great deal of resistance to accepting theory on how young children learn (Epstein, Schweinhart, & McAdoo, 1996). This resistance comes from the fear that by allowing children to learn in the way that is best for them to learn, the measurement and accountability for success disappears. This is where the FFS curriculum model differs from the others explored. There is both accountability for learning and measurement in the foundation for success model that takes into account how children learn best and what is developmentally appropriate for them to be learning.

Early Learning Standards in the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The FFS curriculum model is deeply rooted in the use of a set of developmental guidelines. These developmental guidelines were created through the adaptation of the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (Parks & VORT corporation, 1994) with the integration of Texas Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Guidelines (TEA, 1980; 1999). In addition, there were several revisions made to the more academic domains using other research supported documents as well as real life concepts that the early childhood educators felt necessary to add. These guidelines were also revised every year with teacher input, in regards to how they are being implemented in the classroom and utilized overall. In all cases, the learning standards were central to the planning process and foundational in the measurement of children's developmental success. This aspect of the model is unique in that the constructivist model is tied to the accountability of curriculum being directly related to instructional planning.

In the primary grades, our educators are surrounded with the pressure of teaching to the standards and being held accountable for what children learn. When Gallup (2014) asked U.S. public school teachers if they are experiencing each of seven possible emotional reactions to the new curriculum standards initiative, 65% said they are worried and 62% frustrated. Nearly half agreed they feel hopeful, but relatively few said they feel confident (27%) or enthusiastic (20%). Due to the context of this learning environment, more and more teachers are frustrated with the feeling of being less creative in teaching and not really preparing children for the future.

In early childhood education, there is a very real fear that this accountability focus can destroy the focus on how children learn best, this being through play. The research

surrounding the results for developmentally appropriate teaching versus strictly academic focused teaching supports the fear for less success for our young children. These findings were the results of a research study that compared three groups.

> By the end of their sixth year in school, children whose preschool experiences had been academically directed earned significantly lower grades compared to children who had attended child-initiated preschool classes. Children's later school success appears to have been enhanced by more active, child-initiated early learning experiences. Their progress may have been slowed by overly academic preschool experiences that introduced formalized learning experiences too early for most children's developmental status (Marcon, 2002).

Beginning in the 1980s, leading early childhood experts expressed concern about the wisdom of overly didactic, formal instructional practices for young children (e.g., Elkind, 1986; Zigler, 1987). They feared that short-term academic gains would be offset by long-term stifling of children's motivation and self-initiated learning. Research conducted later suggests that these early concerns were warranted. Compared to children whose kindergarten experience emphasized child-initiated learning, primary-grade teachers rated children from didactic, teacher-centered kindergartens lower in conduct and work-study habits, and perceived them to be more distractible, less willing to follow directions, and less prosocial (Hart, Charlesworth, Burts, & DeWolf, 1993). Stipek, Feiler, Daniels, and Milburn (1995) also found motivational differences favoring a child-initiated view of early education compared to a more formalized, didactic approach. They cautioned that early academic gains in reading skills associated with didactic instruction of preschoolers "come with some costs" that could have long-term negative effects on achievement. In addition Burts et al., (1990) found that children in inappropriate classrooms exhibited more total stress behaviors throughout the day and more stress behaviors during group times and workbook/worksheet activities. These findings compound the research

that explains how more academically rigorous classrooms tend to have negative effects on young children's future success.

Furthermore, early childhood educators quoted research that found children in child-initiated classrooms scored higher on measures of creativity, or divergent thinking, than children in academically oriented classrooms (Hirsh-Pasek, Hyson, & Rescorla, 1990; Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescorla, 1990). Progress reports from public-school preschool programs indicated that children in child-initiated classrooms had better verbal skills than children in academically oriented programs (Marcon, 1992). In other studies on language development in child-initiated and academically focused or teacher facilitated programs those programs rooted in child-initiated learning were again associated with better language outcomes. Dunn, Beach and Kontos, 1994 cited that children's receptive language was better in programs with higher quality literacy environments and when developmentally appropriate activities were more prevalent. In addition to language outcomes, it also appeared as though young children in developmentally appropriate programs seemed more confident in their own cognitive skills. Children described their cognitive competence more positively when they attended child-initiated rather than academically oriented programs (Mantzicopoulos, Neuharth-Pritchett, & Morelock, 1994; Stipek et al., 1995).

With primary grade teachers focused on standards and meeting them and early childhood educators focused on preserving the constructivist learning approach of play there seems to be no common denominator to connect on. The existing curriculum models in early childhood have focused on developmentally appropriate practice and how children learn, without a way to authentically assess and have this knowledge inform instruction for the

future. This need in the world of curriculum and instruction naturally allow a platform for the FFS curriculum model.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice within the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The FFS curriculum model is built with the foundational belief of the importance of using developmentally appropriate practice with children. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) describes a research based approach to teaching young children from infancy through third grade that is very child-centered. Again, DAP is central to the understanding of how children learn within the school that implements the FFS curriculum model. It is important to those implementing the model that children are met where they are developmentally and guided successfully through the zone of proximal development, as previously discussed. It is also important that skills that are not developmentally appropriate are not addressed until children are ready to be successful.

The first publication of the DAP guidelines (Bredekamp 1987) was developed in response to the growing emphasis on academic instruction in preschool environments that emerged following the widely-influential policy document, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). It was at this point that the discussion began about a new way of thinking about early childhood education.

DAP is rooted in the fact that all domains of children's development and learning interrelate. When DAP is employed in classroom environments, lessons are more successful, highly effective, and all students benefit throughout each learning domain in relation to literacy instruction (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). A teacher who implements DAP into his or her

teaching employs a busy classroom where students are self-engaged, interacting physically with objects and people, mentally processing, and constructing knowledge that builds on previous learning (Beaty, 2009). Those early childhood educators who passionately use DAP as a basis for their instruction believe in the importance of fostering both learning and development in academic domains, as well as the emotional and physical domains. Social factors strongly influence cognitive development and academic competence. In the same way, the cognitive domain influences the social domain. Research indicates a positive correlation between a high quality early childhood classroom that uses DAP and later school success (Birdwell, 2009) and educators' teaching strategies that have a direct effect on student achievement (Van-Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

Experimental support can be found for child-centered approaches to preschool instruction, especially if the importance is on long-term goals and social-emotional factors related to academic success, such as self-regulation and problem solving. Research suggests that there is an important role for play or active "meaning making" by the child in the classroom, but that this must occur within an environment offering the teacher a clear instructional role (Dickinson, 2002). As Stipek et al. (1995; 1998) highlight the simple dichotomy between teacher directed and child centered learning is not adequate in explaining the complexity of instructional practices in early childhood. Further research in the combination of direct instruction with child-centered group instruction that is facilitated by focused teachers is needed. It is important for developmentally appropriate practice to provide the intention for instruction and the sequence of content available to measure learning, and opportunities for

social-emotional growth and self-regulation (Roskos & Neuman, 2002). Furthermore, new approaches must acknowledge the complexity of young children's learning and development.

Some researchers have compared existing models to determine which may be more effective. Miller and Bizzell (1983a, 1983b) studied (1) a traditional nursery school, also called Bank Street; (2) Montessori; (3) a direct instruction approach called DISTAR; and (4) a program called DARCEE, which blended specific pre-academic goals and motivational goals. Short-term effects of the programs were consistent with the goals of the individual programs. DISTAR and DARCEE produced the highest outcomes in pre-academic areas, while the more child- centered programs led to higher levels of inventiveness, curiosity, and social participation. Nevertheless, by second grade, the boys from the Montessori program appeared to be outperforming other groups in reading and also showed a less severe decline in IQ. This advantage was maintained through middle school and points to success for child-centered programs.

In addition, Karnes and colleagues (1983) studied five model approaches, including traditional, Montessori, and direct instruction. At the end of first grade, the children from the most highly structured pre-academic programs were most successful in school. Consistent with the research from Miller and Bizzell, in a later follow-up, the original Montessori group contained the highest percentage of high school graduates, while the traditional program group was found to be close behind. Despite the potential methodological limitations of these studies, when taken together, they present a pattern commendable of more investigation.

Another variable that seems to vary as a function of preschool instructional practices are motivational outcomes. Despite the higher rate of success on achievement tests from children in more academically oriented preschool programs than the children in more child-

centered preschool programs, the children in academically oriented preschools rated their abilities lower, showed lower expectations for success on academic tasks, showed more dependency on adults, evidenced less pride in their accomplishments, and claimed to worry more about school (Golbeck, 2002). Another study replicated these findings in preschool but suggested that these relationships become more complex in kindergarten, making it difficult to separate the type of instruction from the social context of teachers' behavior (Stipek et al., 1995, 1998).

The Unique Intersection of Early Learning Standards and DAP within the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

Basic to the FFS curriculum model is the understanding that developmentally appropriate practice must always be considered while simultaneously measuring and accounting for children's learning through a series of learning standards or developmental guidelines. It is foundational to the creation of this model that without this accountability, children can learn a plethora of information without the understanding that there is specific information that should be attained for preparation of their next educational step. Most curriculum models either have a direct instruction approach or a child-centered, or child-initiated, focus instead of the intersection. Without a clear indication that either type of model can predict success across all developmental domains, there is a need for a curriculum model that embraces the constructivist learning approaches and also builds in accountability for measuring child development so that young children are prepared for the next stage of learning.

Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers must envision new approaches to instruction integrating proven success with new research on early learning. Developmentally appropriate practices must provide a clear role for the teacher, a sequence of content for the child to learn, and opportunities for self-regulation (Roskos & Neuman, 2002). Furthermore, new approaches must acknowledge the complex ecology of young children's learning and development. The National Education Association (Boyer, 1992) believes high quality early childhood programs are rooted in a conglomerate of characteristics including a well-rounded curriculum that enhances the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domains of each child's development, teachers and administrators who are caring and well-trained in early childhood education and child development, curriculum supervision, and assessment and evaluation that support children's development through curriculum implementation. It is imperative to include and consider (1) the interplay among emotions, social understanding, and cognition within the child (Pianta, 1999); (2) factors within the classroom such as socioemotional climate and the teacher-child relationships; and (3) the larger context of school, family, and community (Rogoff et al., 2001). This balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive, and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community (Center for the Developing Child, 2007).

Brain Development and Kindergarten Readiness within the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The integrated approach to curriculum in early childhood education should be rooted in the latest research in brain development. The FFS curriculum model has a basis rooted in the knowledge of brain development and the understanding of this research within the context of

education. Early experiences affect the quality of brain architecture by establishing either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the learning, health and behavior that follow. In the first few years of life, 700 new neural connections are formed every second (Center for the Developing Child, 2007). New discoveries in neuroscience suggest that school readiness interventions might come too late if they start after the child is three years old (Lally, 2010) The brain is particularly responsive to experiences and environments during early development, which influences how well or poorly its architecture matures and functions (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010). The knowledge that the brain's foundation for all later learning is created in the first three years of life should be considered when shifting the paradigm of curriculum models.

As education experts work on curriculum models and approaches to enhance learning outcomes for young children, neuroscience and genomics suggest that further decreases in disparities in educational achievement will require both the provision of rich learning experiences and the reduction of significant adversity that disrupts the developing architecture of the brain (Council for the Developing Child, 2007). The curriculum model within this case study was created with the understanding that relationships within the educational setting also prepare the foundation for all other learning. It heightens the awareness of these relationships and contains a process imbedded in the model for peer coaching. The peer coaching aspect ensures that the relationships between caregivers are healthy and able to support other developmental domains. Because young children develop in an environment of relationships, it is critically important that adult caregivers interact with them in a consistent and responsive manner (National Scientific Council on the Developing Council, 2010). In biological terms, a

child's environment of relationships can affect lifelong outcomes in emotional health, regulation of stress response systems, immune system competence, and the early establishment of health-related behaviors (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010).

The foundation for success curriculum model is rooted in the fact that social and emotional development is foundational for all other learning.

> Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. The emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community(Center on the Developing Child, 2007).

The Role of Reflective Supervision and Reflective Practice within the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

Reflective supervision is a relationship for learning (Fenichel, 1992). In a similar way, reflective supervision can be seen as an act of shared mindfulness (Foley, 2009). In the world of early childhood education, a world filled with complex relationships between many different people, including but not limited to, the child, the teacher, the parent and the administrator, it is important to find a method of nurturing those relationships to create a healthy learning atmosphere. It is important to begin with relationships and then explore how individuals know another person and the nature of communication between people that nurtures the layered skills of social and emotional intelligence (Siegal & Shamoon-Shanok, 2010). At the root of these abilities is a central process called mindsight, which is how an individual sees the internal world of the mind (Siegal, 2009). Due to the impact of healthy relationships on growth, it is

important for all involved in the world of early childhood education to take part in a reflective relationship through considering the mental world in which they exist, also called mindsight. Combining insight and empathy, mindsight also enables people to envision relationships as how two minds connect, and even to know how the brain of each person comes to resonate with the nervous system's signals from another (Siegal & Shamoon-Shanok, 2010).

Reflective capacity refers to being aware of one's own personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes as well as understanding how these practices affect one's behaviors and responses when interacting with others. Moreover, the relationship between the practitioner and supervisor provides a respectful and thoughtful space where observations, authentic feelings, thoughts, and ideas can be explored on a regular basis (O'Rourke, 2011). This "relationship for learning" (Shahmoon-Shanok, 2006, p. 343) provides a trusting context in which a practitioner is able to reflect on the realities of work with infants, very young children, and families and on oneself (Weatherston, 2011). Some research has suggested that access to reflective supervision creates opportunities for self-exploration and insight (Weatherston & Barron, 2009) and results in higher quality of service and the potential for better outcomes for families (Heffron, 2005).

"Reflective" supervision is now commonly required for staff of many programs that serve young children ages 0 to 3 and their families, including infant mental health services, early care and education programs, child-development programs, health care, and specialized home-visiting programs (Eggbeer, Shahmoon-Shanok, & Clark, 2010; Emde, 2009; Gilkerson & Shahmoon-Shanok, 2000; Heffron & Murch, 2010; Virmani, Masyn, Thompson, Conners, Burrow, & Mansell, 2013). The organization Zero to Three's work over the last quarter-century

has found that reflective supervision promotes and supports the development of a relationship-based organization. This approach expands on the idea that supervision is a context for learning and professional development. According to Zero to Three, there are three essential building blocks for reflective supervision and they are reflection, collaboration, and regularity. All three of these components are important and have been built into the construction of the FFS curriculum model.

In addition to the use of reflective supervision for the benefit of the relationships within the preschool, a method of reflective teaching is also employed in the FFS curriculum model. Loughran (2002) writes, "It is through the development of knowledge and understanding of the practice setting and the ability to recognize and respond to such knowledge that the reflective practitioner becomes truly responsive to the needs, issues and concerns that are so important in shaping practice." While the conventional and more traditional understanding of teaching and learning, or training, view that a teaching activity is a moment to exteriorize the knowledge and skills acquired by teachers who should demonstrate efficiency when applying techniques and strategies in their language classrooms (Freeman, 2009). Richards (1998), Wallace (1991), Williams (2001), and Zeichner (2008) argued that categorizing professional teacher preparation as training reduces teacher education to the mere application of strategies and techniques created and sustained by external researchers who are distant from the needs and particularities of a determined educational context. On the other hand in reflective education, teaching practice occupies a relevant formative place because it is seen as one of the main scenarios for systematic observation, analysis, reflection, assessment, and action concerning language teaching and learning. In addition, it has become a context in which prospective

teachers can reflect on their own practice, aiming at language teaching, learning optimization and continuous self-professional development. According to Gebhard (2009), other teaching practice objectives in initial teacher education include developing teachers' knowledge about school and classroom realities, improving teaching abilities and competences for professional practice, stimulating systematic observation and reflection about their pedagogical actions, and providing opportunities for future teachers to engage in collaborative projects.

The concept of learning through reflection is grounded in theories of adult teaching and learning as well as models of experiential education. The essential attributes of experiential learning are action and reflection (Beaudin & Quick, 1995). "Reflection involves taking the unprocessed, raw material of experience and engaging with it, as a way to make sense of what has occurred" (Boud, 2001, p. 10). Keeping written logs or journals have been found to deepen the quality of learning, increase the ability to reflect, enhance problem-solving skills, allow opportunity to explore personal constructs, and facilitate understanding one's view of the world (Boud, 2001; Knott & Scragg, 2010). It is for this reason that the written requirement of reflection is included in the foundation for success curriculum model.

Interest in both reflective practice and reflective supervision continues to the present. Perhaps no more clear example of the current energy and enthusiasm around evaluating reflective supervision can be found than the brainstorming sessions conducted in packed rooms at recent Zero to Three National Training Institutes and the participatory research begun by leaders at the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health League of States Retreat (Eggbeer et al., 2010; Weatherston, Weigand, & Weigand, 2010). These interests are forefront to the FFS curriculum model.

Design Thinking and the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The FFS curriculum model was created with the idea that design thinking in education is important for effective curriculum implementation. The design thinking process first defines the problem and then implements the solutions, always with the needs of the user demographic at the core of concept development. This process focuses on searching for user needs, understanding them, creating and thinking about new methods, and then implementing them. At the core of this process is a bias towards action and creation: by creating and testing something to continue to learn and improve upon initial ideas. The FFS curriculum model was created with the belief that the goals and unique aspects would steer the implementation of the model and allow the users to connect through those foundational pieces. However, it is a model that recognizes any curriculum model is only as successful as it can be implemented into practice. For this reason, the model is consistently revisited through a series of "think tanks" with the teachers to gauge the practicality of connecting the model to classroom practice. The leader of the business consulting firm IDEO Tim Brown has written that design thinking is "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity." (Brown, 2010) In the same way, design thinking is described as an iterative approach to problem solving that intentionally seeks out people with different perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience and has them work together to create a practical solution for a real-world problem. In the case of the FFS curriculum model, the teachers were intentionally assembled to discuss the success of the model and find ways to make it more applicable and easier to implement for the benefit of the school using the model. There are

currently many researchers (Koh, Chai, & Wong, 2016) exploring the intersection of design thinking and education and the FFS curriculum model is one example of how this method can be helpful to curriculum and instruction.

Summary

The FFS curriculum model is rooted in constructivist theory in relation to both the child and the educator. Understanding the child as a constructivist learner and how the educator scaffolds the learning that is intentionally planned through the model is paramount. The model has three goals and three unique aspects. The goals of the model are to make sure that educators understand and use pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology, articulate and understand the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections and to understand what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." The unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model are the value-based curriculum component, the use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice, and the use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. The research of these goals and unique aspects have been explored and will serve as the foundation for the current research study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter on methodology describes the research method and procedure that the researcher used in the study. For this reason, the methodology chapter is organized to include a detailed description of the research method, a comprehensive representation of the participants, an explanation of the instrumentation, including Likert survey questions, open-ended survey questions and focus group questions, as well as clarification of the procedures and data analysis. The chapter culminates with a brief summary.

Research Method

This study was conducted as a descriptive embedded single-case study, of an innovative preschool in North Texas, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the educators' perceptions of the goals and the unique aspects of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model being implemented. This case-study research is derived from the same compelling feature Bromley (1986) describes: the desire to derive an up-close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of "cases" set in their real-world contexts. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Zainal, 2007). Specifically, this study closely examined the perceptions of 55 early childhood FFS curriculum model implementers, both educators and administrators, in a

suburban preschool within north Texas who experienced comparable training and exposure to this model before being expected to implement it.

This case study was a cross-sectional study to determine the current status of the FFS implementers' perceptions at the exact time of data collection. The case study is the most appropriate choice for a research method as this study looked at the perceptions of one particular group of educators and administrators at a specific school in the midst of implementing an innovative curriculum model. The research completed by Gulsecen and Kubat in 2006 is just one example of how the role of case study research becomes more prominent when issues with regard to education are raised.

This particular case study was not limited to one source of data. In fact, good case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2010). By including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study methodology helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997). Moreover, Yin (2012) has pointed to the potential relevance of both qualitative and quantitative data in doing case study research. He goes on to explain that this duality reinforces the positioning of the case study method as a research design not limited to either type of data. Therefore, this study determined the overall understanding of the model these teachers' and administrators' have of the specific goals and unique aspects of the curriculum model through the use of a quantitative survey method that will contain both Likert responses and open-ended responses. In addition to the quantitative survey data, this study used focus groups to garner FFS implementers' perceptions of both the goals and unique aspects of the model in greater detail. According to Merriam (1998) the

qualitative portion of the study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the conclusion 'makes sense' and will help to increase the credence of the interpretation of the results. These detailed qualitative accounts produced through the qualitative portion of the survey and the focus group not only help to explore or describe the data in the real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research (Merriam, 1998). The program successes and obstacles are also discussed as well as further insight for the future.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study addresses two research questions, based on the problem statement and purpose of the study, that have been thoroughly described in Chapter 1:

1. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model with respect to the three sub topics below?
    a. The FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology.
    b. The FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections.
    c. The FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."
2. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, with respect to the sub topics listed below?
    a. The value-based curriculum component
    b. The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice

c. The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this research study is to fully analyze and recognize the benefits of the curricular understanding of fifty early childhood educators and administrators in order to understand their overall feelings and experiences towards the main goals and unique aspects of the FFS in early childhood curriculum model.

Research Participants

A total of 55 early childhood educators at a North Texas private preschool comprised the initial sample. In addition, random sampling was used to determine the group of ten implementers that participated in the focus group. The specific criteria to be met for participation in this research study were the following:

1. An early childhood educator who has had exposure to the FFS curriculum model.
2. An early childhood educator who was employed at the unique private preschool that is being studied.

Instruments

There were two instruments used in this research study with a total of four types of data collected. The first was an electronically administered survey that will gather three types of data; demographic data, Likert scale data, and exact words and quotes collected through open-ended responses. All data collected was used to precisely determine the implementers' perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model. Included in the survey instrument were several initial questions to determine specific demographic information that

will provide guidance in data analysis. Specifically, Questions 1-6 simply included the collection of necessary demographic information. In addition, there were 39 survey questions dedicated to collecting information where respondents used Likert scale to relay their answers. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly used in research that employs questionnaires (Wuensch, 2005). The term Likert scale is also used interchangeably with rating scale and is used to allow respondents to specifiy their agreement or disagreement for a series of statements (Burns & Burns, 2008). The range of responses allowed helps the researcher understand the intensity of a person's feelings for a specific item.

The survey used in this research study was formulated using the initial areas of goals of the curriculum model and unique aspects of the curriculum model. Both the goals and unique aspects of the curriculum model were examined more closely to determine the necessary questions to be included to accurately gain the perceptions of the early childhood educators who have been implementing the model. The questions of the survey each corresponded to a specific research question being measured. Appendix C is a chart explaining the breakdown of the survey questions and their relevance to each research question. In order to validate the survey items, one of the doctoral dissertation committee members helped revise the items. In addition, a retired educator who had previously implemented the curriculum also reviewed the survey items, both Likert and open-ended, and the focus group questions for clarity.

In addition to the Likert scale response items, which were quantitative in nature, there were a series of open-ended questions that were qualitative in nature. In correlation with all research questions, just as in the Likert form questions, a series of open ended questions were presented to the participants of the study. Specifically, five open ended questions were

included on the survey to capture implementers' own views on professional growth and other opinions related to the use of the FFS curriculum model.

Also used in this study, were a series of focus group questions with a short introduction before participation. Traditionally, focus group research is a way of collecting qualitative data which essentially involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion, focused around a particular topic or set of issues (Wilkinson, 2004). Focus groups are less threatening to many research participants, and this environment is helpful for participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The focus group allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the curriculum model that was also explored in the survey. The questions used in the focus group were formed considering the essence of the experiences of the FFS implementers. Likewise, the focus group questions were also compiled by looking closely at the goals and unique aspects of the model and finding more open ended ways to reiterate questions given in the Likert scale model. These questions were also reviewed by a committee member and a retired educator who had previously used the model.

The triangulation of these three data types, the Likert response survey responses, open-ended survey responses and the focus group responses helped to gain a clearer picture of the true feelings of the early childhood educators towards the goals and unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model. It is a common recommendation to constantly check and recheck the consistency of the findings from different as well as the same sources (Duneier, 1999). In so doing, the researcher will be triangulating, or establishing converging lines of evidence, which will make your findings as robust as possible. Furthermore, to alleviate the commonly cited

drawback of a single-case study method to provide a generalizing conclusion, this study provided three different methods of data collection therefore triangulating the study with other methods to confirm the validity of the process.

Procedures

Data was obtained in three ways in this study to triangulate the results and make the perceptions of the implementers clear. There was a quantitative measure of data collection through a survey that has a large portion of Likert response questions. In addition, there were two additional methods of qualitative data collection, namely the five open-ended survey questions and the focus group. Each of these methods of data collection is explored in this section. In addition, UNT Institutional Review Board permission was sought following approval from the dissertation committee.

The first data set was collected through the Likert scale survey instrument. The answers were provided in a Likert scale format, allowing respondents to rate those answers over a 5-point scale: *agree strongly, agree slightly, neither agree nor disagree, disagree slightly, disagree strongly*. A 5-point Likert scale is frequently used to measure and quantify attitudes (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004). The survey portion (Appendix A) also included a series of demographic questions to more clearly describe the background of those participating. Participation for the survey instrument was gained through an e-mail containing the IRB approved flyer for participation. A link was provided to the survey through Survey Monkey and respondents had the opportunity to respond anonymously. All responses from the survey were initially recorded through Survey Monkey. The process included: creating a URL link to the

survey; emailing the link to the population sample; receiving the results through surveymonkey.com; and transferring the data to an Excel® file for statistical analysis. Surveymonkey.com was designed to provide respondents with confidentiality and anonymity. The site also allows only one response from any given IP address which reduced the chances of multiple contributions to the study by one respondent. Multiple responses from a single respondent could possibly skew the results.

The second data set was collected through the open-ended questions that were gathered at the end of the survey instrument. In order to better understand and complement analysis of the quantitative survey data provided by the Likert response questions, qualitative data was gathered using a specific set of five open-ended questions. Participation for this portion of the survey instrument was also gained through the original e-mail containing the IRB approved flyer for participation.

The third data set was obtained in the focus group for implementers and was also descriptive in nature. Following survey participation, respondents were given the opportunity to take part in this focus group. Of those respondents wishing to participate, ten people were randomly selected. Onwuegbuzie (2009) explained the rationale for this range of focus group size stems from the goal that focus groups should include enough participants to yield diversity in information provided, yet they should not include too many participants because large groups can create an environment where participants do not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and experiences.

After selection for the focus group was completed, participants were again be contacted through e-mail and in person about their participation in the focus group portion of this study.

Once respondents committed to the focus group, an e-mail was sent to describe informed consent and the overall process of the focus group. The questions were also e-mailed to participants prior to the focus group session so they had the opportunity to prepare their thoughts and understand the purpose of the research study in advance. Further questions were answered within the waiting room prior to the focus group, as necessary.

While the survey instrument was used to gain initial understanding of the perceptions of the early childhood educators, the focus groups provided a depth of understanding into the personal perceptions of teachers and administrators. The focus group information was used to give further insight to the data gathered through the survey instrument distributed for participation to the total staff community at the North Texas private preschool. The focus group was held at the same location of the North Texas private preschool so respondents would feel more comfortable. According to Criswell (2003), qualitative research takes place in the natural setting and enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants. A focus group introduction along with the detailed questions (Appendix B) was used initially in the focus group session to allow participants to fully understand the purpose for the focus group. A reflective atmosphere was introduced and open-ended questions was used to encourage all participants to speak freely about their beliefs and perceptions of the curriculum model. In accordance with Connelly (2009) and Creswell (2007) focus groups, in lieu of one-on-one interviews, were used to provide depth of understanding into the phenomenon. Furthermore, the focus group questions were open-ended to allow early childhood educators to freely discuss their perceptions of both the goals and unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model.

During the focus group, the researcher utilized a printed copy of the introduction and questions in order to record any observational data or reflective notes. In addition, a matrix was used and tallied for assessing the level of the consensus in the focus group. This matrix was used by the moderator to be able to specify the number or proportion of members who appeared to be a part of the category or themes that emerged. The focus groups were recorded for later transcription and analysis. Transcription not only facilitates further analysis, but it also establishes a permanent written record of the group discussion that can be shared with other interested parties (Stewart, 2006). As the recordings were reviewed, all verbal data was transcribed into Microsoft Word for storage, interpretation and reporting purposes.

Directly following the research and during interpretation, all collected data was stored on the researcher's password-secured laptop. After the study has been completed, all data that could potentially identify participants will be transferred to a flash drive. This flash drive will then be stored in a locked cabinet within the Department of Teacher Education and Administration at the University of North Texas for three years, in accordance with federal regulations and Institutional Review Board policy. At the point in time when the data has been transferred to the flash drive, all stored information was permanently removed from the researcher's laptop. Any paper data obtained throughout the research process data through which participants might be identified was shredded. In the same way, all audio recordings were completely destroyed once analysis is complete. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze perceptions of the individual teachers, it is the researcher's hope that the results produced practical data to advise other professionals interested in

innovative curriculum models of the benefits of the unique aspects and the potential impact of the goals of the model to the world of education both locally, statewide and nationally.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed on both the survey data and the focus group data to meet the needs of both quantitative and qualitative research. According to Criswell (2003), it is the responsibility of the researcher to make an interpretation of the data.

For the survey portion of the research study, the tools Survey Monkey has were utilized. Survey Monkey allowed for viewing and analyzing data at any point during the data collection process in the analyze section of the survey. The specific tools available through Survey Monkey were used to analyze data and download the results in the multiple formats available. Percentages were reported to reveal the proportion of respondents that fell into each Likert-response category. As these percentages are reported, the span of these responses was considered and what that span may indicate and/or reveal about the question asked.

The open-ended questions of the survey were also analyzed very carefully. Observations of the specific language were used and sorted according to the exact textual content and distinct categories of responses revealed.

The focus group data was also analyzed. According to Stewart (2006) the analysis of focus group data requires a great deal of judgement and care. For this reason, the first step in analyzing the focus group was transcribing the session. Transcription not only facilitates further analysis, but it also establishes a permanent written record of the group discussion that can be shared with other interested parties (Stewart, 2006). Furthermore, transcription will allow for

what is known as content analysis (Krippendorf, 2004). In order to complete a content analysis, the content of the discussion must be examined and the meaning and its particular implications for the research questions at hand discovered (Stewart, 2006). Berkowitz (1997) suggested considering six questions when coding and analyzing qualitative data. For the purpose of this study, one specific question will be used: What common themes emerged in responses about specific topics? These themes were discovered post facto during several stages of data analysis. The themes that are discovered were charted by research question. The additional qualitative data recorded through the open-ended questions from the survey was also added to this chart. Precise quotes were used to explain exactly how participants described their perceptions to the FFS curriculum model. The reporting of specific quotes was determined through an In Vivo coding process. According to Saldana (2016), In Vivo codes derive from the actual language of the participants, by doing so zoom into the emotional dimension of the story. Due to the emotional dimension of the context of relationships within which the FFS curriculum model functions, In Vivo coding appeared to be the best action orientated method of coding to use.

In order to code the transcription, the audio recordings will be listened to carefully for words that are used often or repeated. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) define qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others." The words surrounding the educators' perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the curriculum model and specifically the thoughts, feelings and experiences were used for coding, including those previously used in the survey. Bogdan and Biklen (2007)

provided the common types of coding categories that include the setting or context, the definition of the situation and how it relates to the topic being researched, the respondent perspective, and the respondents' ways of thinking about people and objects. These items were considered during the coding process. After the initial In Vivo coding, there was a method of theoretical coding used. A theoretical code functions like an umbrella that covers and accounts for all other codes and categories formulated thus far in grounded theory analysis (Saldana, 2016). In order to integrate this coding method with the thinking and learning processes of the FFS curriculum model, the umbrellas created from theoretical coding became transformed into a mind map. Mind mapping is used throughout the FFS curriculum model. Using the mind map to determine overall themes that emerged through the data seemed important as another parallel process to the overall model. Mueller et al. (2002) describe the process of using mind maps as a method of enhancing thinking skills, including critical thinking, whole brain thinking and comprehensive thinking. In the same way, Bozan (2003) explains that a mind map can help the researcher think with greater clarity to explore relationships between ideas and elements of an argument and to generate solutions to problems. Mind mapping can put a new perspective on things by allowing a vision of relevant issues and analysis choices in light of the big picture. Bozan (2003) also explains that mind mapping makes it easier to integrate new knowledge and organize information logically. Furthermore Tattersall, Powell and Stroud (2011) examined perceptions in participants of their research and found that mind mapping could be used to rapidly analyze simple qualitative audio-recorded interviews. For these reasons, mind mapping was used as the main method to look for themes revealed across the research results. It is also necessary to identify those themes that may emerge that reveal

an outlier of the responses. According to Onwuegbuzie (2009) researchers should specify the number or proportion of members representing a dissenting view (if any) as well as how many participants did not appear to express any view at all. Those themes that emerged through the identification of the researcher were also validated by a second reader of the transcript. This was done to assure those themes identified are accurate.

Brief Summary

The research method used for this case study research study was described in detail throughout Chapter 3. Yin (1984) defined the case study research method "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." The research method was both quantitative and qualitative in nature and three different types of data sources were collected for triangulation purposes. Yin's (2002) definition of analysis "consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining both qualitative and quantitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study." Furthermore, the most desired convergence exists at the place where three independent sources all point to a similar set of perceptions or interpretations. Fifty five initial early childhood educators were surveyed through both Likert and open-ended response questions and an additional ten participants were randomly chosen to contribute to the focus group. All early childhood educators who participated had been exposed to the FFS curriculum model used at a unique North Texas private preschool, were currently employed at that private preschool, and had the ability to give their perceptions on the goals and unique aspects of the

model. Data were collected through an initial survey using Survey Monkey, containing both Likert response questions and open-ended response questions and a focus group conducted on site where the North Texas private preschool resides. The focus group was recorded and inductively analyzed through a coding process. All information gathered was stored electronically so that it can be analyzed and properly described.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study was conducted to examine further the responses to two research questions, based on the problem statement and purpose of the study. As previously mentioned, the purpose of this research study was to fully analyze the perceptions of fifty early childhood educators and administrators in order to understand their overall feelings and experiences towards the main goals and unique aspects of the foundations for success (FFS) in early childhood curriculum model. These fifty early childhood educators and administrators had personal experience with the FFS curriculum model and had been asked to relay their experiences with the model. The two research questions and their sub-questions are as follows:

1. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model with respect to the three sub topics below?
    a. The FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology;
    b. The FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections; and
    c. The FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."
2. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, with respect to the sub topics listed below?:
    a. The value-based curriculum component;
    b. The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice; and

c. The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model.

There was an overall response rate of 48% (*n* = 27) to the online survey that was posted via Survey Monkey and e-mailed to all participants, including teachers and administrators. The demographics of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Characteristic		%
1. Gender	Male	8.3%
	Female	91.7%
2. Age	18-25	8.3%
	25-35	25.0%
	35-45	16.7%
	45-55	29.2%
	55+	20.8%
3. Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	12.5%
	Non Hispanic or Latino	87.5%
4. Race	American Indian or Alaska Native	4.2%
	Asian	4.2%
	Black or African American	8.3%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
	White	79.2%
	One or more races	4.2%
5. Years of teaching	1-3	9.1%
	3-5	9.1%
	5-10	22.7%
	10-15	9.1%
	15-20	13.6%
6. Years at GFECC		
	1-3	54.2%
	3-5	12.5%
	5-10	8.3%
	10-15	0.0%
	15-20	12.5%
	20+	12.5%
7. Years using curriculum model	1-2	33.3%
	2-3	16.7%
	4-5	20.8%
	6	29.2%

Of the respondents, the male and female response rate was both characteristic of the original makeup of the staff of the school and the normal distribution of male and female staff in early childhood education. Of those respondents, approximately one-third of the respondents were under the age of 35. The remaining two-thirds of respondents were over the age of 35. Generally speaking, the staff represents many teachers who have been teaching for quite a long time. Twelve and one-half percent of the respondents were either Hispanic or Latino and 87.5% were not Latino. Seventy-nine and two-tenths percent of the respondents were white, while the remainder of the respondents was Alaskan Native, Asian, African American or one or more races, 4.2%, 4.2%, 8.3% and 4.2% respectively.

There was a wide range of teaching experience, both in general and at the GFECC, found within the respondents. This also is an accurate representation of the population of the staff at the GFECC. The majority of the respondents have been teaching at the GFECC for 10 or less years. However, there is a large number of teachers that have been at the GFECC for quite a while. Fifty-four and two-tenths percent have been teaching for 1-3 years at the GFECC; 12.5% for 3-5 years; and 8.3% for 5-10 years. Almost 25% of the respondents have been teaching at the GFECC for over 15 years. Twelve and one-half percent have been teaching at the GFECC for 15-20 years and 12.5% of the respondents have also taught at the GFECC for over 20 years.

There was a wide range of experience amongst respondents with respect to experience with the FFS curriculum model. The FFS curriculum model was piloted 6 years ago and has been fully implemented for the five consecutive years following the pilot year. Twenty-nine and two-tenths percent of the respondents were those teachers who actually participated in the pilot group and have been using the FFS curriculum model for all six years, while 20.8% of

the respondents have been using the model for 4-5 years. Thus, over half of the respondents have been using the model for over 4 years. The GFECC is a school that has many experienced educators and many educators that have just completed their formal schooling and joining the staff. The wide range that actually exists in education and experience, both overall and with the FFS curriculum model, is also seen in the demographics of the actual respondents of the survey.

Research Question 1A

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert-value survey questions, open-ended survey questions and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 1A can be found in Appendix D. The answers from the respondents reveal the FFS curriculum model implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology.

The first research question considers how implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the FFS curriculum model with respect to three sub topics. Implementers' perceptions were gathered in three different ways. Survey data was collected using a Likert scale and is reported by exploring the percentage of implementer's responses in each category. Open ended survey questions were also used to reveal specific perceptions of individual respondents. In addition, the responses from the focus group were also recorded and transcribed to reveal implementers' perceptions in a session that could offer an opportunity for group dynamics to promote a different type of response.

The first sub-topic explores the FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology. "Accountability" is a word that is often used within the world of curriculum and instruction that can stir up strong emotions. In this study, when asked about the importance of the accountability to learning standards to teaching, 66.7% strongly agreed about the importance and 33.3% agree. The importance of "measurement of developmental progression" is also terminology used within education that initiates a lot of debate. According to the survey results, 78.3% strongly agreed that it is important to measure developmental progression; 17.4% agree; and 4.3% were neutral. Throughout the survey results, respondents revealed their understanding of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology such as "measurement of developmental progression" and "accountability." In addition, the respondents indicated the importance of the parallel process of "using intellectual language" with the children. When asked if implementers found it important to use intellectual language with the children to enhance their understanding, 73.9% strongly agreed and 26.1% agreed.

In addition to the Likert survey responses, open ended survey questions were asked to reveal implementers' perceptions. One of the responses clearly illustrated his/her perception of the importance of accountability. The respondent stated, "I rely on the curriculum model to provide me with a framework on which to build my lesson plans. I can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences I am providing." Several responses also indicated the perceived importance of measurement for children's success. One respondent stated, "Having specific developmental guidelines available encourages me to be mindful in planning so that I can move children along the learning continuum." In the same way, a respondent

replied, “The use of developmental guidelines over several years has strengthened my understanding of what to watch for as well as my ability to see how planned activities help in the children's development. At my previous school, I planned without regard to developmental guidelines and by taking them into consideration here I see that I am able to foster growth better, providing challenge or support when necessary.” Another respondent mentioned the importance of understanding the measurement tool and wrote, “I have had to think and revisit developmental guidelines over and over in order to evaluate where my students are developmentally.” When exploring the inclusion of important vocabulary for the children’s benefit one respondent mentioned, “The inclusion of vocabulary in the curriculum resources helped me to describe more accurate scientific and mathematical concepts with the children. I feel I have a more complete understanding of developmentally appropriate goals for the children through studying the learning standards used in the curriculum.”

When exploring this same topic during the focus group, many of the responses stayed focused on the use of vocabulary with the children. Implementers of the FFS curriculum model perceived the planning for the use of higher level vocabulary as an important component of the model. Many respondents also mentioned the use of the vocabulary resource as important. One respondent talked about the importance of using sophisticated language with the children, stating, “We are using correct terminology for them to hear rather than speaking down to them… so…we keep repeating it and giving them examples and defining what it means.” In the same way another respondent talked both about the use of the vocabulary and the implementation of the process to find the vocabulary to use; they explained that “using vocabulary with the value… it really helps you…when they can’t really get the word but they can

scaffold the meaning, brainstorm it, and look up the synonyms." In the same way, another respondent discussed the importance of vocabulary and the impact it has on the teachers themselves. They said, "As a teacher, it makes you pay attention to what you are saying…it makes you be more prepared and more conscious about what you are saying." Furthermore, many implementers perceived that the children were actually using a higher level of vocabulary and that the use of this vocabulary pushed the students to learn words they may not learn otherwise. Some examples included the following:

> Respondent 6: They are comfortable with using language that they may not completely understand but have heard in context and use it.
>
> Respondent 7: Talking about the zone of development (and using our understanding to determine) what they do understand and push them to understand things they did not know.
>
> Respondent 1: They are actually using correct terminology.

Overall, within the focus group, the conversation was very focused on the impact of the use of vocabulary with the children. The specific discussion of accountability or measurement did not come up, yet the theme of the importance of accountability and measurement was detected in the reliance on planning the experiences for the children for optimal benefit. The results from the survey, both Likert and open-ended, and the focus group revealed the respondents desire to be held accountable through the FFS curriculum model and the need for accounting for the measurement of the development of the students.

Research Question 1B

Research Question 1B explored the FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning

standards and the value of those connections. In order to understand the implementers' perceptions, Likert survey questions were asked in addition to the open-ended survey questions and the focus group questions.

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert value survey questions, open-ended survey questions and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 1B can be found in Appendix E. The answers from the respondents all divulge the FFS implementers' perceptions of (a) the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and (b) the value of those connections.

There were 9 Likert response survey questions directed towards the implementers' perceptions of both developmentally appropriate practice and relevant state/national learning standards and the subsequent value of both. Within the results, 45.8% strongly agreed and 45.8% agreed that it is important to move children through the zone of proximal development. This statement shows the implementers' belief that understanding developmental progression is valuable. In addition, when asked if it is important to use developmentally appropriate practice to present topics to the children, 91.7% strongly agreed and 8.3% agreed. The belief of the importance of using developmental guidelines to measure the children's understanding is a statement that 58.3% of implementers' strongly agreed with, and 37.5% agreed. Pertaining to the same belief, 4.2% were neutral. The structure of the Likert survey questions, open ended survey questions and focus group questions pertaining to developmentally appropriate practice and learning standards is such that they also contain and account for the sub-topic of child-initiated learning and how that connects. According to the implementers' perceptions, 62.5%

strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed in the belief of the importance of child-initiated learning, while 4.2% were neutral to this statement.

When considering developmentally appropriate practice and state or national learning standards, observation and assessment of children's progress becomes important. Without this observation and assessment, it becomes difficult to measure and consider success. According to the FFS implementers', 33.3% strongly agreed they have a greater understanding of anecdotal records and charting developmental progress through the use of the model; 58.3% agreed with that statement, and 8.3% were neutral. In the same way, 37.5% strongly agreed that reporting of child's progress becomes easier through total use of the curriculum process, while 58.3% agreed and 4.2% were neutral. Furthermore, when asked if using the curriculum model helps the implementers' stay focused on the developmental progress the children are making, 29.2% strongly agreed, 66.7% agreed and 4.2% were neutral.

When considering developmentally appropriate-practice and learning standards, there is usually some discussion about the need for direct instruction. Traditionally there are some teachers who believe that direct instruction is the only way to progress students along the learning continuum. The FFS curriculum model is built with the understanding that direct instruction is a small component of the whole learning picture that also includes the use of small groups within a classroom structured with independent learning centers. According to the related Likert survey question asked of FFS implementers', 26.1% strongly agreed in the need for direct instruction; 47.8% agreed, 21.7% were neutral; and 4.3% actually disagreed. This Likert question revealed the largest discrepancy among respondents thus far in the results of the study. This discrepancy may come from the fact that the need for direct instruction, in

addition to the amount of direct instruction, is highly debatable within many constructivist-based early childhood programs. The program being studied, as well as the opinion of the respondents of the study, falls at different places on the continuum. The FFS curriculum model is meant to provide instruction that balances both the constructivist-based approach to early childhood with the need for some direct instruction.

In the same way, the foundation for success curriculum model is best considered a template for thinking and learning that allows teachers a foundation for instruction combined with the flexibility to follow the children's interests. When asked about the importance of intentional planning to the acquisition/promotion of learning and development, 41.7% strongly agreed, 54.2% agreed and 4.2% were neutral.

The open ended survey question asked implementers' how they had grown professionally with respect to the understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and the use of learning standards. One respondent stated that "with this information at hand, it has helped my teaching to become more developmentally appropriate." Another respondent stressed the importance of the curriculum model without having an official education degree. S/he explained that "without an education degree, I rely on the curriculum model to provide me with a framework on which to build my lesson plans. I can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences I am providing. Having specific developmental guidelines available encourages me to be mindful in planning so that I can move children along the learning continuum." In the same way, one respondent highlighted the importance of the vocabulary component within the model by saying, "The inclusion of vocabulary in the curriculum resources helped me to describe more accurate scientific and mathematical concepts to the

children. I feel I have a more complete understanding of developmentally appropriate goals for the children through studying the learning standards used in the curriculum." Furthermore, one respondent stated simply that the use of the FFS curriculum model has allowed me to "become more intentional in my teaching."

During the focus group, the use of developmentally appropriate practice and learning standards was once again explored. Implementers discussed the ability to use the curriculum model to creatively determine activities that children were interested in, create developmentally appropriate activities and measure development through the learning standards as a guide. One implementer stated that "even if by mistake there is an activity that happens and then for next year you know, okay, this is a good appropriate activity (that) we can do to measure this standard." One participant described using the curriculum model as a foundation for determining where developmentally appropriate practice meets the learning standards. They explained:

> We are almost making (a leap) to say that would be a good measurement to use for this developmental guideline (that) we wanted them to do…We want them to do it because they are interested in it. We don't want to just present it just so we can know if they can cut on a line or (make) their letters.

In the same way, one participant in the focus group mentioned that "as we go along with this process we find more appropriate ways and different activities that let us measure (a student's) ability." Another participant talked about the value of observation within the use of the FFS curriculum model to determine both what is developmentally appropriate practice and whether or not the children are making progress within the included learning standards. They indicated that "you have to be a good observer as a teacher…when they come together, you

will (observe) those things that are a good measure and that (students) enjoy doing and see them make progress."

In addition, two of the participants explained the importance of beginning with the learning standards as the basis for creating developmentally appropriate practice:

> Respondent 5: Knowing the guidelines ahead of time and being able to be alert and pick it up and just ask questions that can take them to that next level.
>
> Respondent 7: I think if you are starting with the guidelines like we intend… you are almost forced into doing developmentally appropriate practice.

Overall, when discussing the intersection of developmentally appropriate practice with the learning standards that are a part of the model and asking how this has affected FFS implementers' professionally, one participant simply mentioned that the model "pushes me as a teacher."

Research Question 1C

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert-value survey questions, open-ended survey questions, and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 1C can be found in Appendix F. The answers from the respondents all help us to understand the FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."

When simply asked through a Likert survey question if they believed the foundation for success curriculum model prepares children for kindergarten, 54.2% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed and 4.2% were neutral. Similarly, when asked if they believed the FFS curriculum model emphasizes learning in all developmental domains, 56.5% strongly agreed and 43.5% agreed. When specifically asked if they believe the FFS curriculum model helps children in the

development of language and literacy, 66.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed. In the same way, when asked if they believed the FFS curriculum model helps children understand mathematical concepts necessary for Kindergarten success, 33.3% strongly agreed, 62.5% agreed and 4.2% were neutral.

In addition to the traditional academic learning, the FFS curriculum model is built with the overall belief that developing higher level thinking skills and a genuine love for learning is just as important for kindergarten readiness. When asked if the implementers' believed that the FFS curriculum model creates unique learning opportunities that foster higher level thinking skills, 39.1% strongly agreed, 56.5% agreed and 4.3% were neutral. In the same way, when the implementers' were asked if they believed they are preparing the children to love learning and be successful, 66.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed.

In addition to the instructional component, one of the most important focuses of the FFS curriculum model is preparing the teachers to be confident about what they are doing instructionally and how they can communicate this to the parents of their students. When asked if the implementers' can articulate how children using the FFS curriculum will be ready for kindergarten, 30.4% strongly agreed, 60.9% agreed and 8.7% were neutral. In the same way, when asked if the implementers' understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain these to the parents, 50% strongly agreed and 50% agreed.

Furthermore, the open-ended questions explored professional growth through the FFS curriculum model pertaining specifically to kindergarten readiness. According to one implementer, teachers "have had to think and revisit developmental guidelines over and over in order to evaluate where (their) students are developmentally. I have gotten to know my

children well and (have) helped them enjoy their learning experiences while facilitating their growth and…gains toward kindergarten readiness." In the same way, another implementer described growing "in a way of 'doing the right thing' when it comes to children both professionally and educationally."

When engaged in the focus group, many of the implementers talked about the success of the FFS curriculum model in preparing the children for kindergarten. One implementer stated, "the best way we prepare our children for kindergarten is creating an environment for them to be inquisitive, (which) encourages them to participate and think about a variety of things." In the same way, another implementer suggested that the students "become a participant in learning" and that "we encourage their curiosity and their creativity," thus indicating that "the biggest thing that gets them ready for school is because they begin to want to learn, and they are interested." In addition, another implementer discussed how teachers combine academic growth with learning standards and developmentally appropriate practice and also involve (students) in the process. S/he stated, "We are also building on their knowledge…(using) the developmental guidelines and trying to grow them academically with… the attitude of (students) being a part of their learning and (having a) part in creating the curriculum (thus promoting) the value of learning and the love of learning." This love of learning, in combination with the accountability to learning standards, is truly the foundation of the FFS curriculum model. In the same way, one implementer explained how "we do a very good job of making sure (students) are ready for kindergarten because I think we make sure when they leave here they know how to think which I think serves them well even past kindergarten."

Another implementer described how the FFS curriculum model not only engages the whole child but also guides the families along as involved partners for success. They explained:

> (I feel good about) being able to go through the process to get some children extra help with things and that are also personal to me and my family…when you are helping them with social and emotional skills and encouraging that type of learning, we are also working and seeing if they are meeting our developmental guidelines (benchmarks). And if they are not we are working with them and pushing them and working with parents and making sure they are growing and connecting them to other resources they need so when (the children) do get to kindergarten they are ready for it.

The connection to families and responsibility for education of those families, as a whole is important to the basis of the FFS curriculum model.

In addition to the positive comments in regards to the FFS curriculum model and its ability to prepare children for kindergarten, the focus group also discussed a very real challenge to kindergarten preparation with the use of the model. Implementers expressed a belief in the method and educational philosophy behind the FFS curriculum model and contended that it constitutes what is best for young children. In contrast, their concern rested in sending the students into an educational world where many schools do not value the same educational philosophy and are more traditional, engaging in rote learning. One implementer explained that "the challenge is for us, and this is always the challenge perhaps for the way kindergarten education goes…here we are trying to do things for the kids, and then there is a very, almost black and white transition experience for (students) in that there is what we do here and then what they experience when they get to kindergarten." In the same vein, another implementer added how "we are doing what is best for (students), but I think it is nothing related to us a school but more a result of the education system (that) seems to flip the switch a lot of time(s) because when (students) get into kindergarten it is not necessarily what is developmentally

appropriate anymore. And some places are really trying to change that, but many are not." One implementer suggested there is a solution. The solution also happens to be an underlying goal of this study and the FFS curriculum model as a whole, and that is that there needs to be a bridge between early childhood education at its best and the primary grades that follow it. One implementer suggested that "if the other schools would do what we do and be developmentally appropriate, (students) would soar and take off. We sort of dread giving (the children) away because they are so ready to take off, and if they continued that way in kindergarten it would be amazing."

Research Question 2A

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert-value survey questions, open-ended survey questions, and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 2A can be found in Appendix G. The answers from the respondents all reveal their FFS perceptions of the unique aspects of the value-based curriculum component. This research question contains the largest amount of results, especially during the focus group.

This section describes the respondents' perceptions of the value-based curriculum component of the FFS curriculum model. The Likert survey questions are explored along with the open- ended survey questions and the focus group responses.

According to a Likert survey question, 56.5% strongly agreed, 34.8% agreed, 4.3% were neutral and 4.3% disagreed that using Jewish values helps establish consistency across the school. The small percentage of respondents who disagreed may be due to the debate that is discussed later in the focus group section about whether the value component is actually

needed or could be tailored to each individual program depending on their individual focus. When asked whether implementers believed that using the Jewish values consistency across the school helps children develop their character, 62.5% strongly agreed, 25% agreed and 12.5% were neutral. Furthermore, 37.5% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed and 4.2% were neutral to the statement that using these values to plan instruction helps provide the language to use with the children throughout the day. In the same way, when asked if using values to plan instruction helps to plan activities that are meaningful to the children, 45.8% strongly agreed, 45.8% agreed, 4.2% were neutral, and 4.2% disagreed. Once again, the small margin of disagreement may be attributed to those respondents who view the values as substitutable for other similar components. This is discussed later in this section. In the same way, when asked if using values to plan instruction makes it easier to connect with books to use, 37.5% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed, 8.3% were neutral and 12.5% disagreed. In the last Likert question for the unique aspects of the value component of the FFS curriculum model, when asked if using values to plan instruction helps foster at-home understanding, 33.3% strongly agreed, 45.8% agreed and 20.8% were neutral.

As the unique aspects of the value-based component of the FFS curriculum model continued to be explored through the open ended survey questions, implementers shared more specific perceptions of this component. One respondent stated that "the value-based curriculum component is really important because it frames so many conversations throughout the year, and the values build and reinforce from year to year." In the same way, another respondent described how the "value-based curriculum is important because these are universal values and the children learn it every year on a different level… by the time they

arrive to pre-k, they are very familiar with the concept and can internalize it better." One respondent also explained the value component of the FFS curriculum model as being important to the families of the children, in addition to the children themselves. They said, "I really like the value-based curriculum and reflecting how to tie the values together and use them throughout the year. Parents of different belief systems like these (values) and how they are important for people in general." In the same way, another respondent went on to explain the importance the value-based component has on the familial system of the child:

> I am a huge believer in the values-based curriculum. The values we focus on are ones that parents are desperate to see in their children. I have heard from many families how much they appreciate that we expect children to be kind, respectful, and responsible. I believe that the ability to reflect, personally and with peers and administration, is vital to improving as a professional.

In another response, an implementer explained that "the value-based approach is most important because it helps us be responsive to the children's interests while still being cohesive across ages." Furthermore, another respondent described the value-based learning component as the "most important piece." S/he went on to describe how "it is something truly unique to our school" and how s/he "loves the things it provides both the staff and the students."

During the focus group, implementers discussed, once again, in more detail their perceptions of the value-based component of the curriculum model. One participant described the value-based component as having "the biggest impact on the children." They then explained how "the values that we teach not only instruct children on how to relate socially, but add… rich cultural, emotional, and literacy opportunities." Similarly, another participant relayed a story of the importance of the value based component within a real life story:

> Giving children a foundation in basic human values is so important, particularly in this fast- paced world where parents don't seem to have the time to teach these ideals. Just

> today, I encountered a child who was not honoring his parent when she wanted to leave. I encouraged her to stay strong and not allow the child to dictate the situation. She appreciated having an ally, and the child came to understand that respecting his mother was important.

In addition to the program benefit of facilitating relationships between parents and children, one focus group participant mentioned the program's benefit with respect to children's peers:

> I think that the young children relate well to the repetitive use of value learning. They learn vocabulary, such as respect and kindness, and express these words when problem-solving with their peers. It also helps [children] understand their actions and behaviors, as well as, [promoting] language and literacy.

Relationships across the school have been affected by the use of the value-based curriculum. It has provided a shared lens to look through. As one participant explained, "The focus on values across the school helps the students understand them as everyone they interact with (from specials to community times like Shabbat) are discussing and modeling the same value at the same time." In addition, the values-based component seems to join people together across cultures and religious beliefs. The ability to connect people from many different cultures also was discussed by the implementers. One participant stated "the values stretch across cultures." Another mentioned that the "values are tied to the Torah and the Bible and tie everyone together."

In addition to the effect on the families, children, and the school as a whole, some of the participants discussed the ability of the value-based curriculum to affect the overall instruction in the classroom. For example:

> Providing ways for [children] to reflect on what they have already learned and how it is connected to what they are doing now helps the children build and retain knowledge. For example, in science they learned that you can look for certain characteristics to

> determine what type of animal a specimen is. They began with identifying birds and then built on that knowledge to learn how to identify insects.

In the same way, one implementer mentions the benefit of "how we use these values and then the values in combination with the developmental guidelines." One participant described how it all ties together through "a cohesiveness list of developmental guidelines and the social emotional component."

In addition to the intersection with the developmental piece as described above, during the focus group, much of the time of the discussion time on the values-based component of the FFS curriculum model revolved around the consistency that it brings to the school as a whole. This multifaceted benefit was described in several ways. One respondent explained, "I feel like our values are sort of our backbone . . .it is like a structure for all that we do and how we do it, and it's not just for the children but for us to. It is good for the children and the teachers." The connection appears to go further than the instruction with the children. Implementers talked a lot about how "the values allow everyone to connect through adult education." Therefore, the inclusion of the values-based component of the FFS curriculum model was also viewed as a way to consistently train and develop the teachers. In addition, the repetitive nature of the values from year to year was seen as allowing the children to revisit and learn at new levels. One participant mentioned:

> I was going to say, though, that we repeat and again as I was saying everything is relative. We are revisiting things constantly. So I like that, even though one month our value was respect, we don't stop talking about that; so we are reinforcing it.

There was also an outlier opinion that is worthy of mentioning and may have also been revealed during the Likert-value survey questions. One focus group participant talked about the possibility of the values being replaced by other values that may be important to another

school and still finding success with the model. The participant explained that the developmental pieces "need to be joined by something, and for us being a Jewish school I think it makes sense for us to have Jewish values as the backbone because that is what ties the religious aspect into it for us. But . . . if you were to think about outside of this school or someplace that wasn't a Jewish school, I don't know if it would have to be (Jewish values) or makes sense to be that, (but) doing something that is value-based is necessary to providing the sort of education that we provide here." S/he continue to explain that "we achieve our developmental goals this way, and that has a great value . . . but it doesn't have to be a Jewish value. But I think that it is important to say this is who we are, and this is what we do as a community."

If the opportunity existed to replace the Jewish values with another component that was not value-based one participant felt as though "it could be harder to get everyone on the same sort of page." S/he reiterated that the benefit of the value-based component can be seen in the behavior and character of the child. S/he indicated that "when we see kids go through this type of program, when you get to the third year of the program, you can tell that it has been a priority."

Overall, the majority opinion of the focus group was that the values-based component of the curriculum was a benefit to the entire school in many ways. One participant simply says, "the value based curriculum made the biggest impact (because) the children and the teachers use it on a daily basis and refer to it constantly."

Research Question 2B

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert-value survey questions, open-ended survey questions, and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 2B can be found in Appendix H. The answers from the respondents all show their FFS perceptions relating to the use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice.

The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice is examined in the second section of Research Question 2. In the survey responses, both Likert and open-ended, as well as in the focus group questions, both reflective supervision and reflective practice are viewed by the teaching staff as a powerful part of the FFS curriculum model.

The first question in the Likert survey questions asked FFS implementers if their relationship with their teaching partner is stronger because of the peer coaching component. Peer coaching is a one-on-one reflective supervision component of the FFS curriculum model that engages teachers in dedicated time to discuss improvement. Seventeen and four-tenths percent of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 47.8% agreed and 34.8% were neutral. Peer coaching and the other reflective supervision sessions that are a practice within the FFS curriculum model allow for time for individual teachers, teaching pairs and age level teachers to discuss improvement of their classrooms or teaching-learning practices as a whole. When the implementers' were asked if reflective supervision helps them to become a better teacher, 21.7% strongly agreed, 56.5% agreed, 17.4% were neutral, and 4.3% disagreed. Reflective supervision sessions are conducted with an administrator and at least one teacher. Most of the time, the reflective supervision sessions have multiple teachers coming together with an administrator, once again, to discuss methods for improvement. When asked about

the time used to come together for these sessions, 27.3% of implementers' strongly agreed that reflective supervision allowed the space for them to discuss their feelings in a trusting environment, while 36.4% agreed, 13.6% were neutral and 22.7% disagreed. During this designated time for discussion about improvement and new ways for innovative practice, implementers have the opportunity to grow in ways that they may not have had without the sessions. When asked whether reflective supervision helps them think of ways to solve problems that they may not have thought about otherwise, 29.2% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed, 8.3% were neutral, and 4.2% disagreed. Similarly, 26.1% of implementers' strongly agreed that they are more aware of their personal thoughts, beliefs, feelings and attitudes through the peer coaching and reflective supervision process, while 39.1% agreed, 26.1% were neutral and 8.7% disagreed. Overall more of the implementers believed reflective supervision and peer coaching were beneficial to them and their growth as teachers. However, were a small group of respondents that had some disagreement with both peer coaching and reflective supervision helping their practice. One reason for this, which is discussed in greater detail in the discussion section for this research question, is the perceived lack of time for this part of the FFS model. In addition to any restrictions on time, this part of the model is probably the most difficult part of the model due to the sensitive nature of the practice. Both reflective supervision and peer coaching require teachers to be vulnerable, honest and transparent with those they work with. There may be some teachers who have not fully committed to this practice in a way that ends up being beneficial to them.

In addition to the benefit of reflective supervision to the growth of the implementers as educators, reflective practice often benefits the children in the classroom. Time to reflect often

allows the teachers time to look closer at what the children are doing and how they can alter their teaching practice for the benefit of the children. Fifty percent of implementers believed that reflective practice in the classroom helps them determine what the children's interests are, while 41.7% agree that this is true; 8.3% are neutral. In addition to reflective practice helping with determining children's interests, many implementers believed that reflective practice with the children helps them scaffold their own learning. Thirty-one percent of implementers strongly agreed that this is true; 54.5% agreed that this is true; 9.1% were neutral to the statement, and 4.5% disagreed. A similar benefit of reflective practice appeared to be the ability to determine the developmental needs of the children. When asked if reflective practice helps them to determine the children's developmental needs, 30.4% of implementers' strongly agreed, 65.2% agreed, and 4.3% were neutral. All in all, the majority of implementers believed there were multiple benefits of reflective practice with respect to the children based on answers to the Likert survey questions.

There were similar findings obtained through the open-ended responses to the survey questions. Many of the implementers found extreme professional value in the reflective supervision and reflective practice component of the FFS curriculum model. Implementers believed in the importance of reflective supervision and reflective practice to build the relationships throughout the school, to increase their professionalism and to help with the focus of the instruction they delivered to the children. Overall, development of reflective capacity was described as an avenue for professional growth. As one implementer stated, they "believe that the ability to reflect, personally and with peers and administration is vital to improving as a professional." In the same way, another implementer also believed that the

most important component of the FFS curriculum is the use of reflective supervision and reflective practice. They described how "thinking back on what has happened helps me to improve my teaching in the future" and that "discussing this with others is especially helpful because they bring up perspectives that may have been missed."

In addition to helping teachers grow professionally, reflective practice enables teachers to look closer at the children in their class and tailor the children's needs for optimal development. The process of reflection takes place both with the children and within the teaching pair. For this reason, both the children's ideas and teachers understanding of what they should learn next can be combined. The importance of this component of the FFS curriculum model is described by one implementer in the open-ended survey question pertaining to this research question subtopic:

> I believe reflective practice has the biggest impact on the children. When I have brought up an issue we are having in class during reflective supervision time, I was able to receive many helpful suggestions from other teachers that improved my classroom as a whole. Reflecting with my partner helps us to see where our children currently are, and what we can do with them to move forward.

While reflective supervision and reflective practice appear to help teachers grow professionally and allows for them to be more in tune with the children, it is important that the necessary time investment is a priority. Being reflective is time consuming. An essential commitment for the FFS curriculum to be successful is the commitment of time for teachers to plan and reflect together. As mentioned previously, a lack of total commitment due to time constraints may be one reason teachers do not see the results in their teaching practice that are intended through the use of the FFS curriculum model. One implementer even mentioned the need for more time in the open-ended section of the survey.

> I think if there was a way to devote more time to reflective supervision and reflective practice that it would have the biggest impact on students because what impacts students the most is their learning environment and teachers, which is what can theoretically be advanced the most through those processes.

Furthermore, within the focus group the implementers again discussed the benefit of reflective supervision and reflective practice. Most implementers emphasized the benefit of the dialogue between teaching partners to improve practice in their classrooms. They enjoyed the way the curriculum model encouraged partners to reflect on what they do in the classroom and how what they do can progress. The focus group members continued to elaborate on the benefits of talking about what worked and what did not. The process of talking through improvement appeared to connect teachers in new ways as they came together for a greater purpose. One implementer stated: "Reflective supervision is an opportunity for our group to connect in a way that we hadn't before, really connect emotionally. As professionals we had worked together but had not connected in this way." In the same way another implementer mentioned how it "pushed her to transparency" and how that "transparency makes it easier…it provides a space for social emotional development of adults and the team." The implementers' conversed about how the absence of reflective supervision and reflective practice can allow an avenue for relationships to deteriorate. As one implementer suggested, the implementation of reflective supervision and reflective practice within the team teaching model engages those teachers in "continual conversations to figure things out" and this is "the key part of productive team teaching." S/he went on to explain that "if the partnership doesn't grow, the kids don't grow!"

Similarly, one implementer stated that talking about "what does work and what doesn't work makes us better, moves us forward and takes away the chance to be complacent."

Overall, they believed that this component of the FFS curriculum model encouraged approaching different methods or experiences and ultimately made them "a better teacher."

Another way reflective supervision and reflective practice was discussed in a positive way was how this component of the FFS curriculum model changed the school culture. Implementers discussed the deeper connections they felt to administrators and those in support positions. They valued the time that was spent taking them away for a time of reflective supervision. In their opinion, stopping the day for this time made them "feel valued and helps with morale." This component of the model was described as a "rather unique support system that moves teachers together, moves teams together, and ultimately can move schools together."

One last point made within the focus group was that there seems to be a benefit to teachers regardless of their education and/or experience. It is a model that fosters growth regardless of where you start in the growth process. One implementer commented that it "doesn't matter the stage of teaching . . . the model can work with anyone; everyone gets a benefit of the process if you are open and assess where you are at." This again connects to a possible reason that some teachers may not have a benefit. To reiterate, the respondent stated if "you are open and assess where you are at" if there is not openness or assess teaching practices at a different level than actually exists the process would not appear helpful.

Research Question 2C

The compilation of results gathered from the Likert value survey questions, open-ended survey questions and the focus group questions pertaining to Research Question 2C can be

found in Appendix I. The results gathered in the responses to these questions tell the FFS' perceptions of the use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model.

Research Question 2C examines the perceptions of the use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. An important component of the FFS curriculum model is the ability for the implementers of the model to evaluate and modify components of the curriculum model to make it easier to transition into practice.

When asked if the implementers believed that they had a role in the modification of the curricular process from year to year, 29.2% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed, 12.5% disagreed and 4.2% strongly disagreed. The results of this question have a large range of responses. This range of responses could be due to the way the implementers themselves see their involvement in the process. Once again, the modification meetings, called "think tanks" were consistently an open invitation to join. Those implementers interested in investing extra time, above and beyond their scope of responsibility in the classroom, were those who became involved in this process. Those who did not attend these meetings may not have felt as though they had input into the curricular process, while those who did participate may perceive strongly in their ability to affect the process.

Similarly, when implementers were asked if they felt empowered to give feedback about implementation of the curriculum, 16.7% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed, 16.7% were neutral and 8.3% disagreed. The variance in responses was not as large as the previous question, although there was still a small percentage who disagreed with this statement. This,

again, could be due to the amount of involvement those implementers had in the design thinking sessions or as they were presented to the implementers, the "think tanks."

Implementers were also asked if they saw themselves as stakeholders in the curriculum as a process. Thirty-four and eight-tenths percent of the implementers strongly agreed that they were indeed stakeholders, while 39.1% agreed, 17.4% were neutral, and 4.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Another possible explanation for the range of answers for implementers to see themselves as stakeholders is the way that the FFS curriculum model had originally been implemented. There are approximately forty-percent of implementers that have been employed at the private preschool being studied for quite a long time. At the time that this model was piloted, some of the implementers were not interested in a new process, as they were content with the information they had been presenting to the children for many years. As the leadership team decided to move forward and implement this model not everyone was on board. It is possible that six years later some of these implementers still do not see themselves as committed stakeholders to the process, mostly because they could see themselves successful in their own ways before implementation of the model.

However, the range of responses began to diminish as the Likert-response questions changed to discuss the ability to consistently revisit the model for further understanding and how implementation improved as evaluation continued. When asked if talking through the curriculum process continues to strengthen their understanding, 39.1% of the implementers strongly agreed, 52.2% agreed and 8.7% were neutral. Despite the small numbers that may have disagreed with their involvement in modifying the curriculum process overall, many more implementers found value in the ability to talk through the process of the curriculum model to

strengthen their understanding. In the same way, overall 34.8% strongly agreed, 60.9% agreed and 4.3% were neutral when asked if implementation of the curriculum improves when we evaluate together. Again, despite not necessarily feeling involved in the modification process many of the implementers believed the constant evaluation process did help the overall implementation of the model.

During the open-ended survey questions pertaining to the unique aspects, there were several implementers who mentioned their perceptions of the design thinking component used to consistently evaluate and modify the model. One respondent explained that s/he believed "the consistent modification of the curriculum model is the most important because it allows the school and staff to keep growing, as the process is adapted to fit the school's needs." Another respondent described that "when we evaluate (the process)…and what could have been improved we will get better as professionals."

During the focus group implementers began to expand further on their perceptions explained in the Likert-response and open-ended survey responses. One of the participants of the focus group explained how "watching the evolution of the paperwork . . . has been educational . . . and that (overall) the process works." In the same way, another implementer stated that "giving us a voice motivates us to do it and helps us to understand it." The implementers overall responded in a positive way to the design thinking model throughout the focus group. As explained previously, those educators that chose to participate in the "think tanks" as they have been presented have responded well to their involvement.

The consistent revisiting of the model and the components allowed educators to have a deeper understanding of the smaller components of the goals and unique aspects of the FFS

curriculum model and the overall process of the model as a whole. Specifically, one respondent mentioned how it was helpful to "look at developmentally appropriate practice over and over again." Repetition for adults seems to have the same effect as repetition for children; it helps! In addition to helping the implementers, design thinking also helped the model itself grow and be more transferable to actual classroom practice. The discussion and revaluation of the developmental guidelines with the input from the implementers was reported as valuable. One respondent explained that "as the developmental guidelines were revised it makes you feel valuable and constantly grow." The involvement in the process allowed the implementers of the FFS curriculum model to engage in a deeper level of thinking and learning with the model. Another implementer stated that ultimately "we create these things and share it with teachers halfway through to make new progress . . . these things were listened to and then brought in next year. This is very supportive and the professional use is valuable." Overall, the unique aspect of design thinking was viewed as a constructive way to evaluate the model and engage the teachers in the process.

Mind Mapping Themes Related to Each Research Question

To gain a better understanding of the themes that had emerged through the coding process, mind maps were used to organize and gain a visual of the data. This section looks across the findings within each of the results sections previously discussed to find and summarize commonalities and report them in a visual way. All three methods of collecting data were reviewed, the Likert-value survey questions, open-ended questions and the focus group questions. As the coding process progressed, key phrases, as well as, common themes and

topics were placed on to the mind maps. Key phrases that related to each other were drawn connecting to one another visually. Each mind map is considered separately in the following sections. Later in the discussion, further consideration is given to the underlying themes that have appeared across all goals and unique aspects and the meaning that they have within the complete picture of the FFS curriculum model.

Research Question 1A Mind Map

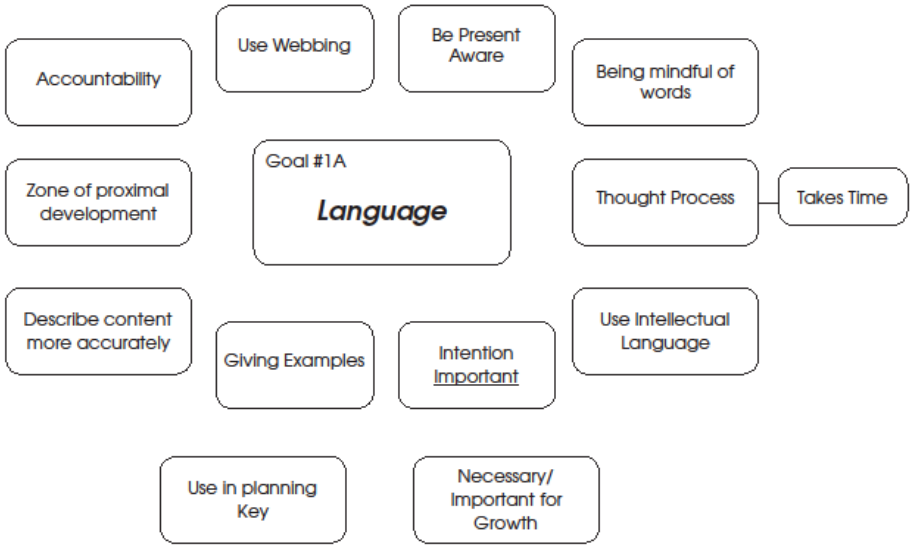

Figure 1. Mind map for Research Question 1A.

The first mind map considered the first goal of the FFS curriculum model which is the use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology and the role of the parallel process of using instructional vocabulary with the children. One of the themes that emerged most often in responses is the role of accountability. From the Likert-response survey questions, 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the accountability to learning standards is an important piece of teaching. In the discussion of the open-ended survey questions, one

respondent specifically mentioned the necessity of "having a curriculum model to provide the framework on which to build . . . lesson plans." Once again in the focus group, the intentional planning for overall accountability of teaching developmentally appropriate concepts was discussed as being of upmost importance. This concept of accountability is not only an important curriculum and instruction term, but one that can be taken to two different extremes. There is both accountability that squeezes the life out of teachers and accountability for learning that pushes teachers to become the best teacher they can be. The FFS curriculum model aims to be a model that encourages teachers to be the best they can be through an intentional process of thinking and learning.

Another theme that emerged that is closely related to accountability is the zone of proximal development and how this is an important consideration and necessary component when being held accountable for children's growth and success. The Likert-response survey question aimed at the zone of proximal development generated an overwhelming 96% of teachers that either strongly agreed or agreed that measuring children's developmental progression is important. In the same way, in the open-ended survey questions respondents talked about the importance of "having specific developmental guidelines available . . . so that (children) can move along the learning continuum." Furthermore, in the focus group respondents explained how important it was to find out "what they understand and push them to understand things they did not know." As previously discussed in the results section for this particular research subtopic, both "accountability" and the "measurement of children's developmental success" are pillars of importance throughout the FFS curriculum model.

Many of the teachers talked about the importance of the FFS both being a thought process that takes time and how both planning and intention is important throughout the use of the model. Throughout the open-ended survey questions phrases such as "being mindful about planning" and having "to think and revisit developmental guidelines over and over to plan" described the importance of intention throughout the planning. In the same way, the process of intentional planning was described through "scaffolding the meaning of language used for children" and how in planning it is important to "think about how to use the words" for the benefit of their language acquisition. The use of mind mapping was instrumental within this study to describe themes as they emerged but used as a parallel process throughout the FFS curriculum model as a whole. Within the FFS curriculum model, webbing is used to generate teacher's ideas pertaining to what to present in the classroom and to generate children's thoughts to connect them for the benefit of upcoming instruction. Many teachers discussed the use of webbing and how it was helpful to gain a greater perspective on the children's thoughts and subsequent direction for instruction. Webbing was also mentioned as a way to be both mindful of the words being used throughout instruction and a way to be accountable for being present within the classroom with the children's thoughts and ideas. One respondent mentioned that "doing the webbings and seeing us record what they say…they can recognize what we are writing." Last, the use of intellectual language was a theme that evolved throughout the open-ended survey and focus group discussion. The importance of giving examples of or defining intellectual language through common or less simple vocabulary was discussed.

Research Question 1B Mind Map

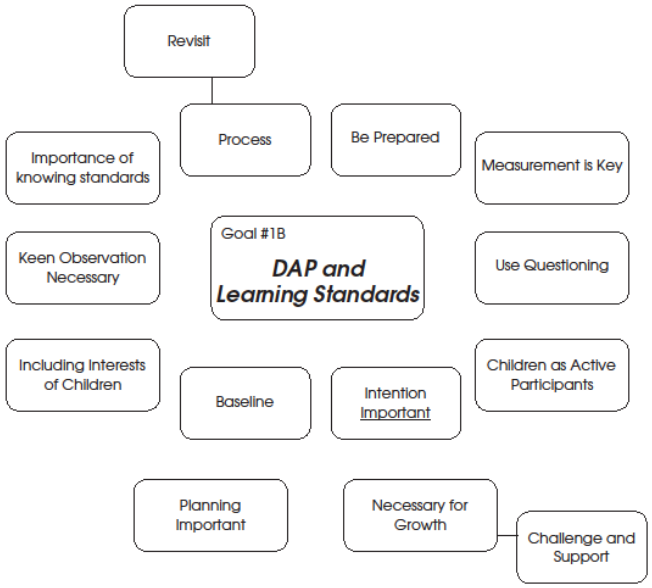

Figure 2. Mind map for Research Question 1B.

When investigating the importance and/or value of both developmentally appropriate practice and the adherence to learning standards during the focus group, several themes emerged across the various data-gathering measures. The importance of knowing the learning standards and being prepared to measure these standards through keen observation were often discussed. In the Likert-response survey questions, 100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that it is important to use developmentally appropriate practice to present topics to the children. In the same way, approximately 96% either strongly agreed or agreed that it is important to use developmentally guidelines to measure the children's understanding. Based on those two questions, it is apparent that the implementers of the FFS curriculum model understand the need for both developmentally appropriate practice and measurement to a set of learning standards. One respondent in the open-ended survey responses also indicated that "the use of developmental guidelines over several years has strengthened (their)

understanding of what to watch for as well as (their) ability to see how planned activities help in the development." Another respondent from the focus group explained the importance the intersection of developmentally appropriate practice and measurement of learning standards when s/he stated "where you see them come together you will see those things that are a good measure and that they enjoy doing and see them make progress." The intersection is possible and the balance of both developmentally appropriate practice and the measurement of learning standards is vital to children's developmental progression.

Once again, the reality that the FFS curriculum model is a thinking process that needs to be constantly be revisited for total success was a theme that emerged. In the same way, being instructionally prepared and intentional planning were seen as important. Over 96% of the respondents to the Likert-response question directed towards intentional planning either strongly agreed or agreed that it was important to the acquisition of learning and development. Respondents in the focus group discussed the difference between the intention used now while using the FFS curriculum model and the discrepancy in learning when there was no intention.

Throughout the process of considering both developmentally appropriate practice and whether or not learning standards were necessary, the theme of including the interests of children and seeing children as active participants in learning was often discussed. Over 96% of the respondents to the Likert-response survey question revealing their belief about child-initiated learning either strongly agreed or agreed. One respondent from the open-ended survey responses mentioned that the FFS curriculum model has helped in "knowing (the children) well and helping them enjoy their learning experiences while facilitating their growth." Similarly, a respondent in the focus group discussed the importance of the children

and their interest and how "(the children) almost can't do an activity that is developmentally inappropriate if (the teachers) start with the developmental guidelines." In addition to these themes, the theme of the use of the FFS curriculum model as a baseline for challenge and support to both the teachers and the students was a theme that also emerged. Last, the use of questioning as a way to gather the children's thoughts, as well as the recording of their thoughts was a theme that was consistently present.

Research Question 1C Mind Map

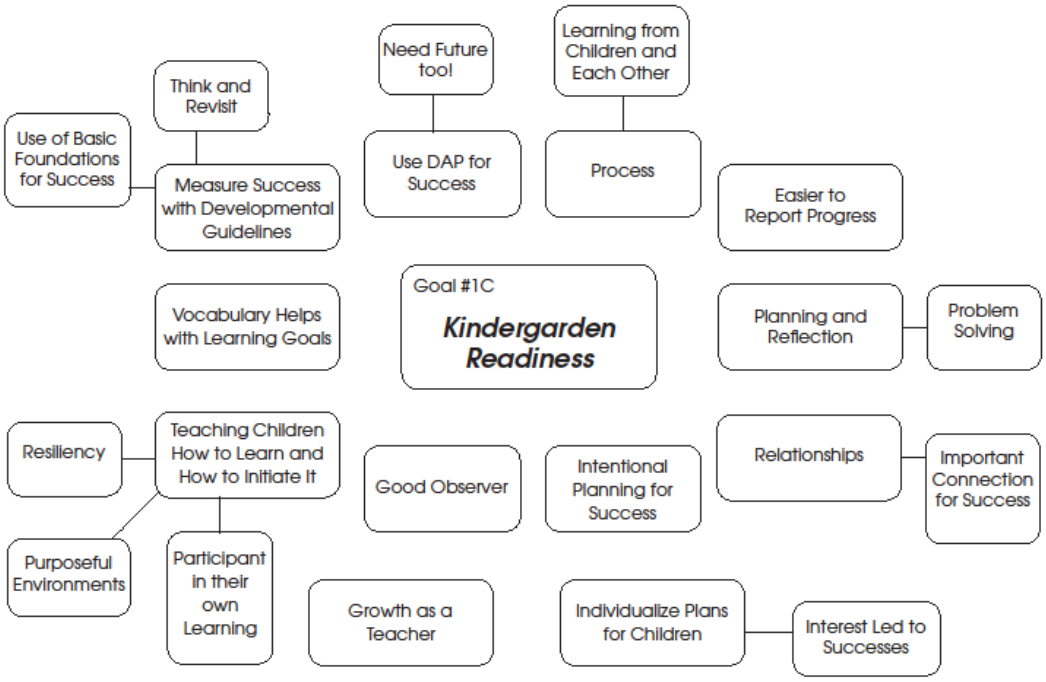

Figure 3. Mind map for Research Question 1C.

When exploring whether the FFS curriculum model prepares children for kindergarten, many different themes emerged. The one theme that consistently appeared was the discussion of the measurement of success through the developmental guidelines and how this was a basic foundation for success and one that needs to be thought about often and revisited continually.

In the same way, the theme of the use of vocabulary helping with both learning goals and overall kindergarten readiness was apparent. Throughout the Likert-response questions that discussed learning content, whether language and literacy, mathematical concepts, all developmental domains, and higher level thinking skills over 96%-100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the foundation for success curriculum model helps children learn and develop these skills. In one respondents answer to an open-ended survey question s/he stated that "they have grown in a way of 'doing the right thing' when it comes to children, both professionally and educationally." One of the respondents in the focus group discussed that the FFS curriculum model "helped (children) build on the developmental guidelines and . . . academically . . . and the attitude of them being a part of their learning and (the children's) part in creating the curriculum . . . and the love of learning." In the Likert-response questions 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they are preparing the children to love learning and be successful. A focus group participant explained that the FFS curriculum model does a "very good job of making sure (the children) are ready for kindergarten because . . . when they leave here they know how to think which . . . serves them well even past kindergarten." Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the FFS curriculum model is a unique model that facilitates growth academically, intellectually, and personally, as well as, fosters a love of learning that spans a lifetime.

According to respondents across all data measures, the use of the FFS curriculum model appears to make reporting of the children's progress easier. The theme of needing to be a good observer as a teacher for the benefit of kindergarten readiness emerged. One respondent in the focus group described that "you have to be a good observer" in order to "see things that

are a good measure . . . and see them make progress." Once again, the understanding of the FFS curriculum model as one that is a process and one that involves the children constituted a theme.

The use of intentional plans for success, including both planning and reflection as a source for problem-solving and a basis for revision of those plans was mentioned. Within those intentional plans, the importance of individualization of plans for children was pointed out many times, and the use of children's interests as a means leading to success was consistently present in implementers' responses. Some other key phrases that were used often were the children being participants in their own learning, as well as using the environment as a way to purposely involve the children in their learning. In addition, the trait of resiliency was a theme that emerged in responses.

Another theme that emerged when considering kindergarten readiness was the interrelated set of relationships within the school, including children, teachers, administrators and families, that are considered important connections for children's success. One hundred percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain them to the parents. The ability of the teachers using the foundation for success curriculum model to be experts in their field allows them to connect with parents in different ways. During the focus group, respondents also discussed their ability to connect with families for the benefit of the whole child and meeting various needs. S/he stated that "being able to go through the process to get some children extra help with things . . .when you are helping them with social emotional skills and encouraging that type of learning . . . (and also) working and seeing if they are meeting our developmental guidelines and if (the

children) are not . . . working with them and pushing them and working with parents and making sure they are growing and connecting them to other resources they need so when they get to kindergarten they are ready for it." The ability for teachers to connect to parents in new ways and really partner for the children's success is fostered through the process of the FFS curriculum model.

Overall, the FFS curriculum model was again mentioned as a model that encourages professional growth, within both teaching and learning, as a teacher prepares children for kindergarten. The last theme that emerged was the importance of a desire to ensure developmentally appropriate practice as a tool for success in the future education of the children. One respondent in the open-ended survey responses mentioned that they "can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences they are providing (for the children)." During the focus group, the conversation shifted to the despair of having to passing children off to a broken kindergarten system, thus validating the overall need for this study and the FFS curriculum model. One respondent explained that "we are doing what is best for (the children) . . . but when they get into kindergarten it is not necessarily what is developmentally appropriate anymore; some places are trying to change that but many are not." Many of the teachers support the goals and the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, yet struggle with why there is not a better system in the primary grades that mirrors or continues this model. One respondent described how "if the other schools would do what we do and be developmentally appropriate they would soar!" The need for the bridge that the FFS aims to build is made very real throughout this study.

Research Question 2A Mind Map

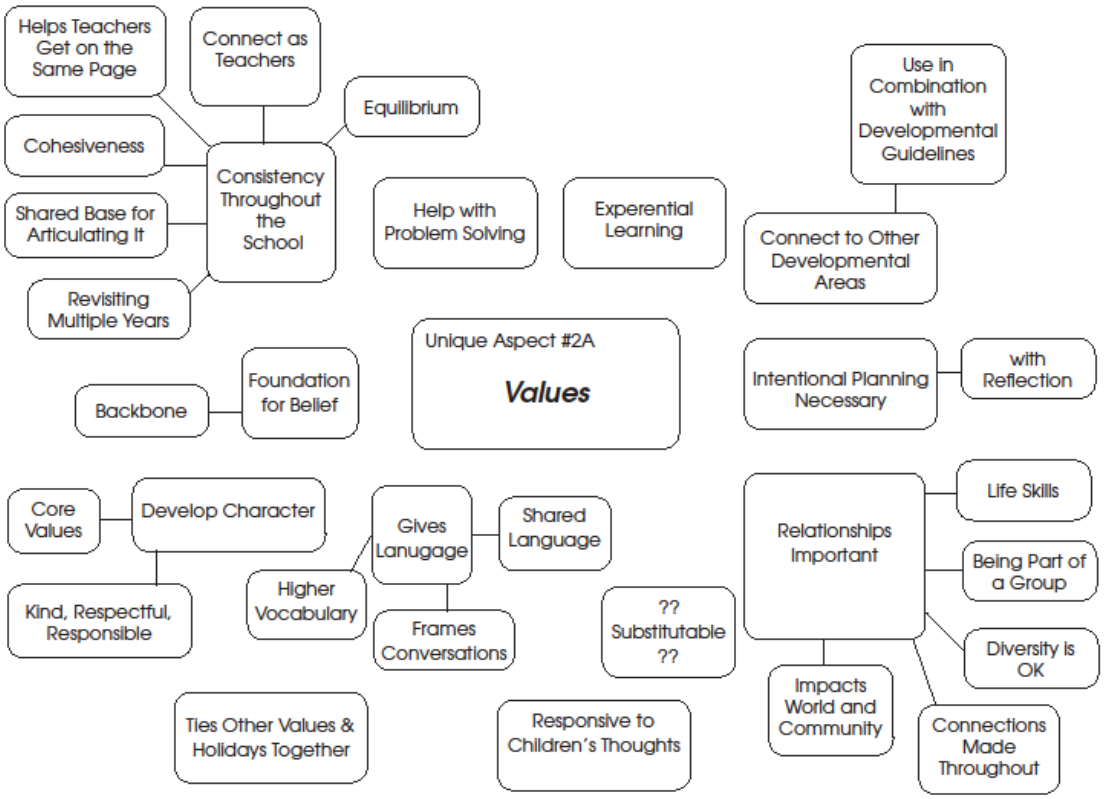

Figure 4. Mind map for Research Question 2A.

Again, the benefit and necessity of intentional planning and reflection was seen as a common theme that was used to describe those things necessary for success within the model. There were several Likert-response questions that addressed the ability for values to help plan instruction. Depending on the question, 85% to 96% or respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the value component helped with intentional planning. One focus group respondent explained that "what the values do . . . is it gives (teachers) a backbone because (teachers) do have to be very intentionally planned . . . and this gives . . . a broader place to stand on." Subsequently, implementers' expressed the need of the planning to be responsive to children's thoughts. A respondent to the open-ended section of the survey clarified that "the

value-based approach is most important because it helps us to be responsive to the children's interests while still being cohesive across ages."

In addition, a consistent theme that emerged was that the values connected well to other developmental domains and that they were easily used in conjunction with the developmental guidelines. One of the respondents in the open-ended survey questions described specifically that "the value-based curriculum has the biggest impact on the children. The values that we teach not only instruct children on how to relate socially, but add opportunities for rich cultural, emotional, and literacy opportunities." The implementers once again mentioned that the values were important for experiential learning and problem-solving. One respondent stated that "providing ways for (the children) to reflect on what they have already learned and how it is connected to what they are doing now helps the children build and retain knowledge." The values were also seen to help frame conversations with the children and give them both a shared language and a framework for higher level vocabulary. Over 96% of the Likert-value survey respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that using values to plan instruction helps provide the language to use with the children throughout the day.

Another theme that emerged multiple times was the importance of how the values help to develop character in the students. The values seem to represent the core values of what is important, such as being kind, respectful and responsible. Many implementers also mentioned how relationships were important within the understanding of the values. There were, once again, connections made throughout the community created between children, teachers, administrators and family. Within this school community, there was a special significance given

to being a part of this special group where diversity was okay and where together they could impact the world and the greater community.

Research Question 2B Mind Map

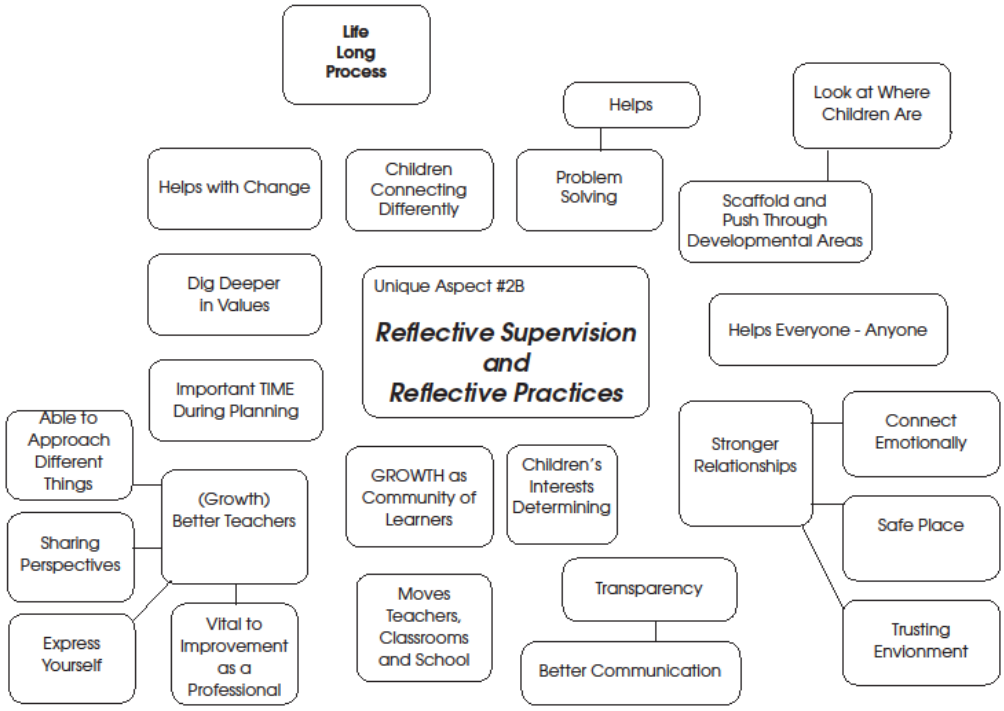

Figure 5. Mind map for Research Question 2B.

While examining the second unique aspect of the FFS curriculum model, the use of reflective supervision and reflective practice, there were several themes that emerged across the measures used in this study. Reflective supervision was mentioned as a crucial part of a lifelong learning process. According to the implementers it is a practice that naturally encourages transparency and effective communication, as well as a safe, trusting environment that allows teachers to connect emotionally and create stronger relationships. One respondent described how reflective supervision and peer coaching "pushed them to transparency" and that the "transparency makes (the process) easier." Due to the sensitive nature of reflective

supervision, the range of responses in the Likert-value responses of the survey was greater than other goals and unique aspects to this point in the study. Reflective supervision involves asking teachers to take a closer look at their teaching practices and relationships with others. On average, in the Likert-value response area, 65%-75% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that reflective supervision was beneficial to them personally, with their partner, or with the children. Despite the lower percentages, the respondents in the open-ended questions and in the focus groups described both reflective supervision and reflective practice as beneficial to their practice. The implementers shared the belief that reflective supervision is an important time required during the planning process that facilitates growth within the teachers. It was also discussed that time spent seemed to be proportionate to the ability to succeed or amount of growth. One respondent explained that "if there was a way to devote more time to reflective supervision and reflective practice that it would have the biggest impact on students . . . what impacts students most is their learning environment and teachers, which is what can theoretically be advanced the most through these processes." Reflective supervision was considered vital to improvement as a professional and mentioned as an important time to express themselves, share different perspectives, and approach different methods of teaching and learning. One of the respondents in the open-ended survey responses explained that "the ability to reflect, personally, and with peers and administration is vital to improving as a professional." The overall theme of growth emerged as teachers noted the ability of reflective supervision as a way to encourage growth as a community of learners and to ultimately move teachers, classrooms, and the school to new ways of thinking. In a similar line

of thinking, another theme that emerged was the power of reflective supervision to engage teachers and bring them effectively through a change process.

As implementers considered the parallel process of reflective practice with the children, the themes that emerged mirrored those of reflective supervision. Implementers pointed out the way reflective practice helps children with problem solving. In the same way, implementers discussed the effect of reflective supervision on teacher relationships; in addition, they saw the same effect on children's relationships. The overall theme of connection was present throughout the implementers' responses. One implementer explained through an open-ended survey response that "reflecting . . . helps us to see where our children currently are, and what we can do with them to move them forward." Reflective practice was also addressed as a way to facilitate a deeper involvement on behalf of the children. This process was explained as one in which children could dig deeper in the values being discussed and also as an effective way for teachers to step back and examine how to better scaffold their learning and push them through the developmental areas. The theme of the importance of reflective practice to a keen sense of observation, both for children and teachers, was also present. Last, the theme of the ability of reflective practice to connect teachers more effectively to the interests of the children was referred to often. Overall, reflective supervision and reflective practice were both described as a well needed pause for effective curriculum and instruction both in the classroom and throughout the school.

Research Question 2C Mind Map

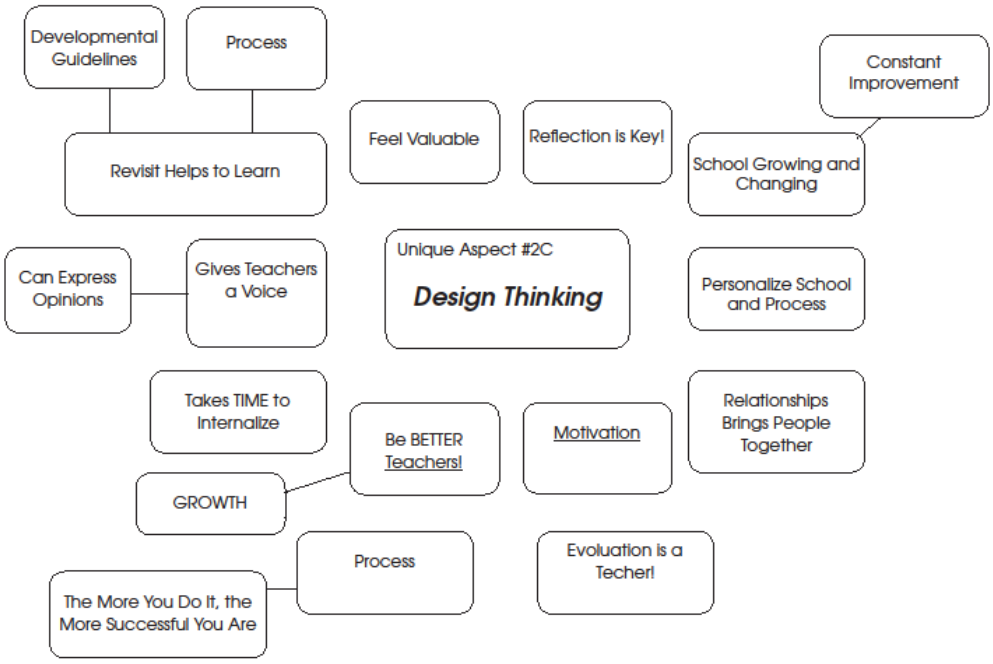

Figure 6. Mind map for Research Question 2C.

The last research question dealt with the unique aspect of design thinking. There were many major themes that evolved throughout the implementers' responses. Once again, implementers noted the theme of the importance of design thinking as a part of the overall curriculum process. Specifically, over 91% of the respondents to the Likert-value survey questions either strongly agreed or agreed that talking through the curriculum process continues to strengthen their understanding. In the same way, over 95% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that implementation of the curriculum improved when we evaluate together. On the other hand, there was a range of responses, from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed when asked if implementers saw themselves as stakeholders in the curriculum as a process. This range could be attributed to whether or not the implementers engaged in the process. The FFS curriculum model component of design thinking occurred

during specific “think tanks.” The “think tanks” were voluntary in nature, although all implementers were consistently invited. If implementers did not attend a think tank they may have believed that they were not a stakeholder or did not have a role in the modification of the curricular process from year to year. Similar to reflective supervision, the design thinking component may be viewed in different ways dependent on the depth of the involvement in the process.

Design thinking was presented as an important way to revisit the developmental guidelines and the entire process of the FFS curriculum model. In describing this revisiting process, the implementers again noted the growth that they felt as teachers. They enjoyed being a part of a process that allows them to become better teachers. Constant improvement was a theme that emerged as something that was valuable to everyone and that was an effective indicator that the school was constantly growing and thinking. One respondent in the open-ended survey questions described how “the consistent modification of the curriculum model is the most important because it allows the school and staff to keep growing.” This respondent was obviously aware of the role they had during the evaluation and modification of the model. Throughout the results, teachers indicated how they were evolving as professionals because of the process. The implementers felt as though it was motivation to continue to grow. Design thinking was described as a process in which the more one takes part in it, the more success one will have. In addition, the implementers felt the different relationships that emerged were stronger as a result of the design thinking process. The implementers described design thinking as a way to personalize the school and the overall curriculum process. According to implementers, design thinking gives teachers a voice and allows them to feel

valuable, as their opinions matter and are included in the process. Another theme that emerged was the importance of reflection during the design thinking process. The implementers discussed that because the FFS curriculum model is one that takes time to internalize, design thinking is a critical step in the total evolution of teachers, classrooms, and the school.

The results generated throughout the examination of the goals and unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model have been discussed throughout this section. When considered together with respect to the same research question, the Likert survey responses, open ended survey questions and focus group questions have given a clear understanding of the implementers' overall perceptions of these goals and unique aspects. In the next section, themes that are consistent across research questions are considered.

Themes Consistent Across all Research Questions

Throughout the coding process, specifically the mind mapping process, there were many themes that emerged across all research questions. It is important to note all of these themes, as they are foundational to the model. Each theme that was consistent across all research questions is an area that the FFS curriculum model process illuminates as paramount to the way children in learn. These themes are also important consider when determining the focus to explore during the next phase of creation, to be discussed in Chapter 5, such as the training and professional development needed to make the implementation of the model a success.

The first consistent theme that emerged across all research questions was the importance of relationships. As discussed earlier in the literature review, it is within the

context of all relationships at a school that the foundation for learning starts. The importance of healthy relationships within the classroom, with the teachers, with the families, and throughout the administration is foundational to the ability to learn. Consistent with this understanding is that this theme also surfaced across all goals and unique aspects for the FFS curriculum model. In the same way, another theme that also surfaced interrelated to relationships was the ability for the model to first strengthen relationships and then to create an atmosphere for both personal and professional growth and ultimately change. Change and growth can be difficult for everyone involved. However, implementers mentioned that the goals, and especially the unique aspects of the model, helped support both change and growth within a healthy context of relationships.

The next theme that emerged across all research questions was the importance of the accountability that the FFS curriculum model fostered. There was consistently conversation surrounding the need for accountability to the intention behind the material presented to the children, the accountability to each other as professionals, the accountability for development of the children, and the overall accountability to being reflective and thoughtful throughout the curriculum and instruction process. Accountability is actually one of the curriculum and instruction terms that the thinking process of the model fostered. Based on the responses of the implementers, this is a concept that the model incorporates and allows to unfold naturally. In the same way, being accountable for the language used during the implementation of the model, with the children and again with fellow implementers, consistently emerged as a theme. The value placed on communication, or language, throughout the school and different constituents appeared as another level of accountability. Accountability for transparent

communication between teachers was revealed to be important. Accountability for communication surrounding the developmental progression of children was revealed to be important. Accountability for communicating constructive feedback in an open and honest way when processing the overall implementation of the model was revealed to be important. All of these various levels of accountability build on each other and come together throughout the use of the FFS curriculum model.

When examining in greater detail the responses of the implementers in regards to the goals and unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, the central focus of the children and their interests, as well as the consideration for their development came up in response to every question. The children's interests led the conversation about language and its importance, DAP and learning standards and kindergarten readiness. In considering these goals, it appeared that the children's interest in connection to their development served as the integral entry/starting point for success in achieving these goals. In the same way, when presented questions about the values, reflective supervision and reflective practice, and the design thinking for evaluation, the implementers consistently asserted the importance of both children's interests and the monitoring of development. It appears that the implementers consider the children's interest and their developmental progression as connected and foundational to the entire curriculum process.

The last and perhaps most prominent theme across all research questions was the discussion of the FFS curriculum model being a thought process that never ends. It is a model that requires frequent revisiting of all of the components. Reflection and intention lead the way from language used to the intersection of developmentally appropriate practice to the goal

of making sure the children are kindergarten ready. In the same way, across all research questions, the importance of the overall thinking process, the consistent revisiting of both planning and observation, and the use of reflection in combination with intentional planning appeared to be foundational throughout the model. The implementers discussed in detail the process that they felt themselves emerged in and the need for reflection throughout the open-ended questions and the focus group. Through the mind mapping process, it becomes clear that the implementers placed value in the intentional planning process and the time for reflection and that they recognized that the investment in these activities is what brings success in using the model. In the next chapter, the overall implications of these results are discussed and next steps determined for the overall success of both the FFS curriculum model and those who implement it in their school.

Evaluation and Challenges to the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

Within the open-ended survey questions and the focus group, implementers were asked to provide their overall evaluation of the FFS curriculum model, as well as to discuss some challenges that they may have experienced. Overall, the implementers discussed that the FFS curriculum model has propelled them on a journey of professional growth, both personally and as a school. In addition, many of the implementers felt more competent with the way they both measured development and articulated it to the parents of their students. One implementer stated:

> I think the model has provided ways that allow for student achievement to be easily articulated to parents in evaluative writing and informal conversations, which has been helpful in maintaining positive and productive relationships with parents. I also believe that the model provides a solid base level for the expectations of student learning

> across the school so that as a teacher I would know what my students have previously been asked to do and where they need to be in terms of getting ready for the following year.

During the evaluation of the FFS curriculum model, the implementers also discussed some of the goals evaluated throughout the research questions. For example, when considering the goals of the understanding of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology, such as measurement, and understanding the intersection of developmentally appropriate practice and learning standards, one implementer stated that "the curriculum model has helped me know how to think and approach teaching the children. Instead of approaching with ideas or end results, I think about developmental guidelines, what the children are interested in at the time, and how each individual child is ready to learn the material." The goal of the model is for implementers to be intentional about the material they teach the children, both in accordance to the set of developmental guidelines and the children's interests. When considering the responses of the implementers for the evaluation of the model it appeared as though this goal has been achieved through many of the implementers. Similarly one implementer stated that they "feel that it has helped (them) be more intentional and reflective. It also helps me think about the children as individuals in order to help them with personal achievement." Once again another implementer stated that s/he thinks the FFS curriculum model "has been beneficial (for) professional growth because it provides a framework for all developmental areas. This also helps to . . . completely measure student achievement by evaluating all developmental areas."

Another goal of using appropriate content language with the children and overall language usage was discussed during the evaluation of the FFS model. One implementer stated

that s/he thinks "it is a wonderful curriculum model that has helped me grow as a teacher . . . I know how to have conversations with students that I never would have even thought to have before." In the same way that this implementer discussed the growth s/he felt since the implementation of the FFS curriculum model, many of the implementers focused on growth throughout the discussion. One implementer stated that "as the year goes on . . . I am getting a better understanding of it. I definitely think it has helped me become a stronger teacher." The FFS curriculum model is a thinking and learning process and throughout the discussion implementers have overwhelmingly discussed the success of the model in this area. Even the implementers who discussed their growth alongside their challenges or amount of time needed for investment to be successful, growth was always discussed. As one implementer described:

> I appreciate having a program/philosophy/model that is uniform throughout the school. It takes time to understand all the components, but when taken as a whole, it builds a rich framework for curriculum planning. The children benefit from the thoughtful planning across developmental domains.

It is not uncommon for a process that challenges your thinking or ways of doing things to be simultaneously considered both time consuming and rewarding. The variances of all responses to this point, which are discussed further in the next chapter, may revolve around the willingness and scope of the adaptation of such a process. Another implementer again discussed growth in tandem with challenge:

> The curriculum is very challenging but has enabled me to grow considerably as a teacher. In the past I may have had an inkling that a child was struggling in an area but did not know how to evaluate, discuss, and plan activities to help them. The students have benefited greatly from the reflections of the teachers about each one of them and from the way in which the values build upon each other and interconnect.

The evaluation of the foundation for success curriculum model revealed that the model is intensive and requires an investment of time both physically and intellectually, yet the

completion of the process can result in professional growth as an individual and for the benefit of the children.

The implementers of the FFS curriculum model were also asked to describe some of the challenges that come with using the model. One of the implementers explained how s/he "thought that not all teachers are able to easily understand, internalize and work through the model at a face pace and that the model itself can take a lot of years to help change the practice of established teachers." This implementer described something that is difficult no matter the curriculum model being used, and that is change. It may be extremely difficult to work through the professional development and implementation of anything new being taught, especially with teachers who have been teaching the same way for many years. Similarly, the ability for all of the staff to agree on the new model being adopted can naturally lead to challenges. It is a process that needs the investment of time and commitment in order to be successful. One of the implementers explained that s/he thought "the weakness is (that) it can be overwhelming to expect (all of the) staff to adopt it all at once. You must have buy in from the teaching staff . . . (therefore) implementing it in stages while educating and supporting staff development would probably be very important." Unfortunately, as one implementer mentioned "some people (simply) don't have the mindset to put in the time and involvement that is necessary." However, this concept of everyone being committed may not be realistic. Going back to the Pareto Principle (Payne, 2012), that states that 20% usually complete 80% of the work, the idea that everyone would be involved and/or committed in the same way or on the same level may be unreasonable.

As the implementers discussed the challenges of the model the implementers who gave feedback about the challenges seemed to agree that the overall process of the FFS curriculum model is quite complex. Due to the nature of the curriculum model and the interface of the goals and unique aspects, the process can be challenging, and again require a lot of time and dedication. One implementer stated that "it is challenging in the beginning to see how the different pieces fit together. Over time using it becomes much easier but there is a great deal of information to process so it can be overwhelming when . . . first introduced to (the model)." In the same way, another implementer explained that "it takes a long time to get comfortable with all of the pieces and it does require commitment to keep up with."

Time spent both processing and implementing the model was a common theme that emerged across responses pertaining to challenges. The time given within the field of early childhood education for planning and professional development combined often varies greatly from school to school. The foundation for success curriculum model requires an investment of time, and money, by those who are being asked to use the model. Another implementer, mentioned the time consuming nature of the process. The implementer stated that "sometimes it is cumbersome and time consuming but it is so important . . . (to) get beyond those feelings."

The last challenge that was revealed during the open-ended survey responses was the overall commitment to a process some educators might not agree upon. As discussed earlier, peer coaching specifically is a component of the model that not all educators feel comfortable with. It is a time to be vulnerable and transparent with some of the opportunities that are available for growth. Those educators who engage in this process completely have seen more

success with the model overall, although this was not specifically measured in the results. Implementers, such as the one who gave this response, often discussed the uncomfortable nature of peer coaching, especially if reflection is difficult. One implementer described that s/he felt "it is a little uncomfortable to do the peer coaching each week. Maybe it should be completed when there is conflict with the teachers? Maybe once at the beginning of the year and then starting in the second semester?" The peer coaching or teaching partner reflective supervision component of the model was specifically designed to encourage open and honest, regular, communication between two educators that work together every week, at least. The ability to share thoughts, feelings and experiences in this manner has diminished the conflicts that come up and cause major disruption in a classroom environment. This challenge may be more about each educator personally and how they share and receive thoughts about thoughts, feelings and experiences, than about the model specifically. In the same way, one implementer mentioned that there "should be more flexibility in how different teachers use the program based on their level of experience." However, the FFS curriculum model was built to encourage growth regardless of the level of experience. Having more experience would actually be a reason to dig deeper into the model for new levels of professional growth, rather than eliminating any component of the model.

When challenges to the FFS curriculum model were discussed within the focus group, there were some similar themes that emerged. Once again, the complexity of the model was discussed, specifically that "sometimes the teachers get lost in the process." While it is important to both recognize and engage in every component of the model, it is also important to realize that the FFS curriculum model is a process for thinking and learning. The process is

necessary not for the sake of the process, but for the journey that the model takes the educators mind through when intentionally planning for both curriculum and instruction.

Similar to the responses in the open-ended survey responses, the discussion of time and the specific limitations on the time necessary to complete the process was also consistent. One respondent stated, "Unfortunately the reality of our school, the structure of hours, doesn't allow us as much time as we need. (More time) would speed things up." In the same way, another respondent explained that "it takes so long and there are limitations in our day." The discussion of time is challenging in itself. Time can also be used as an excuse to not engage fully in a process that is new and challenging. Depending on the structure of the specific school using the model and the labor laws of that state, educators can either be described as exempt or non-exempt employees. In the school where the research was conducted educators are considered exempt. Therefore, technically they have as much time as it takes to get the job complete, similar to those teachers in the primary grades. This may be more challenging for early childhood education center administrators who consider their educators non-exempt. The consideration of the budget dollars put into the time for planning is important to the adoption of the FFS model.

The last challenge that was discussed at the very end of the focus group was the idea that the model may be more successful within a mentoring system of support. This may be especially important to those educators who are brand new to the process or may be more comfortable with the way they have been teaching for many years. Again, the FFS curriculum model is a model of thinking and learning. The process of thinking and learning is meant to

challenge the minds of those engaging in the model. In the next chapter further implications for this model of thinking and learning are explored in greater depth.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This qualitative and quantitative case study was designed to explore the perceptions of the implementers, both teachers and administrators, pertaining to both the goals and unique aspects of the foundations for success (FFS) early childhood curriculum model in a north Texas private preschool. The goals examined pertaining to the FFS curriculum model were the (a) perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology and parallel process of content use of language in the classroom, (b) perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections, and (c) perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." With respect to the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, focus was placed on FFS implementers' perceptions of the (a) value-based curriculum component, (b) use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice and the (c) use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. The program successes and obstacles were examined and further implications for the model were recognized. Based on the purpose of study explained above, the answers to the following two research questions were explored:

1. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the foundations for success (FFS) curriculum model with respect to the three sub topics below?

    a. The FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology, as well as the parallel process of overall use of content language in the classroom.

b. The FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections.

c. The FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."

2. How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the unique aspects of the FFS curriculum model, with respect to the sub topics listed below?

    a. The value-based curriculum component;

    b. The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice; and

    c. The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model.

Research Question 1A

The first goal of the FFS curriculum model is to understand both the language used commonly in curriculum and instruction throughout the transition from early childhood through the primary grades and the importance of using specific content language with the children. It is vital to the FFS curriculum model that teachers are effective at knitting higher level content language into their classrooms for the benefit of the children. It is also imperative that they understand and implement the tenets of curriculum and instruction such as, accountability, measurement and standards to successfully create the optimal atmosphere for learning.

The themes that emerged through the exploration of this question were that language is consistently seen as important conduit for information. Whether information is being shared with the children, colleagues, or administrators, language is seen as important. According to the implementers, the type of language used with the children affected the learning that took

place in the classroom. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's understanding that co-constructed dialogues lead to internalization, which in turn lead to independent thinking. As children begin to use and reflect on the language introduced by the teachers they begin to understand the concepts presented by the teachers in new ways.

The inclusion of pertinent content vocabulary within the FFS curriculum model was revealed to be a valuable component to teachers and children. Most of the conversation about language surrounded the children and their interests. This finding is also consistent with the foundational theory of social constructivism in which the FFS curriculum model is based. As previously discussed, social constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness of the learner but actually encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process. The intentional planning of the language used throughout the FFS curriculum model was vital to the implementers. Children use the information presented by teachers to construct their own understanding of what is being presented. In the same way, the intentional consideration of language throughout the reflective supervision and reflective practice portion of the model was clearly important to the implementers.

Furthermore, the use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology was not referred to as much by the implementers. It may be that the related questions were worded poorly. However, the pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology that was intended to be discussed, such as measurement, accountability and standards were present; the "Hot topic" words actually emerged throughout the research questions. Measurement and its importance were discussed by the implementers throughout other research questions, as were standards and accountability. These words have been discussed through research and the educational

arena for a long time now. The solution for how to balance the importance of these pertinent terms with the actual education of children is still being investigated. The FFS model could be the solution!

Research Question 1B

The second goal of the FFS curriculum model is to understand the importance of the intersection of developmentally appropriate practice with the measurement and adherence to a specific set of learning standards or developmental objectives. This study explored the implementers' perceptions to this intersection and its importance. Researchers have been exploring big questions within the field: Should preschool curriculum focus on skills that are academic in nature or the social and emotional development of children? Should preschool curriculum focus on developmentally appropriate practice or the measurement of specific learning standards? Should preschool curriculum embrace the constructivist theory of how children learn and primary grades concentrate on rote learning and memorization to the answers on "the test?" The research clearly states that the answer is not an either/or approach, instead it is finding the delicate balance of all that is important to a child and their overall lifelong success. The design of the FFS curriculum model both guides and encourages teachers to successfully navigate the balance of developmentally appropriate practice and the adherence to a set of learning standards.

Most implementers understood the importance of developmentally appropriate practice and clearly used this way of thinking throughout their intentional planning process. The children's interests were forefront in the description of planning for developmentally

appropriate practice. The implementers seemed to understand what research continues to explain to us. An appropriate curriculum within the field of early childhood education is one that both motivates and encourages children to learn through windows provided by their interests and to seek mastery of academic milestones through their intellectual quests for relevant information. This finding is also consistent with Vygotsky's description of the Zone of Proximal Development where the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Children can be expected to perform challenging tasks with appropriate help from the teachers. With the information teachers intentionally plan for and present to the children, they should be able to construct their commitment to hard work and problem solving to naturally develop the academic skills needed for proficiency in the world they are entering. Children should not be subject to an unbalanced system of learning that contains the absence of either developmentally appropriate practice or the measurement of learning standards for a realistic developmental goal or objective.

The previously discussed significance, measurement to a set of learning standards, was also understood by the implementers. Many of the implementers mentioned that the FFS curriculum model, in a way, forces the adherence to a set of developmental milestones, if one is using the model appropriately. The data seemed to suggest a profound understanding that learning standards are important and foundational to the actual learning that takes place.

The overall stance of the implementers towards developmentally appropriate practice and learning standards was consistent with what Cristakis (2016) mentions in her book *The*

Importance of Being Little. In this book, Cristakis (pg. 91) explains how "being frustrated with current standards is not the same as not wanting any standards at all. I fully support the idea of objective learning and teaching goals." The implementers of the FFS curriculum model articulated the same understanding. Although some state or national learning standards may be inappropriate, the learning standards of the FFS curriculum model are built with developmentally appropriate practice in mind. Therefore, the intentional planning that comes through the balance the FFS curriculum model creates propels children into a higher level of learning. The FFS curriculum model should be considered a "uniform thoughtful architecture" or "a thoughtful template for teaching and learning" as Cristakis (pg. 98) describes that benefits children and teachers. Since the foundation of the FFS model lies within an intricate interrelation of learning standards and a reflection of developmentally appropriate practice, this thoughtful template for teaching and learning is helpful. In many ways, it serves as the necessary uniform pedagogic architecture that Cristakis describes (pg. 98), where teachers have the flexibility to adapt it to their own circumstances.

Research Question 1C

The third goal of the FFS curriculum model is to make sure the children using the model are prepared for their entrance into kindergarten. The Foundation of Success curriculum model was created within the educational climate of the debate for what being kindergarten ready actually means. Sanchez (2017) explains the findings from a report that outlines the ongoing debate, "The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects" by explaining, "When it comes to what preschools should teach, the researchers took on a big question in that

field, too: Should pre-K focus on the social and emotional development of children or should it concentrate on what researchers call 'skills specific curricula,' namely numeracy and literacy? The research clearly says it's not a matter of either/or." The FFS curriculum model articulates the need for balance between social emotional development and skills-specific criteria and finds a creative way for teachers to navigate the challenge of bringing both components to life in the classroom.

Throughout the results of this research study, implementers have supported both the ability of the FFS curriculum model to make certain that children are kindergarten ready and to help define and illustrate what that means. Teachers shared their impressions of what it means for children to be kindergarten ready and agreed with the research that supports the balance of social emotional development and content knowledge intricately put together with children's interests in the forefront of the intentional planning process.

The one factor that came up at the end of the study in the focus group sessions was the disparity for beneficial education after children leave the walls of a school that implements the FFS curriculum. Once again, the discussion articulated the need for a bridge between early childhood education and the primary grades. It was disheartening to several implementers that the FFS curriculum model is used, meeting the needs of all the children for optimal development and success, but the children are then launched into a system of learning that is often supporting one end of the pendulum or the other, rarely considering the balance so desperately needed.

Research Question 2A

The first unique aspect of the FFS curriculum model is the value-based component. The value-based component is something that is truly unique to the other curriculum models previously researched. The addition of the value-based component was two-fold. The Jewish values were meant to form the consistency across classrooms needed to foster the culture of the school and simultaneously enrich the lives of children who attended through the natural integration of social emotional learning. This component allows teachers to intentionally plan for rich social emotional activities throughout the experiences provided for the children. In addition, this component aligns the school in a non-traditional way. Traditionally early childhood programs plan units of study around themes. These themes usually rotate but do not usually build on each other. As a constructivist model for early childhood education and beyond, the FFS model was built with the understanding that children will acquire more knowledge if information presented is interrelated. In this way, the value-based component of the FFS curriculum model thoughtfully integrates social emotional development with everyday learning experiences that are important to the school being studied. This component gives the school a level of consistency, a backbone as commonly described throughout the results, from which all teachers and administrators can draw. This consistency is important on many levels, as it connects the administrators, teachers, students, and families while allowing a thread of commonality across the discussions happening throughout the school. However, it also allows each individual classroom to take on its own personality and to follow the interests of those children within that class. In addition, the values component allows the teachers to connect in new ways and share common thoughts while challenging new thoughts as they arise. It gives

them a platform to be intentional about the language they use with the children and the freedom to be creative. Furthermore, as previously discussed, it naturally creates an atmosphere for social emotional learning.

From the results of the research, implementers support this unique aspect of the FFS curriculum model. They believe this unique aspect benefits the school, the children and the teachers in many ways. They believe the values (a) create an avenue for intentional planning of social emotional experiences and language and (b) connect the school in a unique way.

Research Question 2B

The second unique aspect of the curriculum model is the use of reflective supervision and reflective practice. The reliance on reflection throughout the process of the model allows teachers to think deeply about the work they are doing with the children. Reflective supervision also provides a unique opportunity for professional development with staff that stresses the importance of enabling them to reflect on their actions. Past research (Fenichel, 1992; Siegal & Shamoon-Shanok, 2010) has explained reflective supervision to be important to the work with young children because of the importance of the context of relationships that surrounds the field. The work teachers do with children can be extremely fast paced and emotionally charged. Reflective supervision has proven to be a best practice that allows teachers to share their feelings, thoughts and experiences in a vulnerable way with those they work with. The reflective supervision component allows and encourages teachers to be authentic and transparent with each other for the benefit of the children. Reflective supervision has been described in past research as an essential professional development tool that helps teachers

explore the meaning behind feelings, thoughts and experiences and, therefore, support the children and families that we partner with. It supports and encourages mutually respectful, collaborative relationships that can become a model for how teachers can then interact with children and the families they serve. It brings the teachers to a constant state of thinking and learning by leading them through a process that consistently looks back on interactions with children, as well as what is taking place within their classrooms. In the same way, the reflective practice component of the FFS curriculum model allows the teachers to observe children carefully and look closely at their words and actions. The reflection upon children's words and actions gives great insight into what the children are thinking about and what stage of learning at which they are operating. The parallel process of developing reflective capacity within the teachers for the benefit of the children is also important. The parallel process allows teachers to recognize their strengths and work on their challenges. In the classroom, reflective practice encourages children to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences so they too can grow in new ways.

The results fully support the benefit of reflective supervision and reflective practice as a unique aspect of the FFS curriculum model. That said, some implementers support it strongly, while others support it or are neutral. The difference in the support level may come from the levels of engagement in the process. Reflection can be difficult because it is a process in which one needs to be authentic and transparent with themselves and others. Reflection, in general, is easier for some than others. Regardless, the majority of implementers understood the value of reflection and how it both changes their practice and affects the children's overall experience and development. The implementers supported the inclusion of this unique aspect

and affirmed the ability of this component to transform their teaching as well as guide the school along a path of consistently considering best practice.

Research Question 2C

The third unique aspect of the FFS curriculum model is the process of design thinking with the teachers. Throughout each year, the curriculum process is discussed and pieces are added that the teachers believe are important to the curriculum process. As mentioned in the description of the model, design thinking became a natural way to discuss and think about the model, piloting new pieces became the norm and tweaking the model yearly became a unique aspect the curriculum model could not go without. It has been another way to uniquely honor the relationships throughout the school, especially those between teachers and administrators. The curriculum process is talked through and different sections of the model are clarified in various ways. Giving the teachers the ability to constantly talk through the model allows for both professional growth and refinement of the model itself. This element of the curriculum model is also one that is not comparable to the other models previously mentioned in this study. This unique aspect was added to the FFS curriculum model to both give the teachers a unique voice into evaluation and modification and unite the school through co-construction of the model.

The implementers supported this unique aspect of the curriculum model yet not all fully understand the process based on some of the responses given. One respondent specifically stated that s/he really didn't understand what design thinking. This may be due to the lack of explanation of the process the teachers were asked to go through, by name. Teachers were

invited to times of evaluation and from those meetings revisions of the process were made. Instead of "design thinking time" teachers were simply invited to "think tanks." Throughout every year the FFS curriculum model has been used there have been various "think tanks" scheduled to discuss different components of the model as well as the effectiveness of the model teachers translate it into practice. The attendance at these "think tanks" has consistently been about 20% of the staff. This attendance rate follows the Pareto principle (Payne, 2012). The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, is a theory maintaining that 80 percent of the output from a given situation or system is determined by 20 percent of the input. Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto studied the distribution of wealth in a number of countries near 1900. He discovered that usually 80% of the wealth is acquired through 20% of the population. This principle has been expanded in many ways throughout the workforce. In light of this phenomenon, only the 20% who have been most invested in the transformation of the model may truly understand the design thinking component. After all, if implementers do not participate in the "think tanks" they may not understand or feel as though their feedback, as far as the model goes, was heard or used to modify the model. Overall, the implementers did seem to understand that the model is one that uses feedback for further refinement. Those implementers who participated in the "think tanks" were likely those respondents that described the benefit of professional growth for teachers and enhancement of the model for the benefit of further implementation.

Themes Consistent Across All Research Questions

The FFS curriculum model is one rooted deeply within the context of the relationships

within the school that has adopted the model. All throughout the results for each research question the importance of relationships was apparent. Implementers of the FFS curriculum model understood the importance of their relationships with their colleagues, the administration, the students and the families. It is within the context of these relationships that the model can both be implemented and used to transform lives. Consistent within the results and specifically related to comments surrounding relationships was the ability to both change and grow. Due to the innovativeness of the FFS curriculum model, during the implementation of this model, teachers initially experience a trajectory of change and growth. Those teachers who have embraced the change and pursued professional growth through the relationships throughout the school have been most successful. The model weaves these relationships through all components of the model. The implementers seem to recognize the importance of this, and congruent with the model, utilize the foundation of relationships to propel themselves, and the children, forward.

The next consistent theme that emerged throughout all research questions was the need for accountability. This finding was encouraging. One of the research questions specifically was geared towards the goal of the model to have teachers use pertinent curriculum and instruction language. The results show that they were using this language to grapple with their understanding of the model itself and the importance of the implementation of this thinking and learning process. The most difficult of these concepts for teachers is usually the accountability component. The results of this research show that implementers actually supported accountability. They did not seem to find accountability stressful; instead, they saw it as necessary to do what is best for children. These results were refreshing. These results

show that within the context of a curriculum model that supports and guides the teachers, accountability will increase. Teachers not only recognized both the need for accountability across all goals and unique aspects but also embraced it as it brought them to a new level of professionalism. In the same way, the use of curriculum and instruction terminology was seen as helping teachers learn and grow; the language used with the children was portrayed as having the same benefit. In both instances, language was perceived as the conduit for growth and as a program feature tied to accountability.

As previously discussed throughout the results across all research questions, the children's interests were paramount in importance to the implementers. Children's interests guide the intentional planning throughout the FFS curriculum model. The implementers placed emphasis on children's interests and the importance of both curriculum and instruction being rooted within them. In every goal of the FFS curriculum model and every unique aspect of the model, the children's interests surfaced. From the results, one can conclude that the FFS curriculum model is one that supports the use of children's interests to both facilitate and navigate optimal development in children. After all, it is the children's interests which will guide their attention and overall ability to process information.

The last and most frequently discussed themes across all research questions were the importance of the FFS curriculum model to being viewed as a continual learning process which requires intentional planning, revisiting of goals and learning experiences, and continuous reflection upon everything contained in the model. All goals, including the use of language for optimal development and learning, the understanding of the delicate balance of developmentally appropriate practice and learning standards and making sure children are kindergarten ready rely

on the teachers to be thoughtful and intentional planners that revisit the experiences they provide and reflect on how to make their practice better. The implementers expressed their understanding of this concept consistently throughout the results. In addition, the same was true when discussing the unique aspects. The FFS curriculum model is one that allows teachers to constantly be on a journey of thinking and learning, one that never ends.

Evaluation and Challenges to the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The foundations of success curriculum model is both intricate and complicated. There are many pieces that are considered throughout the model. The consideration of all unique aspects and pertinent components of the model is necessary for the success of the model for both professional growth and implementation in the classroom. It is a model that is challenging and requires a lot of time for intentional planning and reflection. It takes concentration and a willingness to learn and grow consistently. The teachers who have been most successful with the model have been those who were willing to devote the time to the process. The process of implementing the model needs to be taken with great care and intention. The individual components of the model should be explained and explored in great detail before the goals of the model will be met in its entirety. Those schools implementing the model should consider the background and level of understanding of the teachers when considering all of the goals and unique aspects. A mentoring approach is necessary for this model to be implemented in its entirety. Relationships are foundational! A commitment to the time necessary for teachers to engage intentionally in the thinking and learning process must be made. Reflection takes time! The largest challenges of the model are therefore the ability to have all teachers fully engaged

in the process and making the investment, both physically and financially, for the intentional time needed to work through the model of thinking and learning in its entirety.

Implications for the Future Use of the Foundations for Success (FFS) Curriculum Model

The implications for the future use of the FFS curriculum model lie in the ability of the model to build the bridge that is so desperately needed between the early childhood education field and the primary grades. The model can be used as a basis for professional development within the world of education to begin to build a foundation for the next generation of teachers that will make the bridge possible. It is possible that the FFS curriculum model can be implemented in different schools throughout the state and nation to further examine the impact of the model on children and families.

The FFS curriculum model can be used within early childhood and through the primary grades. It is a model that naturally fosters professional growth and collaboration. The FFS curriculum model could also benefit from a cohort style of learning during implementation. This cohort learning module will allow teachers to simultaneously learn and collaborate on the success of the model. An initial introduction to the understanding of the bridge that is being created through the implementation of the FFS curriculum model training plan will also lay the foundation for the success of the model. The introduction will engage teachers in dialogue surrounding the basis for the creation of the foundation for success curriculum model, namely the need for a bridge between early childhood and the primary grades through a curriculum model that uses developmentally appropriate learning standards that cross all developmental domains in conjunction with a component that focuses mainly on the social emotional

development in unique ways through the values. After exploring the need for balance, the introduction will explore in more detail each goal of the model, as well as each unique aspect. The understanding of each goal and unique aspect is paramount to the success of the implementation of the curriculum model. In addition to the components of the model, professional development and coaching in regards to each theme that emerged throughout the study will also be important. The foundation for success curriculum model was created to change the world of education and to challenge teachers along the way to both think and learn in new ways. There are many implications for the model to be used for that purpose in the future.

Suggestions for Future Research

In order to validate the findings of this study, further research can be conducted in new schools that decide to implement the model. In addition, universities could complete research on the effectiveness of each of the components of the model in smaller classes and within lab schools. Also, further research could be completed to determine the impact on the children affected by the model and/or perceptions of the parents whose children were enrolled in the school that has implemented the FFS curriculum model, or those who choose to implement it in the future.

Summary

Chapter 5 concludes this research study with a discussion on the consistent findings and themes determined throughout the study. The most apparent themes derived from the

findings included the following: the importance of relationships; the importance of accountability and the role language plays; the necessity of the consideration of children's interests for optimal development; and the recognition of intentional planning, revisiting and reflection to the process of the FFS curriculum model. The implications and recommendations for future research steps invite those invested in the future of curriculum and instruction that bridges the world of early childhood education and the primary grades to consider the value of this model. The implementers' perceptions of the FFS curriculum model have shown that this model is worthy of further inspection for the purpose of building the bridge that so imperatively needs to be built.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This survey will be administered on SurveyMonkey. Participants will be e-mailed for involvement. In order to protect the sensitive data, SSL encryption will be enabled and the tracking of the IP address will be deleted. The survey will be begin with a consent form on the first page and SurveyMonkey will record the respondent time stamp. The survey will allow for a no response to each question asked. There will also be an option to withdraw from the survey at the end of the survey.

Demographic Questions:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Years of teaching
5. Years at GFECC
6. Years using curriculum model

Questions measured using Likert Scale

Please respond to each of the following questions using the following responses:

1-Strongly Agree 2-Agree 3-Neutral 4-Disagree 5-Strongly Disagree

1. I understand accountability to learning standards to be an important piece of teaching.
2. I believe it is important to measure children's developmental progression.
3. I believe it is important to move the children through the Zone of Proximal Development.
4. I find it important to use intellectual language with the children to enhance their understanding.

5. I believe it is important use developmentally appropriate practice to present topics to the children.
6. I believe it is important to use developmental guidelines to measure the childrens' understanding.
7. I believe in child initiated learning.
8. I have a greater understanding of anecdotal records and charting developmental progress.
9. Reporting child's progress becomes easier through total use of the curriculum progress.
10. Using the curriculum model helps me stay focused on the developmental progress my children are making.
11. I believe in the need for direct instruction.
12. Intentional planning is important to the acquisition of learning and development.
13. I believe our curriculum prepares children for kindergarten.
14. I believe our curriculum emphasizes learning in all developmental domains.
15. I believe our curriculum helps children in the development of language and literacy.
16. I believe our curriculum helps children understand mathematical concepts necessary for Kindergarten success.
17. I believe our curriculum creates unique learning opportunities that foster higher level thinking skills.
18. I believe I am preparing the children to love learning and be successful.
19. I can articulate how children using this curriculum will be ready for kindergarten.
20. I understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain these to the parents.

21. I believe that using Jewish values helps establish consistency across the school.
22. I believe using the Jewish values as the consistency across the school helps children develop their character.
23. Using values to plan instruction helps provide the language to use with the children throughout the day.
24. Using values to plan instruction helps to plan activities that are meaningful to the children.
25. Using values to plan instruction makes it easier to connect books to use.
26. Using values to plan instruction helps foster at home understanding.
27. My relationship with my partner is stronger because of peer coaching.
28. Reflective supervision sessions help me become a better teacher.
29. Reflective supervision allows me to discuss my feelings in a trusting environment.
30. Reflective supervision helps me think of ways to solve problems I may not have thought about.
31. Reflective practice in my classroom helps me determine what the children's interests are.
32. I am more aware of my personal thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes through peer coaching and reflective supervision.
33. Reflective practice with my children helps them scaffold their own learning.
34. Reflective practice helps me determine the children's developmental needs.
35. I have a role in the modification of the curricular process from year to year.
36. I feel empowered to give feedback about implementation of the curriculum.

37. I see myself as a stakeholder in the curriculum as a process.

38. Talking through the curriculum process continues to strengthen my understanding.

39. Implementation of the curriculum improves when we evaluate together.

Open-Ended Questions

1. The goals of the foundations for success curriculum model are:
    a. To understand and use pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology
    b. To understand the value of the connection between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards
    c. To understand what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."

In respect to these goals, how have you grown professionally? Please give specific examples.

2. The unique aspects of the foundations for success curriculum model are:
    a. The value-based curriculum component
    b. The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice
    c. The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model

Which of these unique aspects which do you believe is most important? Least important? Why?

3. Which of the unique aspects do you believe have the biggest impact on the children? Please give specific examples of how.

4. What is your overall evaluation of the curriculum model to your professional development? To Student achievement? Please give specific examples.

5. In your opinion, what is the weakness of the foundations for success curriculum model?

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS WITH INTRODUCTION

Purposes: “The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of the goals and unique aspects of the curriculum model used at the Goldberg Family Early Childhood Center, namely the foundations for success curriculum model. This information will help to understand the possible benefits of the model in the field of curriculum and instruction, specifically early childhood studies and the primary grades. This information will also help researchers understand how the unique aspects of the curriculum are perceived and used. It will help us greater understand the potential impact of the foundations for success curriculum model in the world of education. The purpose of today’s focus group is to explore the topics of both the goals and unique aspects of the foundations for success curriculum model.

Informed Consent: “Before beginning the focus group we will go over the informed consent form and ask each of you who has not previously consented.

Confidentiality: “The information discussed in this group is confidential. Outside of this group, please do not discuss any information shared by anyone else in the group in any way that would enable anyone else to identify that person. Please keep all information discussed in this room.”

Practical information about the group: “This group meeting will last about 2 hours. It will be audiotaped and later transcribed.”

Questions for the Perceptions of the Goals of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model

1. How has being encouraged to use important content language and concepts shaped your teaching?
2. How do you understand the intersection of DAP and learning standards?
3. How does the curriculum prepare our children for Kindergarten?

Questions for the Perceptions of the Unique Aspects of the Foundations for Success

Curriculum Model

1. How has using Jewish Values as a foundation for our curriculum impacted learning overall?
2. How has reflective supervision changed the professional climate of the school?
3. How has reflective practice changed the planning process?
4. How has being involved in the continuous evaluation of the curriculum changed your implementation of it?

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH SPECIFICS

Research Question #1 *How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the goals of the foundations for success curriculum model with respect to the three sub topics below?*		
Sub Topic of Research Question	Questions for Survey	Focus Group Questions
The FFS implementers' perceptions of their own understanding and use of pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology.	I understand accountability to learning standards to be an important piece of teaching.	How has being encouraged to use important content language and concepts shaped your teaching?
	I believe it is important to measure children's developmental progression.	
	I find it important to use intellectual language with the children to enhance their understanding.	
The FFS implementers' perceptions of the connections between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards and the value of those connections.	I believe it is important use developmentally appropriate practice to present topics to the children.	How do you understand the intersection of DAP and learning standards?
	I believe it is important to use developmental guidelines to measure the children's understanding.	
	I believe it is important to move the children through the Zone of Proximal Development.	
	I believe in child initiated learning.	
	I have a greater understanding of anecdotal records and charting developmental progress.	
	Reporting child's progress becomes easier through total use of the curriculum progress.	

	Using the curriculum model helps me stay focused on the developmental progress my children are making.	
	I believe in the need for direct instruction.	
	Intentional planning is important to the acquisition of learning and development.	
The FFS implementers' perceptions of what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready."	I believe our curriculum prepares children for kindergarten.	How does the curriculum prepare our children for Kindergarten?
	I believe our curriculum ephasizes learning in all developmental domains.	
	I believe our curriculum helps children in the development of language and literacy.	
	I believe our curriculum helps children understand mathematical concepts necessary for Kindergarten success.	
	I believe our curriculum creates unique learning opportunities that foster higher level thinking skills.	
	I believe I am preparing the children to love learning and be successful.	
	I can articulate how children using this curriculum will be ready for kindergarten.	
	I understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain these to the parents.	
Research Question #2 *How do implementers, both early and current teachers and administrators, perceive the unique aspects of the foundations for success curriculum model, with respect to the sub topics listed below?*		
Area of Interest	Questions for Survey	Focus Group Questions
The value-based curriculum component	I believe that using Jewish values helps establish consistency across the school.	How has using Jewish Values as a foundation for our curriculum impacted learning overall?

	I believe using the Jewish values as the consistency across the school helps children develop their character.	
	Using values to plan instruction helps provide the language to use with the children throughout the day.	
	Using values to plan instruction helps to plan activities that are meaningful to the children.	
	Using values to plan instruction makes it easier to connect books to use.	
	Using values to plan instruction through fostering at home understanding	
The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice	My relationship with my partner is stronger because of peer coaching.	How has reflective supervision changed the professional climate of the school?
	Reflective supervision sessions help me become a better teacher.	How has reflective practice changed the planning process?
	Reflective supervision allows me to discuss my feelings in a trusting environment.	
	Reflective supervision helps me think of ways to solve problems I may not have thought about.	
	Reflective practice in my classroom helps me determine what the children's interests are.	
	I am more aware of my personal thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes through peer coaching and reflective supervision.	
	Reflective practice with my children helps them scaffold their own learning.	
	Reflective practice helps me determine the children's developmental needs.	

The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model	I have a role in the modification of the curriculur process from year to year.	How has being involved in the continuous evaluation of the curriculum changed your implementation of it?
	I feel empowered to give feedback about implementation of the curriculum.	
	I see myself as a stakeholder in the curriculum as a process.	
	Talking through the curriculum process continues to strengthen my understanding.	
	Implementation of the curriculum improves when we evaluate together.	

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH QUESTION 1A RESULTS

Research Question 1A

SURVEY	
8. I understand accountability to learning standards to be an important piece of teaching.	
1-Strongly Agree	66.7%
2-Agree	33.3%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
9. I believe it is important to measure children's developmental progression.	
1-Strongly Agree	78.3%
2-Agree	17.4%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
11. I find it important to use intellectual language with the children to enhance their understanding.	
1-Strongly Agree	73.9%
2-Agree	26.1%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1A

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #1	
47. The goals of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) To understand and use pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology b)To understand the value of the connection between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards c) To understand what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." In respect to these goals, how have you grown professionally? Please give specific examples.	
6	Without an education degree, I rely on the curriculum model to provide me with a framework on which to build my lesson plans. I can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences I am providing. Having specific developmental guidelines available encourges me to be mindful in planning so that I can move children along the learning continuum.
7	I have had to think and revisit developmental guidlines over and over in order to evaluate where my students are developmentally. I have gotten to know my children well and helped them enjoy their learning experiences while facilitating their growth and improved their gains toward kindergarten readiness.
10	The inclusion of vocabulary in the curriculum resources helped me to describe more accurate scientific and mathematical concepts with the children. I feel I have a more complete understanding of developmentally appropriate goals for the children through studying the learning standards used in the curriculum.
11	The use of developmental guidelines over several years has strengthened my understanding of what to watch for as well as my ability to see how planned activities help in the children's development. Ex. At my previous school I planned without regard to dev. guidelines and by taking them into consideration here I see that I am able to foster growth better, providing challenge or support when necessary.

Research Question 1A

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #1	
	We use the vocabulary in our planning all the time
	We are using correct terminology for them to hear rather than speaking down to them instead of speaking down to them so if we keep repeating it and giving them examples and defining what it means
	Using their vocabulary and that is what really helped us in our classroom
	Using vocabulary with the value it really helps you know so you are not just in the moment when they can't really get the word but they can scaffold the meaning brainstorm it and look up the synonyms
	In the planning you have thought about other ways for them to use the word
	I think in the Pre-K it is pushing them through that zone where they are a little bit challenged
	It is a little push for them to use higher thinking
	They are comfortable with using language that they may not completely understand but have heard in context and use it
	Talking about the zone of development and what do they understand and push them to understand things they did not know
	Definitely use the vocabulary to understand the words that come up in context...it takes time for process
	As a teacher it makes you pay attention to what you are saying...it makes you be more prepared and more conscious about what you are saying
	They are actually using correct terminology
	Doing the webbings and seeing us record what they say...see what we write and can...they can recognize what we are writing

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH QUESTION 1B RESULTS

Research Question 1B

SURVEY	
10. I believe it is important to move the children through the Zone of Proximal Development.	
1-Strongly Agree	45.8%
2-Agree	45.8%
3-Neutral	8.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
12. I believe it is important use developmentally appropriate practice to present topics to the children.	
1-Strongly Agree	91.7%
2-Agree	8.3%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
13. I believe it is important to use developmental guidelines to measure the childrens' understanding.	
1-Strongly Agree	58.3%
2-Agree	37.5%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
14. I believe in child initiated learning.	
1-Strongly Agree	62.5%
2-Agree	33.3%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1B

15. I have a greater understanding of anecdotal records and charting developmental progress.	
1-Strongly Agree	33.3%
2-Agree	58.3%
3-Neutral	8.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

16. Reporting child's progress becomes easier through total use of the curriculum progress.	
1-Strongly Agree	37.5%
2-Agree	58.3%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

17. Using the curriculum model helps me stay focused on the developmental progress my children are making.	
1-Strongly Agree	29.2%
2-Agree	66.7%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

18. I believe in the need for direct instruction.	
1-Strongly Agree	26.1%
2-Agree	47.8%
3-Neutral	21.7%
4-Disagree	4.3%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1B

19. Intentional planning is important to the acquisition of learning and development.	
1-Strongly Agree	41.7%
2-Agree	54.2%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1B

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #1	
47. The goals of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) To understand and use pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology b)To understand the value of the connection between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards c) To understand what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." In respect to these goals, how have you grown professionally? Please give specific examples.	
2	With this information at hand, it has helped my teaching to become more developmentally appropriate practices
3	As I use the curriculum model for planning and reflection with my teaching partner, I have learned these goals well for Twos and Toddlers. I have also learned to work together with my teaching partner.
6	Without an education degree, I rely on the curriculum model to provide me with a framework on which to build my lesson plans. I can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences I am providing. Having specific developmental guidelines available encourges me to be mindful in planning so that I can move children along the learning continuum.
7	I have had to think and revisit developmental guidlines over and over in order to evaluate where my students are developmentally. I have gotten to know my children well and helped them enjoy their learning experiences while facilitating their growth and improved their gains toward kindergarten readiness.
10	The inclusion of vocabulary in the curriculum resources helped me to describe more accurate scientific and mathematical concepts with the children. I feel I have a more complete understanding of developmentally appropriate goals for the children through studying the learning standards used in the curriculum.
11	The use of developmental guidelines over several years has strengthened my understanding of what to watch for as well as my ability to see how planned activities help in the children's development. Ex. At my previous school I planned without regard to dev. guidelines and by taking them into consideration here I see that I am able to foster growth better, providing challenge or support when necessary.
15	I have become more intentional in my teaching.

Research Question 1B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #2	
	Even if mistake there is an activity that happens and then for next year you know ok this is a good appropriate activity we can do to measure this standard
	We are almost making the leaps to say that would be a good measurement to use for this developmental guideline what we wanted them to do...we want them to do it because they are interested in it we don't want to just present it just so we can know if they can cut on a line or making their letters
	I think as we go along with this process we find more appropriate ways and different activities that let us measure their ability
	You have to be a good observer as a teacher where they come together you will those things that are a good measure and that they enjoy doing and see them make progress
	This pushes us as a teacher
	I was going to do this next year as a way to recognize if they can do a puzzle and if they recognize their numbers...who can find number 7...it was amazing the way that they were learning and having fun
	I think even on top of observing I know those developmental guidelines well and can pin point them throughout the day and catch those really great learning moments and encourage them in that direction...in the beginning of the year when I wasn't as familiar of the developmental guidelines of the twos I would go back and look at them and would think that would have fit perfect at that time if I had known
	Knowing the guidelines ahead of time and being able to be alert and pick it up and just ask questions that can take them to that next level
	I think what a lot of we do here is that the activities, the structure of the classroom and the offerings for the children are based on the developmental guidelines so we put together things that are measuring and are appropriate for the ages and engage the children in that way
	You almost can't do an activity that is developmentally inappropriate if you are starting with the developmental guidelines
	I think if you are starting with the guidelines like we intend for you are almost forced into doing developmentally appropriate practice
	You know I remember the days that there was no intention and now the intention is there

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH QUESTION 1C RESULTS

Research Question 1C

SURVEY	
20. I believe our curriculum prepares children for kindergarten.	
1-Strongly Agree	54.2%
2-Agree	41.7%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
21. I believe our curriculum emphasizes learning in all developmental domains.	
1-Strongly Agree	56.5%
2-Agree	43.5%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
22. I believe our curriculum helps children in the development of language and literacy.	
1-Strongly Agree	66.7%
2-Agree	33.3%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
23. I believe our curriculum helps children understand mathematical concepts necessary for Kindergarten success.	
1-Strongly Agree	33.3%
2-Agree	62.5%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1C

24. I believe our curriculum creates unique learning opportunities that foster higher level thinking skills.	
1-Strongly Agree	39.1%
2-Agree	56.5%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

25. I believe I am preparing the children to love learning and be successful.	
1-Strongly Agree	66.7%
2-Agree	33.3%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

26. I can articulate how children using this curriculum will be ready for kindergarten.	
1-Strongly Agree	30.4%
2-Agree	60.9%
3-Neutral	8.7%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

27. I understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain these to the parents.	
1-Strongly Agree	50.0%
2-Agree	50.0%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1C

24. I believe our curriculum creates unique learning opportunities that foster higher level thinking skills.	
1-Strongly Agree	39.1%
2-Agree	56.5%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

25. I believe I am preparing the children to love learning and be successful.	
1-Strongly Agree	66.7%
2-Agree	33.3%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

26. I can articulate how children using this curriculum will be ready for kindergarten.	
1-Strongly Agree	30.4%
2-Agree	60.9%
3-Neutral	8.7%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

27. I understand the academic concepts being taught and can explain these to the parents.	
1-Strongly Agree	50.0%
2-Agree	50.0%
3-Neutral	0.0%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 1C

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #1	
47. The goals of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) To understand and use pertinent curriculum and instruction terminology b)To understand the value of the connection between developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and relevant state/national learning standards c) To understand what it means and takes to be "kindergarten ready." In respect to these goals, how have you grown professionally? Please give specific examples.	
6	Without an education degree, I rely on the curriculum model to provide me with a framework on which to build my lesson plans. I can go back to the curriculum model to validate the experiences I am providing. Having specific developmental guidelines available encourges me to be mindful in planning so that I can move children along the learning continuum.
7	I have had to think and revisit developmental guidlines over and over in order to evaluate where my students are developmentally. I have gotten to know my children well and helped them enjoy their learning experiences while facilitating their growth and improved their gains toward kindergarten readiness.
10	The inclusion of vocabulary in the curriculum resources helped me to describe more accurate scientific and mathematical concepts with the children. I feel I have a more complete understanding of developmentally appropriate goals for the children through studying the learning standards used in the curriculum.
11	The use of developmental guidelines over several years has strengthened my understanding of what to watch for as well as my ability to see how planned activities help in the children's development. Ex. At my previous school I planned without regard to dev. guidelines and by taking them into consideration here I see that I am able to foster growth better, providing challenge or support when necessary.
13	I have grown in a way of 'doing the right thing' when it comes to children. Professionally and educational.

Research Question 1C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #3	
	The best way we prepare our children for kindergarten is creating an environment for them to be inquisitive, encourages them to participate and think about a variety of things
	When we are talking about webbing and valuing their voice and what they are thinking about and voicing their opinion on something and writing their words which encourages their literacy development but it also encourages their participation so their participation is important and valued
	They become a participant in learning and we encourage their curiosity and their creativity so I think that is probably the biggest thing that gets them ready for school is because they begin to want to learn and they are interested
	We are also building on their...the developmental guidelines and trying to grow them academically with and what have you but the attitude of them being a part of their learning and their part in creating the curriculum the value of learning and the love of learning
	The things that we are talking about the things that is something that you need in life no matter where you are or where you go this is the basic foundation blocks the academics fall
	We basically are doing things here that are not even being done at home again it just brings them to another level
	For us it even helps when we do the monthly curriculum planning and we go to ok it looks like we have accomplished this and they have mastered this
	I love teaching but being able to see where my kids are interested in and see what is in the developmental guidelines like looking in the science area and then we brought whales to the sensory table...so they are still based on the developmental guidelines...school and it is teaching them that their opinion matters and that their voice is being heard by their teachers
	Being able to go through the process to get some children extra help with things and that are also personal to me and my family is that when you are helping them with social and emotional skills and encouraging that type of learning we are also working and seeing if they are meeting our developmental guidelines and if they are not we are working with them and pushing them and working with parents and making sure they are growing and connecting them to other resources they need so when they do get to kindergarten they are ready for it
	I like that we make it fun for them we respond to the children and get to know all of the children and their parents...connecting everybody...we respect everyone...children are so involved with each other and the process and don't even know sometimes that they are learning or helping each other out

Research Question 1C

	We do a very good job of making sure they are ready for kindergarten because I think we make sure when they leave here they know how to think which I think serves them well even past kindergarten
	A lot of the things are based on the open ended questions a lot based on that we give them the time to struggle with something and not necessarily trying to solve their problems for them so I think that gives them a lot of resiliency and a lot of other abilities to do things independently and ways to think on their own
	The challenge is for us and this is always the challenge perhaps for the way kindergarten education goes is that here we are trying to do things for the kids and then there is a very almost black and white transition experience for them in that there is what we do here and then what they experience when they get to kindergarten
	we are doing what is best for them but I think it is nothing related to us a school but more a result of the education system seems to flip the switch a lot of time because when they get into kindergarten it is not necessarily what is developmentally appropriate anymore and some places are really trying to change that but many are not
	If the other schools would do what we do and be developmentally appropriate they would soar and take off we sort of dread giving them away because they are so ready to take off and if they continued that way in kindergarten in would be amazing

APPENDIX G

RESEARCH QUESTION 2A RESULTS

Research Question 2A

SURVEY	
28. I believe that using Jewish values helps establish consistency across the school.	
1-Strongly Agree	56.5%
2-Agree	34.8%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	4.3%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
29. I believe using the Jewish values as the consistency across the school helps children develop their character.	
1-Strongly Agree	62.5%
2-Agree	25.0%
3-Neutral	12.5%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
30. Using values to plan instruction helps provide the language to use with the children throughout the day.	
1-Strongly Agree	37.5%
2-Agree	58.3%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
31. Using values to plan instruction helps to plan activities that are meaningful to the children.	
1-Strongly Agree	45.8%
2-Agree	45.8%
3-Neutral	4.2%
4-Disagree	4.2%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 2A

32. Using values to plan instruction makes it easier to connect books to use.	
1-Strongly Agree	37.5%
2-Agree	41.7%
3-Neutral	8.3%
4-Disagree	12.5%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

33. Using values to plan instruction helps foster at home understanding.	
1-Strongly Agree	33.3%
2-Agree	45.8%
3-Neutral	20.8%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

Research Question 2A

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #2	
48. The unique aspects of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) The value-based curriculum component b) The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice c) The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. Which of these unique aspects which do you believe is most important? Least important? Why?	
2	I feel that all this aspects are important
3	I think the value-based curriculum component is really important because it frames so many conversations throughout the year and the values build and reinforce from year to year.
4	I believe the value-based curriculum is the best part of our curriculum as it deals with character development. The use of design thinking is probably the least important as I don't feel I am a part of madify the curriculm model.
5	I am a huge believer in the Values based curriculum. The values we focus on are ones that parents are desparate to see in their children. I have heard from many families how much they appreciate that we expect children to be kind, respectful, and responsible. I believe that the ability to reflect, personally and with peers and administration is vital to improving as a professional.
6	I really like the value based curriculum and reflecting how to tie the values together and use them throughout the year. Parents of different belief systems like these and how they are important for people in general. I'm not sure that I have one component that I like the least.
7	Value-based to me is important to help the children understand and to have something to believe in.
10	The value-based approach is most important because it helps us be responsive to the children's interests while still being cohesive across ages. I'm not sure I understand the definition of "design thinking" so I think that is less important.
11	I think that the msot important piece is the value based learning. It is something truly unique to our school, and I love the things it provides both the staff and the students.
12	Respect because it is so important.
13	Value based - most - helps set the groundwork for who the tiny humans become with great core values.
14	The value based curriculum is important because theses are universal values and the children learn it every year on a different level by the time the arriva to pre- k they are very familiar with the concept and can internalized it better.

Research Question 2A

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #3	
Which of the unique aspects do you believe have the biggest impact on the children? Please give specific examples of how.	
	Values - It helps the children understand empathy at a greater leavel. Also encourages being a part of a whole group.
	The value-based curriculum component has the biggest impact on the children. The values that we teach not only instruct children on how to relate socially, but add opportunities for rich cultural, emotional, and literacy opportunities.
	Learning and practicing values and using the words impacts the children as well as our school community. Children learn what it looks like to be kind and how important it is. They can articulate how they can be kind or have courage or be part of a community. That
	Giving children a foundation in basic human values is so important, particularly in this fast paced world where parents don't seem to have the time to teach these ideals. Just today I encountered a child who was not honoring his parent when she wanted to leave. I
	I think that the young children relate well to the repetive use of value learning. They learn vocabulary, such as respet and kindness and express these words when problem solving with their peers. It also helps when we are helping them understand their actions and behaviors; as well as, language and literacy.
	The value-based curriculum. Children bring ideas of how they are impacted from them.
	The focus on values across the school helps the students understand them as everyone they interact with (from specials to community times like Shabbat) are discussing and modeling the same value at the same time. Providing ways for them to reflect on what they have already learned and how it is connected to what they are doing now help the children build and retain knowledge. For ex., in Science they learned that you can look for certain characteristics to determine what type of animal a specimen is. They began with identifying birds and then built on that knowledge to learn how to identify insects.
	The vaue based learning, no doubt. Nowhere else will you actually see and hear children 2 and under using the word respect (correctly) and knowing what it means.
	The value based curriculum make the biggest impact since the children and the teachers use it on a daily basis and refer to it constantly
	Everyday life skills, value-based learning and learing through experience

Research Question 2A

	FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #4
	these are just basic life skills and when they are out in society or whatever it helps you in relationships with everybody and I feel like if you can if we are teaching these kids and bringing in the value you are helping them interrelate
	she can't believe how much he took in and how much he feels connected to the value
	we are teaching them that diversity is ok and you can be kind and hospitable
	one thing that is amazing about Pre-K is that they have so much background knowledge you know when you introduce the value there is background knowledge and you can bring it in like what do you know about kindness and community...you can always go back and pull it in again
	how we use these values and then the values in combination with the developmental guidelines
	we are working on community we are still talking and using vocabulary and literacy and stuff like that when we are sitting down doing webbing so they are amazed at like how they are twos or threes and they can sit down...not for a long time...but they can sit down and do the webbing my friends still don't understand how they can do that
	I feel like our values are sort of our backbone...it is like a structure for all that we do and how we do it and it's not just for the children but for us to. It is good for the children and the teachers
	we have to set a good example...we can't teach something that we don't do
	I think what Lindsay said is right that we use the values as a backbone...I think you can have a backbone that is almost anything...we use the values because it makes sense for us to use them in that way...and you need to have a backbone...I guess what I am saying is that you have to have a backbone but it doesn't have to be values based
	they need to be joined by something and for us being a Jewish school I think it makes sense for us to have Jewish values as the backbone because that is what ties the religious aspect into it for us but as far as like I don't know if you were to think about outside of this school or someplace that wasn't a Jewish school I don't know if it would have to be or makes sense to be that doing something that is value based is necessary to providing the sort of education that we provide here
	I think what the values do for us is it gives us a backbone because you do have to be very intentionally planned to do what we are doing and this gives sort of a broader place to stand on it...although I think you could do the same thing if you said we could focus differently

Research Question 2A

	I just don't think that you necessarily have to have values be the backbone in the same type of educational system or curriculum for like a preschool
	we achieve our developmental goals this way. I think that that has a great value...it doesn't have to be a Jewish value but I think that it is important to say this is who we are and this is what we do as a community
	I think one of the best things it does is it creates cohesiveness across the school because it is really hard you know to have different ages necessarily with different ages and different interests that they can do Shabbat and they can display the value that we are learning out in Shabbat and specials and anything we do together...and any teacher can talk about are you practicing Kavod...that shared base is important and I think it is stronger because it is a value and not necessarily a specific type of knowledge or whatever
	I agree that it's essential to have that shared base or vision so that you can articulate it
	My thinking is if you were to try to do this in another school or if you were trying to do this somewhere else I don't think the values based part is necessarily essential as long as you have that communal base and understanding or definition that you can articulate and if you were taking it outside of this setting somewhere else I don't think it necessarily needs to be values
	a lot of our values based stuff is social emotional stuff or it is how to take in or how to be responsible for our world or other things and you can do those things in the context of science and in the context of math I don't think you ignore the values and I don't think you don't teach them or show them the right way to live
	it is going to be easier to get them all on the same page with that system than with and I don't disagree with you that you could do it in a different way but I do think it could be harder to get everyone on the same sort of page and the other thing I like about it that's that's when we see kids go through this type of program when you get to the third year of the program you can tell that it has been a priority
	Everyone understands kindness
	and yeah everyone can be on the same page and maybe sometimes it doesn't have to be the same value...I say all the time I would like to maybe add some like cooperation and patience and whatever that could be relational to it
	I was going to say though that we repeat and again as I was saying everything is relative we are revisiting things constantly so I like that even though one month our value was respect we don't stop talking about that so we are reinforcing it
	this helps us because there is something that you know we have the consistency in the school because everyone is doing certain things that just happens to be value based
	How would you get the communal without a cohesiveness list of developmental guidleines and the social emotional component

Research Question 2A

	The values stretch across cultures
	The values allow everyone to connect through adult education
	The values may be an equilibrium- different people may not commit otherwise
	The value piece is the social/emotional piece- this is ignored in a lot of classrooms and becomes foreign when they leave here
	Values are tied to the Torah and the Bible and ties everyone together
	They are able to control emotions and the process of things
	What this school is known for-move forward with communication

APPENDIX H

RESEARCH QUESTION 2B RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 2B

SURVEY	
34. My relationship with my partner is stronger because of peer coaching.	
1-Strongly Agree	17.4%
2-Agree	47.8%
3-Neutral	34.8%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
35. Reflective supervision sessions help me become a better teacher.	
1-Strongly Agree	21.7%
2-Agree	56.5%
3-Neutral	17.4%
4-Disagree	4.3%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
36. Reflective supervision allows me to discuss my feelings in a trusting environment.	
1-Strongly Agree	27.3%
2-Agree	36.4%
3-Neutral	13.6%
4-Disagree	22.7%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
37. Reflective supervision helps me think of ways to solve problems I may not have thought about.	
1-Strongly Agree	29.2%
2-Agree	58.3%
3-Neutral	8.3%
4-Disagree	4.2%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

RESEARCH QUESTION 2B

38. Reflective practice in my classroom helps me determine what the children's interests are.	
1-Strongly Agree	50.0%
2-Agree	41.7%
3-Neutral	8.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

39. I am more aware of my personal thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes through peer coaching and reflective supervision.	
1-Strongly Agree	26.1%
2-Agree	39.1%
3-Neutral	26.1%
4-Disagree	8.7%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

40. Reflective practice with my children helps them scaffold their own learning.	
1-Strongly Agree	31.8%
2-Agree	54.5%
3-Neutral	9.1%
4-Disagree	4.5%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

41. Reflective practice helps me determine the children's developmental needs.	
1-Strongly Agree	30.4%
2-Agree	65.2%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

RESEARCH QUESTION 2B

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #2	
48. The unique aspects of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) The value-based curriculum component b) The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice c) The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. Which of these unique aspects which do you believe is most important? Least important? Why?	
2	I feel that all this aspects are important
5	I am a huge believer in the Values based curriculum. The values we focus on are ones that parents are desparate to see in their children. I have heard from many families how much they appreciate that we expect children to be kind, respectful, and responsible. I believe that the ability to reflect, personally and with peers and administration is vital to improving as a professional.
9	I believe the most important component is the use of reflective supervision and reflective practice. Thinking back on what has happened helps me to improve my teaching in the future. Discussing this with others is especially helpful because they bring up perspectives that I might have missed.
OPEN ENDED QUESTION #3	
Which of the unique aspects do you believe have the biggest impact on the children? Please give specific examples of how.	
	I think if there was a way to devote more time to reflective supervision and reflective practice that it would have the biggest impact on students because what impacts student's the most is their learning environment and teachers, which is what can theoretically be advanced the most through those processes.
	I believe reflective practice has the biggest impact on the children. When I have brought up an issue we are having in class during reflective supervision time, I was able to receive many helpful suggestions from other teachers that improved my classroom as a whole. Reflecting with my partner helps us to see where our children currently are, and what we can do with them to move forward.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #5 & #6	
	Helping us become comfortable to express yourself and helps us become better teachers
	Gives us a safe place to talk where nobody judges you and you can speak your mind
	With just your partner we can reflect on what we do and how we can do better...what worked and what didn't
	An opportunity for our group to bond-connect in a way that we hadn't before-really connect emotionally- as professionals we work together but had not connected in this new way
	Buddy classes reflect together and learn from different age groups and different aged children
	Connect in new ways
	Being reflective causes you to be accountable- especially if you write it down
	Digs deeper into another level of the values
	Speak it and it has power- lay it out on the table
	Team teaching model what is working together continual conversations to share allows us to figure out...this is the key part of productive team teaching...if the partnership doesn't grow the kids don't grow
	Pushed me to transparency glad I could tell you what I think because transparency makes it easier...it provides a space for social/emotional development of adults and the team...if you don't talk about it things turn negative
	Specific time with partners and teams
	It is important...social emotional is important
	Sit with partners and tell what you like and don't like-sharing these things helps
	Biggest pet peeves-very open

RESEARCH QUESTION 2B

	Communication helps us be able to talk and be more open...let's us all talk and let it out
	Taking us away and stopping their day feel valued and it helps with morale
	Asking and checking and being able to talk to the administration
	Rather unique-independently operate-support system not there and the time for resources and support-moves teachers together-moves teams together-moves schools together
	What did work –what didn't work-makes us better-moves us forward-takes away the chance to be complacent and the statement things are fine we need to keep doing the same...Approached different things and made me a better teacher
	Doesn't matter the stage of teaching the model can work with anyone- everyone gets a benefit of the process- be open and assess where you are at
	What works and what doesn't forget to write it down- not good- writing it down and reflecting is helpful for activities and years to come
	Also reflect why...Next year we will know why I didn't work and who it didn't work for
	Learn the most when something goes terribly wrong...What makes teachers great and how can I grow from this
	Same with the children- we want them to be reflective because this is a lifelong learning process...Be willing to look at weaknesses
	Teaches children to be reflective and think about what did we learn from this...Natural consequences-kid said...Goes back to vocabulary

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH QUESTION 2C RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 2C

SURVEY	
42. I have a role in the modification of the curricular process from year to year.	
1-Strongly Agree	29.2%
2-Agree	41.7%
3-Neutral	12.5%
4-Disagree	12.5%
5-Strongly Disagree	4.2%
43. I feel empowered to give feedback about implementation of the curriculum.	
1-Strongly Agree	16.7%
2-Agree	58.3%
3-Neutral	16.7%
4-Disagree	8.3%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%
44. I see myself as a stakeholder in the curriculum as a process.	
1-Strongly Agree	34.8%
2-Agree	39.1%
3-Neutral	17.4%
4-Disagree	4.3%
5-Strongly Disagree	4.3%
45. Talking through the curriculum process continues to strengthen my understanding.	
1-Strongly Agree	39.1%
2-Agree	52.2%
3-Neutral	8.7%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

RESEARCH QUESTION 2C

46. Implementation of the curriculum improves when we evaluate together.	
1-Strongly Agree	34.8%
2-Agree	60.9%
3-Neutral	4.3%
4-Disagree	0.0%
5-Strongly Disagree	0.0%

RESEARCH QUESTION 2C

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #2	
48. The unique aspects of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model are: a) The value-based curriculum component b) The use of both reflective supervision and reflective practice c) The use of design thinking to evaluate and consistently modify the FFS curriculum model. Which of these unique aspects which do you believe is most important? Least important? Why?	
1	I think the consistent modification of the curriculum model is most important because it allows the school and staff to keep growing, as the process is adapted to fit the school's needs. I think that the value based curriculum component is the least important of the three because many different, effective substitutes could be plugged into focus instruction and development around. At times I think the challenge of centering around the value and developmental guidelines that do not tie neatly to it make it harder for teachers to effectively/smoothly plan in their classroom.
8	I believe when we evaluate what we had done and what could be improved, we will get better professionals.
9	I believe the most important component is the use of reflective supervision and reflective practice. Thinking back on what has happened helps me to improve my teaching in the future. Discussing this with others is especially helpful because they bring up perspectives that I might have missed.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #7	
	Watching the evolution of the paperwork in the book has been educational create pages and pass it off- process works- the challenge is the time to put it on paper
	We create these things and share it with teachers halfway through to make new progress these things were listened to and then brought in next year very supportive and the professional use is valuable
	Developmental guidelines were revised and it makes you feel valuable and constantly grow
	Review allows you to memorize the developmental guidelines
	Doing this over and over with tweeks helps you take in the information and then doing it again and again you begin to see the connections
	Takes several years to internalize
	Different parts added each year have been beneficial- would not have focused on it kinda gives you the info and makes you think
	Makes you look at developmentally appropriate practice over and over again
	Giving us a voice motivates us to do it and helps us to understand it
	Audio and visual- being able to express my opinion helps me understand it
	I thought I got it-explains it more- see examples to help
	More I did it the right way the more it helps

APPENDIX J

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS 4 AND 5 RESULTS

CHALLENGES TO THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS CURRICULUM MODEL

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #4	
What is your overall evaluation of the curriculum model to your professional development? To Student achievement? Please give specific examples.	
I think the model has provided ways that allow for student achievement to be easily articulated to parents in evaluative writing and informal conversations, which has been helpful in maintaining positive and productive relationships with parents. I also believe that the model provides a solid base level for the expectations of student learning across the school so that as a teacher I would know what my students have previously been asked to do and where they need to be in terms of getting ready for the following year.	
I feel each year the more I use the curriculm model it helps me to become more aware of the developmental growth of the children.	
The curriculum model has helped me know how to think and approach teaching the children. Instead of approaching with ideas or end results, I think about developmental guidelines, what the children are interested in at the time, and how each individual child is ready to learn the material.	
The curriculum model allows me to continue to grow and develop as a teacher because thinking and evaluating are part of every day. The children also gain through the reflective thinking that teachers go through.	
I appreciate having a program/philosophy/model that is uniform throughout the school. It takes time to understand all the components, but when taken as a whole, it builds a rich framework for curriculum planning. The children benefit from the thoughtful planning across developmental domains.	
I feel that it has helped me be more intentional and reflective. It also helps me think about the children as individuals in order to helping them achieve personal achievement.	
i believe in the curriculum and the work we do here and believe it is very helpful to prepare children for the world around them.	
I think is good, simple and meaningful for our children and us.	
I think the curriculum model has been beneficial to my professional growth because it provides a framework for planning for all developmental areas. This also helps me to more completely measure student achievement by evaluating all developmental areas.	
The curriculum is very challenging but has enabled me to grow considerably as a teacher. In the past I may have had an inkling that a child was struggling in an area but did not know how to evaluate, discuss, and plan activities to help them. The students have benefited greatly from the reflections of the teachers about each one of them and from the way in which the values build upon each other and interconnect.	
I think it's a wonderful curriculum model that has helped me grow as a teacher. I realyl feel that I know how to have conversations with students that I never would have even thought to have before.	
I like the overall evaluation because its more.detailed and gives room for more ideas.	
As the year goes on and I am getting a better understanding of it, I definitely think it has helped me become a stronger teacher.	

CHALLENGES TO THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS CURRICULUM MODEL

OPEN ENDED QUESTION #5	
In your opinion, what is the weakness of the Foundations for Success Curriculum Model?	
I think that not all teachers are able to easily understand, internalize and work through the model at a fast pace and that the model itself can take a lot of years to help change the practice of established teachers.	
I feel it is a little uncomfortable to do the Peer coaching each week. Maybe it should be completed on when there is conflict with the teachers. Maybe once at the begining of the year and then starting the second semester.	
I think the weakness is it can be overwhelming to expect staff adopt it all at once. You must have buy in from teaching staff, so implementing it in stages while educating and supporting staff development would probably be very important.	
Sometimes is is cumbersome and time consuming but as it is so important we must get beyon those feelings. There also needs to be more flexibility in how different teachers use the program based on their level of experience.	
It takes a long time to feel comfortable with all the pieces and it does require committment to keep up with it.	
I think that some people don't have the mindset to put in the time and involvement that is necessary.	
I think one weakness is that the values are presented in the same order from year to year, which causes some teachers to present topics and activities in the same order despite the fact that their class might not be interested in that particular topic at that time.	
It is challenging in the beginning to see how the different pieces fit together. Over time using it becomes much easier but there is a great deal of information to process so it can be overwhelming when you are first introduced to it.	
Too many things being required to fill out, should be able to use what works for us and have it be more of a model, versus a chore.	
Some times teachers get lost in the process.	

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION #8	
	Unfortunately the reality of our school-the structure of hours doesn't allow as much time as we need –it would speed things up
	Tweaking the presentation for next year
	Takes so long and the limitations of our day
	Makes us accountable if we do it in a way we can share
	Mentoring system?
	Confuses subs...I don't get it
	Communication with partner- relationship really good

REFERENCES

Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Squires, J.H., Clarke Brown, K., & Horowitz, M. (2015). *The state of preschool 2014: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

Barnett, S., et al., The State of Preschool: 2005 State Preschool Yearbook, The Annual Report, (Rutgers, New Jersey: The National Institute for Early Childhood Research.

Beaudin, B.P. & Quick, D. (1995). *Experiential learning: Theoretical underpinnings*. Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University, High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety. Retrieved from http://users.ugent.be/~mvalcke/LI_1213/experiencial_learning.pdf

Beaty, J. (2009). *Preschool appropriate practices.* New York, NY: Cengage Learning.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. ED 403 023.

Birdwell, J. (2009, July 23). Upcoming summit focuses on economic benefits of early childhood development. *Oklahoma Gazette*, para. 6. Retrieved from http://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/article-4137-upcoming-summit-focuses-on-economic-benefits-of-early-childhood-development.html

Bloom, P.J. (2004). Leadership as a way of thinking. Zero to Three, (25)2.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston [etc.: Allyn and Bacon.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, Mass: Pearson A & B.

Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 90, 9-18.

Boyer, E. L. (1992). *Cornerstones for a new century: Teacher preparation, early childhood education, a national education index*. Washington, D.C: NEA Professional Library, National Education Association.

Bromley, D.B. (1986). *The case-study method in psychology and related disciplines.* Chinchester: John Wiley & Sons.

Brown, T., & Soundview Executive Book Summaries. (2010). *Change by design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation*. Concordville, Pa.: Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

Brown, T., & Kanopy (Firm). (2014). *Strategy by design: How design thinking builds opportunities*.

Burts, D. C., Hart, C. H., Charlesworth, R., DeWolf, D. M., Ray, J., Manuel, K., & Fleege, P. O. (1993). Developmental appropriateness of kindergarten programs and academic outcomes in first grade. JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, 8 (1), 23-31. EJ 493 673.

Burts, D. C., Hart, C. H., Charlesworth, R., Fleege, P. O., Mosley, J., & Thomasson, R. H. (1992). Observed activities and stress behaviors of children in developmentally appropriate and inappropriate kindergarten classrooms. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 7(2), 297-318. EJ 450 531.

Burts, D. C., Hart, C. H., Charlesworth, R., & Kirk, L. (1990). A comparison of stress behaviors observed in kindergarten children in classrooms with developmentally appropriate versus developmentally inappropriate instructional practices. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 5(3), 407-423. EJ 421 825.

Buzan, T. (2003). *The illustrated mind map book*. London: BBC.

Carr, L. T. (1994). The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: what method for nursing?.Journal of Advanced Nursing, 20(4), 716-721. Retrieved May 16, 2011 from: http://web.ebscohost.com

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2015). *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper No. 13*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). *Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control" System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function: Working Paper No. 11*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Center on the Developing Child (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Center on the Developing Child (2007). *The Science of Early Childhood Development* (InBrief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Chambers, E. E., Martindale, S. J., & Thompson, A. R. (2009). Clinical psychology service users' experience of confidentiality and informed consent: A qualitative analysis. Psychology & Psychotherapy: Theory. Research & Practice, 82(4), p. 355-368. Retrieved April 14, 2012 from: http://web.ebscohost.com Connelly

Christensen, L.B. Johnson, R.B., & Turner, L.A. (2010). *Research methods, design and analysis* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (3rd ed.)*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches, 2nd Ed. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA 91320.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 3rd Ed. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA 91320.

Christakis, E. (2016). *The importance of being little: What preschoolers really need from grownups*.

Davison, T. L. (2013). The effect of the recession of 2007-2009 in the community bank environment.International Journal of Business and Social Science.4(14).Retrieved December 12, 2013 from: http://www.ijbssnet.com

Dickinson, D. K. (2002). Shifting images of developmentally appropriate practice as seen through different lenses. EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER, 31(1), 26-32. EJ 642 337.

Dodge, D., Colker, L., & Heroman, C. (2002) *Creative curriculum for preschool*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies.

Dunn, Loraine; Beach, Sara Ann; & Kontos, Susan. (1994). Quality of the literacy environment in day care and children's development. JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, 9 (1), 24-34. EJ 510 543.

Eggbeer, L., Mann, T., & Seibel, N. (2007). Reflective supervision: Past, present, and future. ZERO TO THREE Journal, 28(2), 5–9.

Eggbeer, L., Shahmoon-Shanok, R., & Clark, R. (2010). Reaching toward an evidence base for reflective supervision. ZERO TO THREE Journal, 31(2), 39–50.

Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (2007). *Education psychology: Windows on classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Elkind, David. (1981). THE HURRIED CHILD. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Emde, R. (2009). Facilitating reflective supervision in an early child development center. Infant Mental Health Journal, 30(6), 664–672. doi:10.1002/imhj.20235

Fenichel,E.(1992).Learningthroughsupervisionandmentorshiptosupport the development of infants, toddlers, and families: A source book. Arlington, VA: ZERO TO THREE Press.

Fisher, A. (2008). Teaching comprehension and critical literacy: Investigating guided reading in three primary classrooms. *Literacy*, *(42)*, 52–58.

Frede, Ellen, & Barnett, W. Steve. (1992). Developmentally appropriate public school preschool: A study of implementation of the High/Scope curriculum and its effects on disadvantaged children's skills at first grade. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 7 (4), 483-499. EJ 458 102.

Freeman, D. (1990). Intervening in practice teaching. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), Second language teacher education (pp. 103-117). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

French, M. (2004). Can you really say no? Standards and good practices can work together. Little Rock, AK: Southern Early Childhood Association.

Gebhard, J. G. (2009). The practicum. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education (pp. 250-258). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gilkerson,L.,&Shahmoon-Shanok,R.(2000).Relationshipsforgrowth: Cultivating reflective practice in infant, toddler, and preschool programs. In J. Osofsky & H. Fitzgerald (Eds.), WAIMH handbook of infant mental health: Early intervention, evaluation and assessment, Vol. 2 (pp. 34–79). New York: Wiley.

Glasersfeld, E. (1989). Cognition, construction of knowledge, and teaching. Synthese, 80(1), 121-140.

Goldstein, L. (2008). Teaching the standards is developmentally appropriate practice: Strategies for incorporating the sociopolitical dimension of DAP in early childhood teaching. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *(36)*, 253–260.

Golbeck, S. L. (Ed.). (2001). PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: REFRAMING DILEMMAS IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Graham, A., & Phelps, R. (2003, January). Being a teacher: Developing teacher identity and enhancing practice through metacognitive and reflective learning processes. Austrailian Journey of Teacher Education, 27(2), 11-24.

Gulsecen, S. and Kubat, A., (2006). Teaching ICT to teacher candidates using PBL: A qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Educational Technology & Society, 9 (2): 96-106.

Hatch, J. A. (2002). Accountability shovedown: Resisting the standards movement in early childhood education. Phi Delta Kappan, 83(6), 457–463.

Head Start, 2012. “Head Start Approach to School Readiness.” Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/pdf/ohsapproach-to-school-readiness_complete.pdf

Heffron,M.C.,&Murch,T.(2010).Reflectivesupervisionandleadership in early childhood programs. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE Press.

Hrebiniak, L. G. (2005). Making strategy work: Leading effective execution and change. Wharton School Publishing.

Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy; Hyson, Marion; & Rescorla, Leslie. (1990). Academic environments in preschool: Do they pressure or challenge young children? EARLY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT, 1 (6), 401-423.

Honebein, P. (1996). Seven goals for the design of Constructivist learning environments. In B. Wilson, *Constructivist learning environments*, pp. 17-24. New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications.

Hyson, Marion C.; Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy; & Rescorla, Leslie. (1990). The classroom practices inventory: An observation instrument based on NAEYC's guidelines for develop-mentally appropriate practices for 4- and 5-year-old children. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 5 (4), 475-494. EJ 423 540.

Iaquinta, A. (2006). Guided reading: A research-based response to the challenges of early reading instruction. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *(33)*, 34–39.

Karnes, M. B., Schwedel, A. M., & Williams, M. B. (1983). A comparison of five approaches for educating young children from low-income homes. In AS THE TWIG IS BENT: LASTING EFFECTS OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS (pp. 133-170). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. ED 253 299.

Knott, C. & Scragg, T. (2010). Reflective practice in social work, (2nd ed.). Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.

Koh, Joyce Hwee Ling., Chai, Ching Sing., & Wong, Benjamin. (2016). *Design thinking for education: Conceptions and applications in teaching and learning.* [S.l.]: Springer.

Krueger, R. A. (1994). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kostelnik, M., Soderman, A., & Whiren, A. (2007). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum: Best practices in early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Lazar, I., & Darlington, R. (1982). Lasting effects of early education: A report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 47*(2-3), 1-151. EJ 266 057. http://dissertation.laerd.com/purposive-sampling.php 2012

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Loughran, J. (2002) Effective reflective practice: In search of meaning in learning about teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*, 33-43.

Mantzicopoulos, Panayota Y.; Neuharth-Pritchett, Stacy; & Morelock, J. B. (1994, April). ACADEMIC COMPETENCE, SOCIAL SKILLS, AND BEHAVIOR AMONG DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE CLASSROOMS. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Marcon, Rebecca A. (1992). Differential effects of three preschool models on inner-city 4-year-olds. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 7(4), 517-530. EJ 458 104.

Marcon, R. A. (1999). Differential impact of preschool models on development and early learning of inner-city children: A three-cohort study. DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, 35(2), 358-375. EJ 582 451.

McDaniel, G. L., Isaac, M. Y., Brooks, H. M., & Hatch, A. (2005). Confronting K-3 challenges in an era of accountability. Young Children, 60(2), 20–26.

McDonald, D. (2009). Elevating the field. *NAEYC Public Policy Report*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Morrow, L. (2004). Developmentally appropriate practice in early literacy instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *58(1)*, 88–89.

Morrow, L. (2009). Developmentally appropriate practice in early literacy instruction. *Distinguished Educator*, *89(2)*, 86–89.

Miller, L. B. (1979). Development of curriculum models in Head Start. In E. Zigler & J. Valentine (Eds.), PROJECT HEAD START: A LEGACY OF THE WAR ON POVERTY (pp. 195-200). New York: Free Press.

Miller, L. B., & Bizzell, R. P. (1983a). Long-term effects of four preschool programs: Sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. CHILD DEVELOPMENT, 54(3), 727-741. EJ 284 356.

Miller, L. B., & Bizzell, R. P. (1983b). The Louisville experiment: A comparison of four programs. In AS THE TWIG IS BENT: LASTING EFFECTS OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS (pp. 171-200). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. ED 253 299.

Mitchell, L.S. (1953). *Two lives: The story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and myself*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Montessori, M., & George, A. E. (1964). *The Montessori method*. New York: Schocken Books.

Nager, N. & Shapiro, E. (2007). A progressive approach to the education of teachers: some principles from Bank Street College of Education. *Bank Street Occasional Paper Series 18.* Retrieved from: bankstreet.edu/occasional-paper-series/18/

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1991). *Early childhood teacher education guidelines : basic and advanced: Position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*. Washington, DC: The Association.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010). *Early Experiences Can Alter Gene Expression and Affect Long-Term Development: Working Paper No. 10*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007). *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do.* Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Parlakian, R. (2001). Look, listen, and learn: Reflective supervision and relationship-based work. Washington, D.C: ZERO TO THREE.

Parks, S., & Vort Corporation. (1994). *HELP charts (birth to 3 years): Hawaii Early Learning Profile*. Palo Alto, CA: VORT Corp.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Payne, M. (2012). *Pareto principle*. Place of publication not identified: Publishamerica.

Pelo, A. (2008). *Rethinking early childhood education*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Piaget, J. (1983). "Piaget's Theory". In P. Mussen (Ed.) *Handbook of child psychology*. Wiley.

Pianta, R. (1999). ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND TEACHERS. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ED 435 073.

Richards, J. C. (1998). Beyond training. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rockwell, R., Hoge, D., Searcy, B. (1999). *Linking language: Simple language and literacy activities throughout the curriculum*. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House.

Rogoff, B., Goodman Turkanis, C., & Bartlett, L. (Eds.). (2001). LEARNING TOGETHER: CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY. New York: Oxford University Press.

Roskos, K., & Neuman, S. (2002). Environment and its influences for early literacy teaching and learning. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), HANDBOOK OF EARLY LITERACY RESEARCH (pp. 281-294). New York: Guilford. ED 457 970.

Saldaña, Johnny. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Schweinhart, L. J., & Weikart, D. P. (1997). The High/Scope preschool curriculum comparison study through age 23. EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 12(2), 117-143. EJ 554 350.

Shapiro, E.K., & Nager, N. (2000). The developmental-interaction approach to education: Retrospect and prospect. In N. Nager & E.K. Shapiro (Eds.), *Revisiting a progressive pedagogy: The developmental-interaction approach*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Shapiro, E.K., & Biber, B. (1972). The education of young children: A developmental- interaction point of view. *Teachers College Record, 74*, 55-79.

Stacey, S. 2009. *Emergent Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings: From Theory to Practice*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf.

Stake, R.E. (1995). The Art of Case Study Research: Perspective in Practice. London: Sage.

Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (1990). Focus groups: Theory and practice. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stipek, D., Daniels, D., Galluzzo, D., Millburn, S., & Salmon, J. M. (1998). Good beginnings: What difference does the program make in preparing young children for school. JOURNAL OF APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, 19(1), 41-66.

Stipek, D., Feiler, R., Daniels, D., & Millburn, S. (1995). Effects of different instructional approaches on young children's achievement and motivation. CHILD DEVELOPMENT, 66(1), 209-223. EJ 501 879.

Tattersall, C., Powell, J., Stroud, J., & Pringle, J. (January 01, 2011). Mind mapping in qualitative research. *Nursing Times, 107,* 18, 10-16.

Tellis, Winston, (1997). Introduction to Case Study. The Qualitative Report, Volume 3, Number 2, July. (http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-2/tellis1.html).

Texas Education Agency, Austin. Div. of Curriculum Development. (1980). *Texas Assessment of Basic Skills: Instructional Guidelines for Mathematics, Readings, and Writing. Grade 3*. Texas Education Agency.

Texas Education Agency. (1999). *Prekindergarten curriculum guidelines*. Austin, Tex. (1701 N. Congress Ave., Austin 78701-1494: The Agency.

Van Tassel-Baska, J., & Stambaugh, T. (2005). Challenges and possibilities for serving gifted learners in the regular classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, *(44)*, 211–217.

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Sinagub, J. (1996). Focus group interviews in education and psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Virmani, E., Masyn, K., Thompson, R., Conners-Burrow, N., & Mansell, L. (2013). Early childhood mental health consultation: Promoting change in the quality of teacher–child interactions. Infant Mental Health Journal, 34(2), 156–172.

Vygotskii, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Wallace, M. J. (1991). Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Weatherston, D., & Barron, C. (2009). What does a reflective supervisory relationshiplooklike?InS.Heller&L.Gilkerson(Eds.),A practicalguide to reflective supervision (pp. 61–80). Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE Press.

Weatherston, D., Weigand, R.F., & Weigand, B. (2010). Reflective supervision:Supportingreflectionasacornerstoneforcompetency.ZERO TO THREE Journal, 31(2), 22–30.

Wertsch, J.V (1997) "Vygotsky and the formation of the mind" Cambridge.

Williams, M. (2001). Learning teaching: A social constructivist approach-theory and practice or theory with practice? In, H. Trappes-Lomax & I. McGrath (Eds.), Theory in language teacher education (pp. 11-20). Essex, UK: Pearson Education.

Woolfolk, Anita. (2004). *Educational Psychology*. (9th ed). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. The Qualitative Report, 20(2), 134-152. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR20/2/yazan1.pdf

Yin, R., (1994). Case study research: Design and methods (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Yin, R. K. (2012). Applications of case study research (3rd ed.). Washington DC: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zeichner, K. M. (2001). Educating reflective teachers for learner-centered education: Possibilities and contradictions. Proceedings of 16º Encontro Nacional de Professores Universitários de Língua Inglesa. Londrina, Brazil.