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August 2018

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING BY DOING PROGRAM

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

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August 2018

Dedication

For my loving husband, Edgardo and my beautiful children, Nathan and Marina

For my wonderful mother, Virginia Rivera, who always stands by my side

For my God-fearing father, Raymond Rivera, who is now in Heaven and always taught
me to keep moving forward

For my loving sister, Denise, who always motivates me

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for guiding me throughout this process and being with me every step of the way. Without His grace, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, I would not have made it through.

I will also be forever grateful to my husband, Edgardo, for being my rock throughout the program. He has been my biggest supporter since day one. I am also grateful to my children, Nathan and Marina, for understanding the importance of this journey for me.

Who and where would I be without my beautiful parents that raised me? I thank them for instilling in me a strong work ethic as I observed them work hard in order to provide a better future for us. A big thank you to my sisters, Marisol, Christina, Debbie, and Denise, for their words of encouragement. Thank you to my family for always being my biggest cheerleaders. My in-laws, Carmen and Nestor Martinez, without your help with Nathan and Marina this would not have been possible.

Dr. Cameron White, thank you for being a wonderful chairperson. I truly appreciate the support and guidance you provided throughout the program. Dr. Laveria Hutchison, thank you for your wise feedback. Dr. McAlister-Shields, thank you for check-ins making sure I was on track. Dr. Michelle Burke, thank you for guidance and friendship. Also, thank you for being a great example of transformational leadership.

Thank you to my friends and colleagues, Sarah, Rosalinda, Erika, Janet, Jennifer, Sabrina, and Erendira for checking on me throughout this journey. You all have inspired me to want to continue to learn more. Viviana, we made it! I am so glad we met and have completed this journey.

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Abstract

Background: Many teachers in school settings are expected to assist students in achieving academic success without providing sufficient scaffolds for both the teacher and the student. **Purpose:** In order to gain knowledge regarding best practices involving teacher support and the effect of educator scaffolding on student success in academic settings, the purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the Learning by Doing Program and analyze its effectiveness on the perceived readiness of teachers and on the academic success of their students. This study posed the following research questions: 1) What are teacher perceptions of the Learning by Doing Program? And 2) Do teachers believe the Learning by Doing Program provides them and the students they teach with the skills needed to be successful? **Methods:** A qualitative case study was conducted to collect and analyze the perceptions of three teachers who were invited to participate in both individual and focus group interviews. The data collected from the two types of interviews was analyzed to determine common patterns and themes.

Results: The study yielded five themes pertaining to the teachers' perceptions regarding the program. These themes were: 1) Teachers felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for students learning letter knowledge and letter sounds; 2) Teachers felt the program assisted in creating readers; 3) Teachers felt that the program assisted in creating writers; 4) Teachers felt that the students using the program became independent learners; and 5) Teachers felt that the organization of the program, which included trainings, materials, and the continued support assisted them to be more successful in the classroom. **Conclusion:** Based on the data collected from the teachers' experiences with

the program, it was determined that students were successful with reading and writing along with independence being fostered with the use of the program.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction and Background of the Study

During my entire educational career, I have worked with students at the early childhood age range (4-6 years of age). As an educator, I have seen that there has been changes in the groups of students we receive from year to year. I am not only referring to changes in the students (excessive use of technology, disrespectful and such) because we know that comes with teaching. The changes I am referring to are changes in the family unit, changes in the upbringing of the child, changes in the level of respect that is given to education, and last but not least, changes in the cultural sensitivity of some teachers. Students have the capacity to learn but sometimes the teachers do not provide them with the necessary tools, the motivation and the confidence they need. Due to lack of preparation from their university, teachers have a misalignment of activities in the classroom when the academic need is great. In a study conducted by Greenberg, McKee, and Walsh, they found that teachers are not being prepared adequately to be successful in the classroom with the changes in the ethnic and socioeconomic student diversity (2013a).

The program, *Learning By Doing*, provides students with tools that are age appropriate while providing teachers with the experience of teaching in the classroom. This in turn provides students with the tools needed to become independent learners. The teachers are provided with a hybrid of research-based strategies and theories from Maria Montessori, Gardner's levels of intelligence, and the gradual release model. The trainers

provide an in-depth training on how to use the materials of the program effectively and how to lead students to work independently and thus academically grow. The trainers follow up with teachers throughout the school year with training and question/answer sessions. The trainers provide the teachers with step-by-step lesson presentations. The teachers are taught why Maria Montessori felt it was very important to present lessons to the students from top to bottom/left to right. In addition, the Learning By Doing Program provides the gradual release model of responsibility so teachers who are in direct instruction benefit from the training. During the initial training, the teachers have the opportunity to present lessons and receive immediate feedback from both the expert trainer and their peers.

The goal of the program is to help the students become independent and strong in literacy. One of my favorite quotes from Maria Montessori is, “The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, the children are now working as if I did not exist.” Once students are provided with a curriculum that has been modeled and is relevant, attractive, and rigorous; they will work independently. At this point, the teacher then becomes a facilitator in the classroom guiding the students to learn more.

Narrative

As a child, I did have access to Pre-Kindergarten, but it was because my parents worked hard for me to be able to go to a private school to receive instruction. I was blessed that my parents were able to sacrifice for me to receive the Pre-K intervention at such an early age. As I continued to grow, I always wanted to be a teacher. Little did I know that one day that dream would come true.

As a teacher, most of my career has been with the younger grades. I have seen students come into Pre-Kindergarten with it as their first school experience with routines and procedures, rules, structure, social interaction, and more. As a Pre-Kindergarten teacher, it always felt great to see the growth my students had by the end of the year. Students would go from learning their letter sounds at the beginning of the year to reading at the end of the year. This made me think of the lasting impact we have on students for the rest of their lives. Even today, I have students that are in middle school that I am still in contact with and to see the great gains they are making in school really inspires me to continue with my early childhood endeavors. As an assistant principal, I feel as if I can make an impact in the classroom by helping teachers achieve their goals with students whether it be by coaching, providing feedback, modeling, meeting with parents and so much more.

Connection to the Study

I was introduced to the Learning By Doing program while working at an Early Childhood Center by attending the Summer training provided to teachers at the campus. It was at this time that I saw the importance of this program. I realized that this summer training is a necessity, especially to new teachers. The training consisted of many tips and techniques to use in the classroom. It also provided teachers with the training and practice on how to use these techniques in the classroom. As I was sitting down, I thought to myself, these teachers are blessed to be more prepared than the average new teacher on the first day of school. The training also included routines and procedures unique to the school which I thought was important, flexible, and such a great component of the program.

Since that day, I have become part of the coaching team for the program. As a coach, I provide specific feedback for teachers in the classroom when observing them. The feedback always starts off positive in order to let the teachers know the great things they are doing in the classroom. I also provide support and training for teachers to begin Guided Reading with the Pre-Kindergarten students that are ready.

Teachers also know that any time they have questions or concerns, I am available to clarify as needed. Teachers have been very grateful to the support provided. They are also very appreciative of the detailed trainings provided with the practice times included.

Need for the Study

There is a positive effect on students that attend Pre-Kindergarten. However, we want to provide instruction that is challenging them. Many individuals, including parents and educators, see Pre-Kindergarten as more of a daycare instead of an educational environment that is setting the educational foundation for the rest of their lives. Pre-Kindergarten education should be taken seriously and if students are ready to go to the next level with reading that should be done. Teachers should teach to the level of the child and differentiate. In the book, *The Discovery of the Child*, the authors referred to the teacher as the dynamic link between the students and the prepared environment (Montessori and Johnstone, 2013). The teacher works as a guide and facilitator and does not move until a child masters the concept instead of continuing to the next concept even though the child is not grasping what is being taught.

Statement of the Problem

The Early Childhood classroom is the first experience for many students in a structured educational setting. Therefore, students should be provided with a rigorous,

yet engaging, Pre-Kindergarten curriculum that will instill a love for learning regardless of the students' cultural background or economic status. Classrooms should be a place where students feel happy, comfortable, and eager to learn. However, many teachers use what Paul Gorski calls the Myth of Culture of Poverty where teachers stereotype their students and parents (2008). Instead of creating an environment where the teacher feels as if student background is restricting learning, classroom environments should incorporate several important components where students succeed regardless of their background. The teacher should be prepared by practicing the lessons ahead of time in order to teach effectively. The classroom should be an inviting and prepared environment that the students know was prepared just for them. In addition, the teacher should learn about each student personally in order to know what to incorporate into the lessons. If these components are in place, the students' learning will soar.

The research in this study focused on teacher perceptions regarding the literacy component of the *Learning By Doing Program*. With the changes occurring today, such as more students with speech impairments and decreased oral language, this was a very important area to research. If educators set a strong foundation for our early childhood students, students would have the skills necessary in order to continue growing academically. During the early childhood age, students have the capacity to learn so much and it sets the stage for the rest of the student's educational career. In a study on brain development during the preschool years, Brown and Jerrigan stated that, "Just as the preschool years represent a time of great cognitive and behavioral growth, with the emergence in early form of many quintessentially human psychological abilities, they

likewise constitute a period of ‘blossoming’ within the brain” (Brown and Jerrigan, 2012, p. 1). Brown and Jerrigan also state that:

Though many brain patterning processes are complete at birth, the human brain exhibits further dramatic biological development during the preschool years, and roughly quadruples in weight before the age of six (Dobbing and Sands, 1973), when it has acquired approximately 90% of its adult volume (Courchesne et al., 2000; Iwasaki et al., 1997; Kennedy et al., 2002; Kennedy and Dehay, 2001; Lenroot and Giedd, 2006; Paus et al., 2001; Reiss et al., 1996).

(Brown and Jerrigan, 2012, p. 2)

Therefore, as educators in the early childhood classroom, individuals should make sure all is being done to nourish the brain development in students.

Research Question

This study posed the following research questions: 1) What are teacher perceptions of the Learning By Doing Program? And 2) Do teachers feel the program provides them and the students they teach with the skills needed to be successful?

Methods

This qualitative study focused on teacher perceptions of the Early Childhood program, *Learning By Doing*, in a Pre-Kindergarten school, specifically focusing on the teachers perceptions teaching literacy in the classroom and ready to deal with anything that may come their way. There was a focus group of teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program. The teachers in the focus group participated in individual interviews and a focus group interview in order to determine their perceptions of the program. The classroom teachers received their first training of the program during the

summer by the instructional coach/expert, and they met weekly for PLC(Professional Learning Community) to continue modeling, and receiving feedback. During the school year, the instructional coach/expert of the Learning By Doing Program visited the campus and provided them with specific feedback regarding the Learning By Doing program by using the different domains of the Danielson Framework which includes classroom environment and instruction.

Definition of Terms

Hands-on Learning/Projects: Hands-on projects obviously engage kids who are tactile or kinesthetic learners, who need movement to learn best. They also engage students who are auditory learners, who talk about what they're doing, and visual learners, who have the opportunity to see what everyone else is creating. For social learners, the time spent in small group conversation will strengthen their knowledge (Weaver, 2017).

Learning By Doing Professional Development Program - a collection of hands-on experiences for teachers through a two-day summer preparation, classroom set-up prior to school starting, and additionally meeting once a week aside from Professional Learning Communities throughout the school year. During the training session in the summer, teachers are provided research based strategies on creating purposeful hands on lessons and objectives that align with those lessons, thinking strategies for whole and small group instruction, setting-up and creating purposeful workstations, managing workstations, Positive Behavior Initiative Support, logical consequences, and working in small groups through the use of a weekly flexible grouping planner, lesson planning. In addition, after the summer training teachers are able to then go to their classroom and begin to set-it up so that it is successful to student learning. During the

school year, teachers experience creating and presenting the following week's lessons while receiving valuable input from a veteran and highly qualified instructional coach as well as their peers. Teachers then are able to reflect and ask questions when presenting lessons for their peers before and after lessons are presented to students.

Logical Consequences: a powerful way of responding to children's misbehavior that not only is effective in stopping the behavior but is respectful of children and helps them to take responsibility for their actions ("Punishment vs. Logical Consequences | Responsive Classroom," 2011). Basically, logical consequences teaches instead of punishing.

Prekindergarten State Guidelines - the state of Texas provides academic objectives for Prekindergarten students to meet throughout the school year. Teachers use these academic guides throughout the year to assess students' mastery (Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, 2008).

Professional Learning Community (PLC) -a powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practices of schooling. But initiating and sustaining the concept requires hard work. It requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold itself accountable for the kind of results that fuel continual improvement ("Educational Leadership: Schools as Learning Communities: What Is a Professional Learning Community?," 2001).

Danielson Framework –

The Framework for Teaching is a research-based set of components of instruction, aligned to the INTASC standards, and grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. The complex activity of teaching is divided into 22 components (and 76 smaller elements) clustered into four domains of teaching

responsibility. Domain 2: Classroom Environment includes Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, Establishing a Culture for Learning, Managing Classroom Procedures, Managing Student Behavior, and Organizing Physical Space. Domain 3: Instruction includes Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness.

("Framework | Danielson Group," n.d.)

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the research behind Early Childhood classrooms and the tools necessary for students to learn letter sounds, letter names, and early reading skills. It is sad to see that students are reaching middle school and high school not prepared. As educators, if we are able to teach academics and social emotional behavior to students at an early age, we can help prevent students being unprepared for their future educational careers. Teachers that are well-prepared are able to provide students with high-quality teaching according to the National Academy Press (2003). In the book, *The Discovery of the Child*, the authors referred to the teacher as the dynamic link between the students and the prepared environment (Montessori and Johnstone, 2013). The teacher works as a guide and facilitator and does not move until a child masters the concept instead of continuing to the next concept even though the child is not grasping what is being taught.

This chapter outlines the different components that an educator should take into perspective when working with children, particularly early childhood students.

Curriculum Design Suitable for an Early Childhood Classroom. It is very important for students to be active in their learning especially at the Pre-K level age since this is the most critical time for cognitive growth. According to Piaget, there are stages that a child goes through. The early childhood student is going through what Piaget considered to be the Pre-operational stage. “During this stage, children develop memory and imagination.

They are also able to understand things symbolically, and to understand the ideas of past and future” (“4 Cognitive Stages for Child Development | LearningRx," n.d.). Therefore, it is critical for educators to provide experiences for students where they will develop these skills.

The curriculum design ideal for students at the Early Childhood age group is the learner/child-centered curriculum. *Curriculum, Foundations, Principles, and Issues* by Ornstein and Hunkins, states “The design should be based on students’ lives, needs, and interests” (Hunkins and Ornstein, 197). In this curriculum design, you have to recognize your student’s interests before you teach them a lesson. This is very important because educators are able reach out to each student individually. When students care about what they are doing, they generally do a lot better in their work. Giving the students school work based on their interests will have a greater outcome in the end. Knowledge is not received from the authority figure but instead students are generating knowledge from their experiences. It is also important to be familiar with the curricular emphasis, underlying philosophy, sources, advocates, and pros and cons for the child-centered curriculum.

Child-centered learning is when students are actively participating in their learning; they learn at their own pace and use their own strategies. Student-centered learning develops problem solving, critical thinking, and reflective thinking. A definition of child-centered instruction found in the article, *Investigating teachers’ views of student-centred learning approach*, is:

Student-centered instruction [SCI] is an instructional approach in which students influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning.

This learning model places the student (learner) in the center of the learning process. The instructor provides students with opportunities to learn independently and from one another and coaches them in the skills they need to do so effectively. The SCI approach includes such techniques as substituting active learning experiences for lectures, assigning open-ended problems and problems requiring critical or creative thinking that cannot be solved by following text examples, involving students in simulations and role plays, and using self-paced and/or cooperative (team-based) learning. Properly implemented SCI can lead to increased motivation to learn, greater retention of knowledge, deeper understanding, and more positive attitudes towards the subject being taught.

("Investigating teachers' views of student-centred learning approach," n.d., p. 143)

This definition was provided by Collins and O'Brien (2003) in the *Greenwood Dictionary of Education*. The definition is stating that the child-centered classrooms focus on their students becoming critical thinkers. Students are not only answering a variety of low and high-level questions but they are really thinking about the foundation of their answers as they dig deep into the root of the problem when trying to solve the problem. Any answer is not just accepted. There is a process of analysis for the answers selected. Students then hold themselves accountable and set higher standards for themselves.

The underlying philosophy for a child-centered design is the philosophy of progressivism. Progressivism is a philosophy of education which targets teaching problem-solving for the students to survive in this world. "Progressivists believe that

education should focus on the whole child, rather than on the content or the teacher. This educational philosophy stresses that students should test ideas by active experimentation” (“PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION,” n.d.). Learning is rooted in the questions of learners that arise through experiencing the world. It enables students to solve problems at higher thinking levels. Progressivism promotes active and relevant learning. Students grow intellectually, personally, and emotionally based on the skills they acquire in this type of philosophy. The teacher’s role is to be the guide throughout this process just as the directress in the Montessori classroom. The teacher makes students think about their responses by asking higher order questions. Similar to the child-centered design, progressivism is based on the student’s interest which is very important.

The source for the child-centered curriculum design is the child. In a classroom, the most important person is the student. The focus should be on making sure each child is learning to their highest potential. Each child should feel the teacher really cares for them. With the child being the focus of this design, Ornstein and Hunkins say “students locate, analyze, interpret, and evaluate data in order to draw their own conclusions” (Hunkins and Ornstein, 2009, p. 47).

Leaders in the field of education for the child-centered curriculum design are John Dewey, William Kilpatrick, and Francis Parker. Dewey believed that learning should be active and also believed these experiences should help with real life scenarios. It is evident that he is an advocate for the child-centered curriculum. In addition, he helped with the progressivism movement. Dewey started what is called experiential education. William Kilpatrick shared the same views as Dewey when it came to education.

Kilpatrick also believed the students' interests and problem-solving should be the basis of the classroom. In the Biography of William Kilpatrick by Sherman and Beineke, he stated,

“Kilpatrick moved somewhat beyond Dewey, however, in the extent of his opposition to the traditional curriculum, organized in advance and presented to children in the form of fixed subject-matter. Kilpatrick's theory of learning emphasized what he called "purposeful activity" engaged in by pupils as they worked on a variety of projects” (Sherman & Beineke, 1999).

He believed all students' work should have purpose. Teaching the students the purpose behind the work they are doing will leave a long-lasting impression on the student. The students will know the importance of what they are doing. Francis Parker is also another proponent and advocate for the child-centered curriculum. Parker was also an advocate of progressivism. He believed the learner should be at the center of the classroom. Parker along with Dewey led the movement from the typical classroom (students sitting in rows) to the child-centered classroom. With Parker, children learned the alphabet by reading simple words, rather than by memorization; arithmetic by manipulating objects, rather than by dealing with abstractions; and geography by taking field trips ("Francis Parker | American educator," n.d.). He believed that this would promote accountable and responsible citizens. He believed the goal of the classroom was to create lifelong, productive learners in society.

When we look at education today, teachers teach what is on their lesson plan and they say either the students mastered it or not. However, it shouldn't be like that. Educators should motivate their students to think of how the information got there and

encourage students to ask the why behind it by activating their prior knowledge and providing them with experiences that cater to them. Students should not be penalized for not learning concepts at home when in fact concepts are supposed to be reinforced. In addition, students may have different factors and educators should seek for understanding of the child and their background. An important question stated by Kincheloe in the book *Critical Pedagogy* is, “How should teachers make use of their knowledge of a student’s background?” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 113). Teachers that understand their student’s cultural background due to their own personal experiences are more likely to be successful. Understanding a student’s background will help provide learning in the classroom that is child-centered and will also help with classroom management.

Advantages of this curriculum design. The child-centered curriculum has many advantages. A positive aspect which is very important is that in this type of curriculum, the student is the center and what drives the instruction as the teacher assists the child. “In child-centered classrooms, teachers assist and facilitate children's learning by providing them with guidance, opportunities, and encouragement to direct their own exploration of objects and academic topics, making teaching akin to a partnership between the teacher and the children” (Lerkkanen et al., 2016, p. 146). This is very important because students will then feel a sense of importance which will then lead them in taking ownership in their work. They know the teacher really cares about them and really wants them to learn. They know the teacher is using their interests to make sure they learn.

Another positive aspect in child-centered learning is that students are involved in the evaluation of their learning. They show how much they have learned through their

work and they can show you exactly what they did and why (metacognition). In an analysis of metacognition teaching strategies, Bond, Denton, and Ellis state,

“The pedagogical promise and possibilities of metacognition suggest “value-added” strategies or techniques in the sense that students might do something more than attempt to solve problems and engage in learning; they might also reflect not only on what but on the how and why of what they have learned as a result of their experiences (Ellis, 2011; Ellis, Bond, & Denton, 2012; Krathwohl, 2002; Nuckles, Hubner, Dumer, & Renkl, 2010; Wilson & Smetana, 2011).”

(Ellis, Denton, & Bond, 2014, p. 4016)

This motivates students to want to work harder because at the end of the day, they will know the value of their work. This promotes lifelong learners and problem solvers. Once they develop such skills, they will apply them to every day life. They will learn how to look at a problem from all angles and come up with the best solution.

This curriculum design also helps students express their opinions and beliefs. It helps students voice their opinion on different matters. This helps them become assertive individuals as they become adults. They learn to become expressive and defend their opinions. Teaching students to be expressive and think critically will boost their self-esteem. The students then become confident and increase their oral language vocabulary skills as they continue to practice by using it. They will know they are valued in the classroom and that their opinion counts. Students will grow up to be communicative adults and expect the same from others which in turn will make others think critically as well.

This is the curriculum that is also developmentally appropriate for Early Childhood. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and cognitive (Yates, 2000). Therefore, this type of curriculum teaches children to develop mentally, physically and emotionally which is very important in every classroom and in life.

Oracy in the Early Childhood Classroom. Oracy is defined as the ability to talk by Oracy in the Classroom: Strategies for Effective Talk (2016). In a prekindergarten classroom, one must make sure to be fostering this concept. Students should be given the opportunity to talk as often as possible so they are able to develop the skills needed to speak. An environment of questioning and discussion should be fostered in the classroom. Oracy in the Classroom provides guidelines that can be used for fostering discussions in the classroom. The guidelines are: “1) Always respect each other's ideas, 2) Be prepared to change your mind, 3) Come to a shared agreement, 4) Clarify, challenge, summarize, and build on each other's ideas, 5) Invite someone to contribute by asking a question, and 5) Show proof of listening” (Oracy in the Classroom, 2016). The last one is especially important because if you are truly listening, others will truly listen to you.

Neil Mercer states, “Our research shows that when students learn how to use talk to reason together, they become better at reasoning on their own” (Mercer, 2014). Teachers should help students develop their talk by continually providing opportunities for their students to engage in discussion.

Hands-On Learning. Well-designed, hands-on activities in the classroom foster connections to real-world situations and increase learner engagement (Chen, 2017). This

helps students become critical thinkers. Chen states, “When students make connections between the concepts in the classroom and the concepts in the real world, more parts of their brains are activated, and the knowledge gained more easily transfers to long-term memory” (2017).

“Being hands-on is especially important in the classroom because it allows students to engage in kinesthetic learning” (Think Fun, 2015). Kinesthetic learning provides students with opportunities to learn through experiences and trial and error. Think Fun (2017) states that most important, it provides educators with a unique opportunity to enrich the minds of students in new and engaging ways (Think Fun, 2017). Students will be excited to learn about the new ways they can show their learning.

The author, Katie Ash, provided us with a study concerning hands-on learning versus lecturing (2009). The study contained two groups. One group used the traditional textbook and lecture teaching style while the other learned the same thing through engineering design modules. The researchers found that the students that created the engineering designs had a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught compared to those that received the lecture (Ash, 2009). Therefore, as educators, we should make sure to provide our students with experiences that are providing a deep understanding of what is being taught. These are experiences will stay in the mind our students.

Early Childhood/Pre-K Center students use intentional manipulatives, they conduct science experiments, and also use hands-on activities to learn. Teachers learn about each student individually and use what works for each one whether it be group work, peer tutoring, differentiated instruction, or one-on-one with the teacher. It is great

for educators to see the excitement on the students' faces when they are learning by doing something they love.

The students are learning by doing (hands on learning). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states:

young children construct their knowledge and understanding of the world in the course of their own experiences, as well as from teachers, family members, peers and older children, and from books and other media. They learn from the concrete (e.g., manipulatives); they also apparently are capable of and interested in abstract ideas, to a far greater degree than was previously believed. Children take all this input and work out their own understandings and hypotheses about the world. They try these out through interactions with adults and other children, physical manipulation, play, and their own thought processes—observing what happens, reflecting on their findings, imagining possibilities, asking questions, and formulating answers. When children make knowledge their own in these ways, their understanding is deeper and they can better transfer and apply their learning in new contexts.

(NAEYC, 2009, p. 14)

Therefore, the instruction provided in an Pre-Kindergarten classroom, should help students learn concepts from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract just as Maria Montessori states.

As an educator, engaging students while challenging students academically daily and knowing they have a love for learning at the same time is a great feeling. Students

are using their own ideas. They are experimenting and working actively to come up with their answers. They are discovering as they learn and they are enjoying it since the child-centered approach caters to them. This approach involves life situations. Students are learning math, reading, science, and social studies while learning about the life they live in at the same time. If students are learning about life, it should be related to their life; therefore, teachers should know their students.

Early Childhood Classroom Environment. Schiller and Willis (2008) identified certain key points that early childhood educators should address or provide for their students in order to create equity among learners and prepare students to meet the challenges of an increasingly demanding world (Schiller and Willis, 2008). In order to identify these brain-based strategies, educators should make sure they have a safe environment for their students. Safety and well-being come before anything (Schiller and Willis, 2008). The classroom may be the only environment that the child feels safe. The physical classroom should be free of anything that could scare a child, the student's day should start with a safety ritual such as a special greeting, and students should be reminded that they are in your safekeeping, for example listening to the child when the child scared or having a rough day (Schiller and Willis, 2008). Students should know that emotions are effective tools. Schiller and Willis state that the day should be started with humor, the class should sing a few songs together, daily activities should be sequenced, learners should feel in control of their learning, educators should be proactive when it comes to student behavior, and social and emotional intelligence should be nurtured (2008). They also stress the importance of involving all the senses in learning in order for the brain to be more likely to receive and process information (build on existing knowledge); for

example, concrete materials should be used in the classroom, chants and rhymes, should be used, learning should be fun and natural (Schiller and Willis, 2008). Teaching can be broken down into small parts in order to be differentiated where necessary, students should be provided with hands-on activities providing a focus or hook to grab the children's attention, and appropriate goals should be set for each student (Schiller and Willis, 2008).

The NAEYC, National Association for the Education of Young Children, found that there are five areas of practice in order for a classroom to be developmentally appropriate for a young learner (NAEYC, 2009). The classroom setting should create a caring community of learners, teach to enhance development and learning, plan curriculum to achieve important goals, assess children's development and learning, and establish reciprocal relationships with families (NAEYC, 2009). The NAEYC states that teachers and administrators in early childhood education play a critical role in shaping the future citizenry and our democracy (2009). This is very important because for many students this is their first school experience and for many parents this is their first time having their child in school. Developing a positive developmentally appropriate environment in the classroom and positive relationships with the families of the students will help create an environment of respect between the teacher/student and the teacher/parent.

Components of Early Literacy. Young children need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing; and they need oral language to help them learn about both (Christie, Richgels, and Roskos, 2003). In this article, Christie, Richgels, and Roskos answer questions regarding what young children should

be learning before they go to kindergarten and what early literacy instruction they should receive (2003). Rich teacher talk such as engaging students in conversations using academic vocabulary, storybook reading-read alouds, phonological awareness activities such as rhyme, alliteration, and sound matching, alphabet matching, support for emergent reading and writing, shared book experiences (left to right, top to bottom, parts of a book), and integrated, content-focused activities were deemed essential early literacy teaching strategies by Christie, Richgels, and Roskos (2003). Written language is harder to learn than oral; however, they both serve real purposes in our daily lives (Christie, Richgels, and Roskos, 2003). Therefore, providing students with the essential strategies listed above, educators will foster a learning environment where students thrive to learn more. Christie, Richgels, and Roskos state that:

We must cultivate their dispositions (curiosity, desire, play) to actively seek, explore, and use books, and print. As they learn what letters look like and how they match up with phonemes, which strings of letters represent which words, and how to represent their meanings in print and retrieve others' meanings from print, they must see also how the fruits of those labors empower them by multiplying the functionality of language. (2003)

Researchers for *The Big Five for All* found that phonological awareness is an important component for our early learners to learn to read and write. Phonological Awareness refers to all aspects of sound and sound patterns which include the following skills: awareness of the sounds and sound patterns such as words, syllables, rhymes, and individual sounds, and the ability to hear, identify, make, and work with the sounds and

sound patterns of spoken language such as listening and noticing the sounds of a language and the different sound patterns (The Big Five for All, 2015). Phonological awareness is important for our young learners to be able to read and in turn become writers. Phonological Awareness can be included daily in the classroom by using songs and rhymes during transitions, using interesting picture books, emphasizing interesting, rhyming, or repeating sounds when reading using a dramatic voice and funny faces, chanting rhymes and songs, utilizing small group instruction based on students interests and needs, and keeping activities fun and engaging. (The Big Five for All, 2015).

Teacher Preparation for the Early Childhood Classroom. In a recent study conducted by the National Center on Teacher Quality, they found that teachers are not being prepared for classrooms with ethnic and socioeconomic diversity (Greenberg, McKee, & Walsh, 2013a). Teachers are entering the classrooms as first year teachers not knowing how to deal with different backgrounds; therefore, affecting classroom management as well. Teachers need to be shown real-world scenarios in order to be able to handle a real-world classroom. Teacher preparation at the University level teaches perfect world situation which in a way is deceiving. University courses do offer some Multicultural Education that includes research or possibly working with a group of students but not a classroom full of different types of students from different backgrounds. In the article, *Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools*, Sleeter states that researcher, Ahlquist, talks about a sense of urgency in preparing teachers to grapple with race with the students lack of background information about the issue (Sleeter, 2001, p. 98). Some teachers enter the classroom thinking they are ready to teach when in fact teaching constitutes not only of teaching content but learning about every individual child in the classroom

including their background. In a study conducted by Benjamin York regarding Teacher knowledge of students' skills, he found that the kindergarten teachers with high levels of knowledge of students' skills target instruction to a greater degree than other teachers and that knowledge of students' skills has a positive effect on student learning (York, B. (2014). *Know the Child: The Importance of Teacher Knowledge of Individual Students' Skills (KISS)*, n.d., p. 35).

The Learning By Doing program provides teachers with hands-on literacy activities and opportunities to practice before they go into the classroom with fellow teachers and an instructional expert. In addition, they model and learn about logical consequences rather than punishment so the teacher then begins to understand the child. "Logical consequences is a powerful way of responding to children's misbehavior that not only is effective in stopping the behavior but is respectful of children and helps them to take responsibility for their actions" ("Punishment vs. Logical Consequences | Responsive Classroom," 2011). This is considered a classroom management technique that are positive and involves getting to know the child. In addition, teachers are also provided with research from Love and Logic and Conscious Discipline to understand the root of misbehavior.

Importance of Professional Development for Educators. Effective professional development is very important in the development of teachers. As an educator, one should be a lifelong learner that wants to provide the best to their students. In the article, *Professional Development as a Critical Component of Continuing Teacher Quality*, Phillips states,

Improving teacher quality can improve learning outcomes for students according to Andrew Leigh from Australian National University (Teacher, 2007). Leigh's study, Estimating teacher effectiveness from two-year changes in student's test scores, asserts that "a teacher in the top ten percent of performance can achieve in half a year what a teacher in the bottom ten percent can achieve in a full year" (cited in Leech, p23). Some would argue that the accuracy of any study about measuring student outcomes can be rife with difficulties, with regard to accuracy, but most would surely agree that quality teachers can only improve student outcomes. Professional Development is critical for maintaining continuous improvement in teacher quality.

(Phillips, 2008, p. 37)

Therefore, student achievement also depends on the effectiveness of the teacher.

Teachers should make sure they are providing students with teaching that is challenging and inviting.

Birman, Desimone, Garet, and Porter also found that professional development correlates with student achievement. They state that, "professional development plays a key role in addressing the gap between teacher preparation and standards-based reform" (Desimone, Porter, Garet, & Birman, 2000, p. 28). They hypothesized that, "by focusing on specific mathematics and science content, by engaging teachers in active work, and by fostering a coherent set of learning experiences, a professional development activity is likely to enhance the knowledge and skills of participating teachers and improve their

classroom teaching practice. This, of course, serves the ultimate goal of improved student learning” (Desimone, Porter, Garet, & Birman, 2000, p. 29).

Birman, Desimone, Garet, and Porter also conducted a 3-year longitudinal study on the effects of professional development on teacher’s instruction along with researcher Yoon. During this study, they had a sample of 207 teachers in 30 schools. They examined the features of professional development and the effect it has on changing teaching practice. During the study, they focused on active learning, coherence, content focus, use of technology, use of higher order instructional methods, use of alternative assessment practices, and other variables. The study found that “teacher participation in professional development that focuses on a particular teaching practice predicts increased teachers’ use of that practice in their classrooms” (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002, p. 98)

With professional development, one has to take into account how adults learn. In the past, adults were taught by lecturing. This was effective for some but not all learners are auditory. Therefore, when we look at adult learning (andragogy) we have to look at the different learning styles. Palis and Quiros explained that in order for adults to learn, instructors should understand the learners’ expectations, introduce goals and objectives, and present an outline to the learners (Palis & Quiros, 2014). Instructors should encourage active learning so the participants become self-directed learners.

Culturally Responsive Teaching. In the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, Gay speaks about five major premises or assumptions that help shape the strategies proposed in order to improve the performance of underachieving students of color (Gay, 2010, p. 8). The first premise is culture. In the book, culture is defined as “a dynamic system of

social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (Gay, 2010, p. 9). As educators, we bring into the classroom environment our culture and values. We see things in our classroom based on how we were raised. However, as educators we should see that culture is all around us and our students’ cultures or backgrounds should be the core of what our teaching is based on. The second premise is that proposals for improving the achievement of students of color are doomed to failure (Gay, 2010, p. 13). Many teachers automatically label their minority students as failing based solely on their background. This is something that educators should not do and definitely not let the child sense that one feels this way. The students should feel as if their teacher is their biggest cheerleader in them succeeding in life. The third premise is many educators have good intentions regarding education and being aware of their students’ cultures. However, some educators do not actively seek to learn more about students’ cultures and how to bring about the changes that are needed in education so that it is equal among all students and they are all having the same opportunities. A fourth premise is that cultural diversity is a strength—a persistent, vitalizing force in our personal and civic lives (p. 15). With cultural diversity being a strength, we should focus on the whole child. The fifth and final premise is that scores on standardized tests and grades students receive on classroom learning tasks do not explain why they are not performing at acceptable levels (Gay, 2010, p. 17). “Simply blaming students, their socioeconomic background, a lack of interest in and of motivation for learning, and poor parental participation in the educational process is not very helpful.” (Gay, 2010, p. 17) This statement quoted is very powerful. As educators, we should think to ourselves what can we do to improve our

teaching in order to make sure we are helping all our students learn regardless of whatever their circumstances may be. As educators, we should embrace all our student's cultures and promote equity and excellence.

Gay states, "Culturally Responsive Teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them." (Gay 31) This is when one recognizes the significance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. This kind of teaching is validating. It also builds upon experiences that the child already has. Culturally responsive teachers use strategies that are tailored to each learner in the classroom. They use cultural resources to teach the child. Gay mentions that Culturally Responsive teaching is multidimensional (Gay 33). She states, "Multidimensional culturally responsive teaching encompasses curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, classroom management, and performance assessments." (Gay 33) This is a gift that several teachers are born with, some teachers develop it as they teach, and some teachers may need help in this area. As an educator, considering all the factors listed above shows parents and students that you truly care about them and their background. As a teacher, one would earn respect from the parents and students if you show them that you are honestly interested in the well-being of their child by taking into consideration the different factors that have shaped the student in your classroom into who they are.

Kincheloe hit it on the nail when he said, "A large percentage of difficulties in school results not as much from cognitive inadequacy as from socially contextual factors." (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 32) This is a powerful statement because if teachers are

aware of their student's backgrounds as stated before, they would be able to incorporate it into the subject matter. He states that this makes learning more dynamic and unpredictable (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 32).

Parental Involvement for Literacy Development in Early Learners. Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez identify the aspects of parenting that matter for children's early language and learning (2009). They found that there were three aspects that are central to children's early language and learning and they are:

(1) the frequency of children's participation in routine learning activities (e.g., shared bookreading, storytelling); (2) the quality of caregiver-child engagements (e.g., parents' cognitive stimulation and sensitivity/responsiveness); and (3) the provision of age-appropriate learning materials (e.g., books and toys). (Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez, 2009)

These are critical components for early learning for young children; however, the parental support will help increase literacy.

Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez also identified what factors predict positive parenting (2009). They found that parent's and children's characteristics determine it. The parent characteristics they were referring to were: parent age, education, income, and race/ethnicity (to name a few) have all been shown to relate to the three aspects of parenting that are central to early language and learning. An example they used was a comparison of younger mothers to older mothers, teen mothers display lower levels of verbal stimulation and involvement, higher levels of intrusiveness, and maternal speech that is less varied and complex (Tamis-Lemonda and Rodriguez, 2009). They labelled the child characteristics to be: gender and birth order (as two of many examples), have also

been linked to early measures of language and learning. An example they used was that firstborn children have slightly larger vocabularies on average than their later-born peers (Tamis-Lemonda and Rodriguez, 2009). Overall, Tamis-Lemonda and Rodriguez found that parents with more resources are able to provide positive learning experiences for their young children (2009).

Classroom Management. Wong, Wong, Rogers and Brook state that, “effective teachers view classroom management as a process of organizing and structuring classroom events for student learning” (2012, p. 60). Therefore, being organized and prepared for the day will help greatly with classroom management. They define classroom management as anything the teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that student learning can take place (Wong, Wong, Rogers, & Brooks, 2012, p. 61). They also state that at the beginning of the school year, the teachers clearly explain their organizational procedures and expectations and follow this by reviewing and reminding students of the procedures and expectations (Wong, Wong, Rogers, & Brooks, 2012, p. 62).

In a recent study regarding classroom management in the multicultural classroom, researchers found that taking into account a students’ background characteristics account for the classroom management (Twartijk, Brok, Veldmen, & Webbels, 2009, p. 459).

This goes hand in hand with cultural sensitivity and critical pedagogy. When teachers learn about their students and truly care, the students can sense it and they care in return.

English Language Learners and Oral Language Development. Antunez (2002) highlights recommendations and considerations for instruction of ELLs within each of the Reading First components. She indicates that even though these components did not originate for English Language Learners, there are considerations that can be made for

English Language Learners. The components with considerations are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary Development, Reading Fluency, and Reading Comprehension (Antunez 2002).

When looking into strengthening ESL and oral language, Farver, Lonigan, and Eppe (Farver 2009) indicated that the problems children experience in learning to read are related to the pre-literacy skills from preschool and kindergarten. In their study, there were ninety-four Spanish-speaking preschoolers randomly selected to participate in a High/Scope curriculum or the Literacy Express Preschool Curriculum. The children's oral language, and phonological awareness, and print knowledge were measured using the same assessments. The children participated in a small-group intervention by research assistants using the Literacy Express Preschool Curriculum and parallel Spanish-language versions of these activities and materials. They saw that this helped enhance the student's vocabulary.

Lugo, Jackson, and Goldstein (2010) examined English-only vocabulary instruction while bridging Spanish through a storybook reading intervention while also considering language characteristics. Twenty-two Spanish-speaking children learning English participated in the study. They either participated in word-expansions in English or English Readings with word expansions in Spanish. The findings indicated that the participants receiving the Spanish bridging improved significantly. Bridging is something that is widely used for English Language Learners especially in Dual Language classes. It has been found to be beneficial for students learning a second language.

Ardasheva and Tretter (2012) explored perceptions and use of language learning strategies among English as a Second Language teachers and English-learning students. Their sample included 651 elementary students, 275 middle students and 131 high school students and 31 elementary teachers, 11 middle school teachers, 12 high school teachers. The findings indicated there is a correlation between teacher and student strategies.

Huang's (2011) investigated the impact of content-based language instruction on English as a Foreign Language young learners. Twenty-five six-year-old students, and English native speaker ESL teacher, and a Chinese and English bilingual ESL teacher participated in the study. The findings of the study had some implications for the teachers' development by shifting the focus from form-focused to meaning-focused where they teacher would provide situations with meaning in order to develop language. This is beneficial for students because the teacher is able to build the student's background knowledge by providing the student with an experience.

Greenfader and Brouillette (2013) presented a program that integrates drama and dance to promote foundational literacy skills emphasizing on oral development of English Language Learners. Children use their own experiences to imaginatively connect with the vocabulary being taught in the classroom. The English Language Learners that participated in the study showed improvements in early literacy skills compared with their peers.

Similar to Greenfader and Brouillette, Gu believed that Foreign Languages learning was interrelated with the learner's experiences. Gu (2014) investigated the nature of language proficiency of school age English as a Foreign Language learners based on their learning experiences. Gu analyzed test performance from the TOEFL

Junior Comprehensive test for students between the ages of eleven and fifteen. Four hundred and ninety-eight participants took this pilot test. Gu investigated the distinction between academic and social language in a foreign language environment. Gu also inspected whether previously confirmed language proficiency models based on adult English Foreign Language learners are applicable to English Foreign Language learners of young ages. The findings of this study indicated that the environment, age, and language proficiency of the English Foreign Language learners are all interrelated.

Lee, Butler, and Tippins (n.d.) conducted a qualitative case study in order to gain an in-depth understanding through close examination of a specific case. The researcher conducted in depth interviews with the teacher which lasted one and a half hours long. Based on the teacher interviews the strategies recommended are: incorporate active, hands-on activities and using children's literature, consider practical approaches that will help ELLs in terms of their language development, feelings of comfort and confidence, and learning interest and motivation.

Unlike the other researchers, Harley wanted to check the possibility that listening strategies could have an effect on learning a second language. Harley (2000) conducted this study with learners of different ages to see the impact of their first language and listening. A preference was not seen when looking for differences in their second language listening strategies. Harley concluded that there may be age-related differences more in oral production strategies than in listening strategies.

When you think about strategies that help English Language Learners, these strategies can be used for all students. It is very important to take the interest of the child in order to keep them motivated in the classroom. Liyanage and Bartlett (2013) examined

the relationship between Language Learning Strategy of English Language Learners and their personality type. They found that personality traits, introversion/extroversion and neuroticism contribute to learning a second language. For example, if a student is working on their listening and speaking skills on the second language they are trying to acquire will be based on the real-life practice they are getting based on their personality outside of the classroom.

Lu and Berg (2008) also researched regarding student motivation. They researched to understand what motivates English Language Learners. The study included one-hundred and thirty-three students enrolled in Intensive English classes. The study concluded that the students were more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated. They also found that female students use strategies more frequently than male students when learning English. The researcher suggests ESL instructors should understand more about students' motivations and strategies in order to achieve better results in language learning.

In conclusion, these are all factors that research has shown contribute to the success of the students, the teachers, and the classroom. As educators, one must make sure to learn what is best for their students and engage them so that they are able to succeed. Incorporating all of what was mentioned above into one curriculum or classroom would benefit the students teachers, and all stakeholders greatly.

Chapter III

Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is for the researcher to describe the method used for this study. The researcher will go into detail regarding the research design, participant and site selection, and the different forms of data collection for this study.

Research Question

This study posed the following research questions: 1) What are teacher perceptions of the Learning By Doing Program? And 2) Do teachers feel the program provides them and the students they teach with the skills needed to be successful?

Research Design

“Qualitative research can use a variety of methods such as interviews and observations – the method you choose should be based on what you are researching and the resources you have” (“Using qualitative methods in program evaluation | Child Family Community Australia,” 2016). Qualitative Research is more about the process.

Shank and Brown use a really interesting example regarding qualitative research using a watch and an oatmeal raisin when looking at complex settings. Shank and Brown stated that the link between the ingredients and the process of using them to create an end product is much different than the link between a mechanical device and its components (Shank and Brown, p. 61). This really stands out because it was very clear in stating that qualitative research is about the process of how the oatmeal cookies came about. Several ingredients are involved in the process even though some may lose their shape, texture, or may be gone totally. However, they all contributed to the end product. This example ties

to the research in the study. The research focuses on teacher perceptions on a program (The Learning By Doing Program) being used in an Early Childhood setting. The preparation, materials, trainings, teacher feedback, and guidance were the ingredients to the end product which contributed to the success of the teachers and students that use the program.

The study used a qualitative research approach through the use of personal interviews and a focus group interview. The teachers who participated in the program participated in individual interviews and also in a focus group interview towards the end of the school year. All interviews focused on teachers' perceptions regarding the literacy component of the Learning By Doing Program.

The worldview that the research was grounded on was the constructivist worldview. This worldview applies to the research in this study and the process of the research. Creswell stated that in the constructivist world view the individual is seeking for understanding (2014, p. 6). With the research conducted, this was completed through the use of individual interviews and the focus group interview conducted. Creswell also stated that this is where the research relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied (2014, p. 6). This was completed by receiving feedback from the teachers participating in the program in order to get their point of view of what was going on in the classroom with the program that they are using.

Therefore, the study focused on teacher perceptions of the program and used a variety of data collection procedures during the course of the research. The steps and actions taken during the research process followed the procedure for qualitative research.

Participant Selection

The participants selected for this study came from a convenience sample of the teachers currently using the *Learning By Doing Program* in their classroom. This was the second year for the program at the campus selected. All participants in the program had received the hands-on initial training in order to implement the program correctly in their classroom.

Site Selection

The site selected was a Pre-Kindergarten campus implementing the *Learning By Doing* program. As of the beginning of this research, this was the only campus that was currently using this program/curriculum in the district selected for the program.

The Pre-Kindergarten campus that participated in the study had a total of 301 students. There were several eligibility guidelines that this school and all Texas Public Schools must follow for Pre-Kindergarten enrollment and students must be four years of age by September 1st of the school year. According the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the guidelines are listed below:

- Be unable to speak and comprehend the English language
- Be educationally disadvantaged, which means a student eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program
- Be homeless, as defined by 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 1143a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child

- Be the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;
- Be the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty;
- Be in, or have been in, the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code;
- Be the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as a peace officer (3106.002), firefighter (3106.003), or emergency medical first responder (3106.004).

("Eligibility for Prekindergarten," n.d.)

In order for the students to have enrolled on this campus, they should have met one of the eligibility requirements listed. The chart below indicates the demographics of the campus that participated in the study.

Table 1

Campus Information

Category	Percentage
Total Number of Students	301
African American Percentage	53.2%
Hispanic Percentage	37.2%

Asian Percentage	0%
White Percentage	8.6%
American Indian Percentage	0%
Economically Disadvantaged Percentage	99.7%
English Language Learner Percentage	29.2%

The District

The location of the district was in a small town in East Texas that had more of a rural setting. It was comprised of 7 schools: 1 Pre-kindergarten center, 4 elementary schools, 1 junior high school, and 1 high school. The demographics for the district is listed below in the chart. This information was obtained from the district's website.

Table 2

District Population

Category	Percentage
Total Number of Students	5,349
African American Percentage	37.05%
Hispanic Percentage	35.82%
Asian Percentage	.057%
White Percentage	23.26%
American Indian Percentage	.37%
Economically Disadvantaged Percentage	68.14%
English Language Learner Percentage	BIL 9.4% ESL 7.94%

Data Collection

The data was collected through use of one-on-one interviews and a focus group interview. The interviews were completed face-to-face. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. During the interviews, fields notes were also used. Teachers also had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the program and if they found the program beneficial.

Teacher Interviews. Individual teacher interviews were conducted with a sample of three teachers. The teachers interviewed were referred to as RT, ET, and BT for the purpose of anonymity. Kvale (2006) stated that an interview has been defined as a meeting where a reporter obtains information from a person, as a meeting with another person to achieve a specific goal, and more generally, as a conversation with a purpose (p. 483). The interviews were held with a purpose in order to determine 1) teacher perceptions of the Learning By Doing program and 2) if teachers believed the program provided them and the students the skills needed to be successful?

The teachers selected participated in two individual interviews. The first interview was labeled as Part 1 and the second was labeled as Part 2. The first interview (Part 1) consisted of four questions. The responses from Part 1 determined the interview questions for the second interview (Part 2). Part 2 consisted of five questions. Both set of interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded into themes.

Focus Group Interview. Participants also participated in a focus group interview that consisted of five questions. “Focus group research is used to develop or improve products or services. The main purpose is to provide data to enhance, change or create a product or service targeted at a key customer group” (Lotich, 2011). The

focus group interview was held once in order to receive feedback from the participants with regards to the literacy component of the program.

Field Notes. Field notes were used to document interviews and the focus group session. The field notes were another form of documentation for the research.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used approach with the purpose of “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Because this was an exploratory study, the analysis was of an inductive nature, meaning that the coding schema (described below) was derived from the actual data rather than fitting the data to a pre-existing coding schema (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Lastly, because the purpose of this study was to describe teacher perceptions of the Learning by Doing Program, semantic (descriptive) themes were looked for rather than latent (interpretive) themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding for semantic themes is congruent with descriptive phenomenology’s goals of not making interpretations of the meaning of a phenomenon for research participants, but instead simply providing a rich description of the perceptions of the participants without any theorizing (Penner & McClemment, 2008).

The following steps were employed in thematic analysis:

Step 1: Understand the data. The first step in data analysis was reading and re-reading the transcripts to become familiar with the data, and this included transcribing the recorded audio (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcript was a verbatim, written representation of the interviews with care taken to include grammar that would accurately

convey the meaning of the interviewee. After the transcription was complete, the researcher read it while listening to the audio for accuracy (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 2: Initial coding. After becoming familiar with the data, the researcher systematically read the transcripts for the purpose of coding. A code is a word that captures the essence of a portion of the data (Saldaña, 2009). Because the coding methods depend on the research questions, the researcher used the Descriptive, Affective and Values Coding methods (Saldaña, 2009).

Many qualitative researchers use Descriptive Coding because of its utility for simple description of the topics in the text, which is helpful for organizing textual data into manageable chunks. Moreover, the researcher used Affective and Values Coding to code for parts of the transcripts that discuss participants' feeling, attitudes and beliefs regarding the Learning By Doing Program. The researcher coded for as many "potential themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89) as possible, and deliberately coded the surrounding area if it pertained to the data extract—each coded portion of the data—in order to give it context (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Interspersed throughout the process of coding is memo writing (Saldaña, 2009). In qualitative research, memo writing refers to the process of reflecting through writing how the codes were selected and why (Saldaña, 2009). In this study, the memos included how the researcher personally related to what the participant is describing in order to help the researcher differentiate between their own preconceived ideas, and how they are different than what the participant discussed.

Step 3: Search for themes. After reaching the point of completed written memos for how each code possibly fit under a theme, a preliminary thematic map was developed

that showed the relationship between the codes and emerging themes. While many codes were able to fit neatly under certain themes, there were certain codes that did not fit anywhere. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that these data extracts should not be discarded from analysis until the data extracts are all read under their corresponding themes.

Once the preliminary thematic map was developed, the transcripts were coded and the data extracts were grouped and linked to each code. Then, all the codes were grouped and their corresponding data extracts that fell under one theme into one excel spreadsheet in order to review the themes in the next step.

Step 4: Review the themes. There were two levels of analysis undertaken in this step. First, the coded extracts were read under each theme in order to determine if they created a coherent picture together under the assigned theme. If they did not fit, then a decision was made regarding moving them under another theme, creating another theme that fit better, or removing them from the analysis altogether (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the themes were mutually exclusive from each other with all codes under each theme logically fitting together. After all the themes were reviewed, all the transcripts were read again in order to ensure that the themes did in fact fit the data, and also to correctly code any parts of the data that had not been captured initially (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 5: Name and define themes. After the data was categorized, attention was turned to renaming the themes by reading the data extracts under each theme and a “detailed narrative” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) was developed that described how the essence of this theme contributed to the overall story that the data is presenting. The

renamed themes represented the content more accurately and contributed to the formulation of writing up the results in the next step.

Step 6: Report data findings. In this step, the detailed narratives that were written separately for each theme were combined and streamlined in order to tell the full story that the data revealed. Special care was taken to report each theme in a logical, narrative flow, and examples were provided from the data that supported the themes. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) caution that simply reporting what was found is not enough. Even for data analysis that focuses on semantic themes rather than latent themes (interpretive), there should be an “analytic narrative” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93) that explains the findings. That is, there is a certain level of interpretation included in this section that explained what these findings meant in relation to the research question and also, what the implications were.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The most important part of assuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is to ensure credibility (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, while I was developing the research questions and the interview questions, I consulted on several occasions with experienced researchers in order to ensure that both my research questions and interview questions were measuring what I intended to measure. In order to minimize the participants’ discomfort, I built rapport with the participants when they were interviewed. I shared information with them about my background and how that had inspired me to understand how to help educators in this field.

Regarding dependability, I built into my data analysis plan the use of memo writing, which allowed me to actively record throughout the process so that I could report

how I decided upon each code and theme (Shenton, 2004). Memo writing was also useful for ensuring the confirmability of the study because I discussed my preconceptions and how they differ from what the participant reported because this type of reflective writing has been identified as one of the most essential ways to guard against biased findings (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability—the extent to which these findings can be transferred to other settings—must be clearly delineated when reporting findings. As other qualitative researchers have noted, it is important to clearly describe the “boundaries of the study” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72) by discussing which organizations were involved in the recruitment of the sample, the criteria used to recruit the purposive sample, the data collection methods, the number and length of each interview, and the length of time taken to recruit and interview from start to finish (Shenton, 2004). In the data analysis plan, I have reported the organization from which I recruited, the sampling criteria, and the data collection methods.

Triangulation is one method for increasing validity of findings, through deliberately seeking evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing findings from those different sources. For example, if you have done interviews and focus groups, compare the findings from each. If they coincide, that strengthens our faith in having identified important issues.

(Patton & Cochran, 2002)

In qualitative research, the researcher is the data analysis tool. Therefore, personal biases are a real threat to the confirmability of the findings. A stronger research design would have included a research team which would enable discussion and consensus

(triangulation) of the codes and themes and could provide checks and balances for each of the team members. Since this is not possible for this study, I used triangulation, consult with research mentors, and confirmability of my findings with existing literature.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings for this study. This chapter will go into depth regarding characteristics of the teachers that participated in the study, the Learning By Doing Program, the procedures for the research, and the summary of the themes derived from the data analysis.

Characteristics of Teachers

The teachers selected for the study were using the Learning By Doing Program in their classroom. All the teachers selected were part of the initial hands-on training of the materials. The teachers were randomly selected through a convenience sample. The teachers selected were a Bilingual teacher, a Regular education teacher, and an ESL teacher. For the purpose of anonymity, we will not use names throughout this report. The Bilingual teacher will be referred to as BT, and Regular education teacher will be referred to as RT, and the ESL teacher will be referred to as ET. The table below indicates the teacher, their gender, and the program they teach.

Table 3

Participant Information

Teacher	Gender	Program
BT	Female	Bilingual Instruction
ET	Female	English as a Second Language Instruction
RT	Female	Regular Instruction

School Year Training

After the two-day training, the presenters helped the teachers set up the classroom in order to show the teachers how to be intentional when setting up their room. During the classroom setup, the teachers learned about the why behind the classroom setup. The teachers learned that classroom set up contributes to order, cleanliness, and also positive classroom management. The teachers also learned about being intentional with setting everything up from left to right, top to bottom because then that will come natural to the students when learning how to read. It is always important for the teachers (the participants in the study) to know the reason behind why certain things are done a certain way. When they are provided with the logical reasoning behind what is done, it makes sense to them and they are also able to see when the students are working/learning as well.

The presenters also visited the campus throughout the school year to provide professional development refreshers to the teachers. During this time, the teachers were able to voice any concerns so the presenters are able to address the concerns. The teachers were also provided time to practice during the professional development as well. As they presented, they were provided with feedback from the presenters.

During the campus visits throughout the school year, the presenters also observed the classrooms to provide the teachers with feedback regarding their instruction. The presenters used Domains 2 and 3 of the Danielson framework for classroom observations. Domain 2 is Classroom Environment and Domain 3 is Instruction. During observations,

the presenter wrote specific evidence associated with the two domains. The evidence collected during the observations fell under the following categories:

Domain 2: Classroom Environment includes Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, Establishing a Culture for Learning, Managing Classroom Procedures, Managing Student Behavior, and Organizing Physical Space. Domain 3: Instruction includes Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness.

("Framework | Danielson Group," n.d.)

The feedback provided is free of bias and interpretation because the observers stated the facts (evidence statements) of what was seen during the observations.

Procedures

For this study, three participants were interviewed on their perceptions of the literacy component of the Learning By Doing Program. The participants participated in individual interviews and in a focus group interview. The information gathered from the interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed through the use of memos. For purposes of anonymity, the Bilingual teacher was referred to as BT, the Regular education teacher was referred to as RT, and the ESL teacher was referred to as ET. All participants signed the consent forms before participating in the Research process. Furthermore, the Research process began after IRB approval from the University of Houston.

Summary of Themes

The themes emerged from the semi-structured individual interviews and the focus group interview conducted with the three teachers who participated in the study. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were read again while listening to the audio in order to check for accuracy. The research brought about the following themes based on the analysis of the responses of the participants: 1) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for students learning letter knowledge and letter sounds; 2) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt the program assisted in creating readers in the classroom; 3) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the program assisted in creating writers in the classroom; 4) Teachers felt that the students using the Learning By Doing Program became independent learners; and 5) Teachers felt that the organization of the Learning By Doing Program, which included, trainings, materials, and the continued support assisted them to be more successful in the classroom.

Theme 1: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for students learning letter knowledge and letter sounds.

Data Example(s)

The participants felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for the learning of letter sounds and letter knowledge. When asked to explain how participant RT felt the students benefit from the learning materials, the participant stated, “Since there's a

lot of repetition, they catch on a lot faster after the first couple of letter sounds. After about six, the first four weeks they start catching on and all I have to do is review those first six letters” (personal communication, 2018). Participant ET felt that the Learning By Doing program helped the participant be successful in the classroom. Participant ET stated, “And it helps the kids, you know, they're more familiar because once we've been through the first three letters, they know what to expect. They know what lessons coming next and what they need to do to, to work on it in their stations, on their own” (personal communication, 2018) The repetition of the program helped the students know what to expect as the lessons became progressively harder.

When asked if the program created independent learners and if the program impacted knowledge skills and dispositions. The participants stated the following: “What you say, student repetition, repetition. They continue making by themselves to understand.” (BT, personal communication, 2018) and “I also feel it's very self-corrective once they get the repetition down and they figured out there listening for that first sound” (RT, personal communication, 2018). Therefore, the participants felt that the repetition of the program also helped the students with self-corrections. Students were familiar with how to use the materials independently and correct their own work without too much interference from the teachers.

Finally, when asked how the program impacts literacy skills, participant RT stated, “Okay. How does it impact? It's very repetitive so they catch on to the letters a lot faster after about the fourth week and it does teach them to read as ET said” (personal communication, 2018).

Theme 1 Summary

For every new concept (letter knowledge, letter sounds, decoding, and more) taught, the Learning By Doing program provided the same process. Therefore, students were familiar with the process and only had to focus on the new concept being taught which is what is called isolating the difficulty. “Isolation of difficulty is an educational technique that involves removing unnecessary obstacles, allowing the child to focus on and gain mastery of just one difficult element” (“Why is Isolation of Difficulty Important in a Montessori Classroom? - Chesapeake Montessori School," 2018).

In the Learning By Doing Program, the classroom is to follow a lesson sequence for 10 days for the new concepts taught. There was a sequence that was followed that the students become familiar with. The students always began with sandpaper letters by tracing them as they say the sound. They then moved on to the small sand paper letters with three different letter sounds being taught. They were then taught what is called a three-period lesson with the three different letter sounds. The three-period lesson is comprised of three phases: naming (This is...), recognizing (Show me the...), and recalling (What is this?). “The three-period lesson was developed by Edouard Seguin, a French physician who worked with special needs children in France and the United States during the late 19th century. He discovered ways to increase children's cognitive abilities and believed in the importance of developing their self-reliance and independence” (“Three-Period Lesson - Montessori Services," n.d.). They then moved on to initial sound to object matching (concrete), initial sound to picture matching (abstract), initial sound bingo, initial sound puzzle, uppercase and lowercase matching, spelling with letters of the alphabet taught, and sentence structure. This process was followed for teaching letter sounds in groups of three.

The focus of theme 1 answered both research questions because the participants' perceptions were that the repetition of the program helped students learn letter knowledge and letter sounds. Therefore, teachers felt the program provided them and their students with the skills needed to be successful in the classroom.

Many of the activities provided repetitively focused on phonological awareness. Phonological Awareness can be included daily in the classroom by using songs and rhymes during transitions, using interesting picture books, emphasizing interesting, rhyming, or repeating sounds when reading using a dramatic voice and funny faces, chanting rhymes and songs, utilizing small group instruction based on students' interests and needs, and keeping activities fun and engaging. (The Big 5, 2015). Therefore, as teachers these activities should be provided to students on a regular basis.

Theme 2: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt the program assisted in creating readers.

Data Example(s):

The participants liked that the Learning By Doing program provided them with a process to correctly teach pre-reading skills which in turn led them to have readers. Participant RT stated, "It has really advanced my students to where they, not all of them are reading, but most of them can decode a word and put it together" (personal communication, 2018). Participant ET stated, "I liked that the kids actually do learn to read and they, I've had a lot of students that now can read the sight words and the sentences, the silly sentences that we break apart and then they put it back together and

they really liked that part because the, it's helped them to compose sentences” (personal communication, 2018).

Participant BT also felt that indirectly helped prepare the students in other pre-kindergarten subject areas. The participant stated, “They make connections and they when reading books in read alouds we doing letter sounds and words” (personal communication, 2018). Participant BT expanded further by stating that when students are working on Science, they are making connections with the vocabulary words they have been exposed to during the Learning By Doing component.

When the participants were asked how they felt the Learning By Doing program helps them as teachers be successful in the classroom, the participants stated: “I have more readers this year than I have ever had leaving my class” (RT, personal communication, 2018) and “I can show the kids how they start with a few, start with the letter to reading. And I can see this year how the kids keep growing in reading because we start with zero and how hold the pencil to reading.” (BT, personal communication, 2018) Not only did participants feel that they were successful as teachers but they felt their students were successful as well. Participant RT stated:

Everything that we do is based on letter and letter sound knowledge. Even later on in life when you're taking a math test or a science test, you're having to read the questions and if you cannot, if you don't know your letters and letter sounds, you're not going to be able to know the words, if you don't know the words, you can't read it. If you don't, if you can't read it, you can't answer the questions, so it gives them that strong, strong, strong foundation.”

(RT, personal communication, 2018)

The participants' also stated that the program taught specific skill to the students for reading such as decoding skills, beginning sounds, ending sounds, sight words, blending, and rhyming (ET, personal communication, 2018). BT also stated that the program specifically teaches students how to identify words and read (personal communication, 2018). The participant also mentioned that many students are four and five years old and it is their first time in school but that they can do it (personal communication, 2018). BT explained further that the students benefit from the instructional learning materials by recognizing letters and words. The participant stated, "They can recognize the letters the word, how the word starts and the sound without pictures and they start reading words. That's what we are doing now. They can read words now" (personal communication, 2018). ET also felt that the program impacts literacy skills by teaching them to read and to become readers (personal communication, 2018).

Theme 2 Summary

After analyzing the data, it became very evident that the participants all felt that the program was helping their students learn to read. They felt that it taught the students beginning sounds, ending sounds, decoding, and blending which then helped the students become readers. One participant specifically stated (shown above) that the curriculum helps students be successful because it is giving them a strong foundation.

Research shows that teaching letter sounds is crucial for students to learn how to read. Light and McNaughton stated some information that is helpful for students with disabilities but this is something that has applied to all students:

Knowledge of letter-sound correspondences is essential in reading and writing. In order to read a word: the learner must recognize the letters in the word and associate each letter with its sound. In order to write or type a word: the learner must break the word into its component sounds and know the letters that represent these sounds. Knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and phonological awareness skills are the basic building blocks of literacy learning. These skills are strong predictors of how well students learn to read.

("Letter-Sound Correspondences: Literacy Instruction for Individuals with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, and Other Disabilities," n.d.)

The Learning By Doing Program followed a process that started with beginning sounds and eventually lead to decoding and reading. The participants felt that this process has benefitted their students with learning how to read.

The focus of theme 2 answered both research questions because the participants perceptions were that the program assisted in creating readers in the classroom. Therefore, teachers felt the program provided them and their students with the skills needed to be successful in the classroom. One of the participants stated,

I liked that the kids actually do learn to read and they, I've had a lot of students that now can read the sight words and the sentences, the silly sentences that we break apart and then they put it back together and they really liked that part because the, it's helped them to compose sentences.

(ET, personal communication, 2018)

The program provided instructional materials that allowed the students to master the pre-reading skills in order to become readers. Christie, Richgles, and Roskos (2003) deemed essential early literacy teaching strategies as rich teacher talk such as engaging students in conversations using academic vocabulary, storybook reading-read alouds, phonological awareness activities such as rhyme, alliteration, and sound matching, alphabet matching, support for emergent reading and writing, shared book experiences (left to right, top to bottom, parts of a book), and integrated, content-focused. Therefore, with the exposure of these activities to students and the provision of support needed by teachers, students were successful in the classroom as readers.

Theme 3: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the program assisted in creating writers.

Data Example(s):

When asked to explain how the Learning By Doing Program indirectly helped in other Pre-Kindergarten subject areas, participant RT stated that the program helped to get the children to think about writing in the other subject areas (personal communication, 2018). Students were able to apply the literacy skills to writing in other subject areas. Also, when asked to state something they like about the program, participant ET stated, “it's helped them to compose sentences, to be able to write their own and to understand what makes sense because they'll laugh and say that doesn't make any sense when it's all out of order and then they can put it back together and they understand about capitalization. They understand about punctuation” (personal communication, 2018).

Participant BT stated that it helps students be successful in the classroom. The participant stated:

Now we write in sentences and they choose one and what they want to write about the picture and make a sentence. We doing now that and they can write it pretty good too because they know the, the letters without pictures and we do pictures without words and they can make their word. The students will be ready for Kindergarten because they are doing a lot of writing and in sentences.

(personal communication, 2018)

Theme 3 Summary

The participants felt as the program was impacting writing. Students that were able to decode were now writing. One participant stated, “they can write independently now without help” (BT, personal communication, 2018). In the article, *The Relationship Between Reading and Writing*, the author states, “reading affects writing and writing affects reading. According to recommendations from the major English/Language Arts professional organizations, reading instruction is most effective when intertwined with writing instruction and vice versa. Research has found that when children read extensively they become better writers” (“relationship between reading and writing,” 2010). Therefore, the Learning By Doing targeted this by including writing into the curriculum. Once students mastered the content from the material, they moved on to writing which is considered an extension of the lesson.

The focus of theme 3 answered both research questions because the participants perceptions were that the program helped create writers in the classroom. Therefore,

teachers felt the program provided them and their students with the skills needed to be successful in the classroom. Young children need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing; and they need oral language to help them learn about both (Christie, Richgels, and Roskos, 2003). With the Learning By Doing Program, students are taught everything from left to right, top to bottom. With the exposure and the writing extensions of the program, students were able to learn the skills necessary for writing. Therefore, students were successful in the classroom as writers.

Theme 4: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing program felt that the students using the program became independent learners.

Data Example(s):

When asked how the students benefit from using the learning materials, one participant stated, “After about six, the first four weeks they start catching on and all I have to do is review those first six letters that we do and they're, they catch on so much faster as to using the materials themselves” (RT, personal communication, 2018). When asked about the program helping the students be successful, participant ET stated:

Well, they're successful because they become independent learners and they are more responsible for their learning and taking care of the materials and doing the lessons on their own once they're in their workstations because I have the one that is learning by doing and where they actually do use the materials on their own.

(ET, personal communication, 2018)

ET also stated, “They become independent learners because they actually have to do it. I mean it's not just the teacher doing everything. The teacher models and then they have to do it on their own basically or with their partner” (personal communication, 2018). BT added by stated that the program helps makes students independent as students are writing independently without any help (personal communication, 2018).

Therefore, the participants in the study felt as if the experiences they were providing their students with were cultivating independence because the students were doing the work themselves. The program encouraged teachers to work with students in small group using a flexible grouping planner and to work with each student at their own pace. Therefore, each student was working on what they individually need. This helped the child feel successful.

Theme 4 Summary

According to Wilson and Conyers, there are three strategies that can be used to guide students to be independent learners ("Guiding Students to Be Independent Learners | Edutopia," n.d.). The first strategy is to inspire student motivation for learning. They say this can be done by guiding students to how they will feel when they learn something new. In the Learning By Doing Program, the presenter lets the participants know that when they are presenting new material, they should let the students know that they are learning something really exciting. The presenter always shows enthusiasm while presenting in order to model to the teachers the importance of enthusiasm so students are motivated to do the work.

Wilson and Conyers stated that the second strategy is to “coach students to set goals and develop a plan for learning” (Guiding Students to Be Independent Learners | Edutopia," n.d.). With the Learning By Doing program, the teachers use a flexible grouping planner when working with small groups. This is where the plan for each child is developed based on their educational needs.

Wilson and Conyers stated that the third strategy is to “teach students to self assess” (Guiding Students to Be Independent Learners | Edutopia," n.d.). They state that this can be done by having students pair up and take turns sharing what they have learned. They say this gives students opportunities to learn from each other. One participant in the study stated:

They can share too. They, sometimes I make the get into groups of two and they say what is this. They asking questions together and they talking about no, this is not here, you know, they, they can help each other. They talk more. They can talk more and resolve situations too.

(BT, personal communication, 2018)

Another participant stated, “They can learn from each other. Kids often learn best from each other and I have my children partnered, so with it like a high to a medium low and a medium high to a low, so therefore they're talking to each other and that one he's catching on” (RT, personal communication, 2018). Therefore, according to the participants in the study, the Learning By Doing Program allows for this.

The focus of theme 4 answered both research questions because the participants perceptions were that the students became independent learners through use of the

program. Therefore, teachers felt the program provided them and their students with the skills needed to be successful in the classroom. One of the participants stated:

Well, they're successful because they become independent learners and they are more responsible for their learning and taking care of the materials and doing the lessons on their own once they're in their workstations because I have the one that is learning by doing and where they actually do use the materials on their own.

(ET, personal communication, 2018)

With the instructional materials of the program being hands-on and student centered, the students were able to work independently and at their own pace. This allowed for them to learn as the teacher plays the role of a facilitator or guide.

Student-centered instruction [SCI] is an instructional approach in which students influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. This learning model places the student (learner) in the center of the learning process. The instructor provides students with opportunities to learn independently

("Investigating teachers' views of student-centred learning approach," n.d., p. 143)

Therefore, students were successful in the classroom as independent learners.

Theme 5: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the organization of the program, which included, trainings, materials, and the continued support assisted them to be more successful in the classroom.

Data Example(s):

Participants felt the organization of the program provided them with something to do every day. Participant BT stated, “You have something to do every day. It’s very organized. I like because every day you have the stuff to do in your class. That’s what most I like. Yes.” (personal communication, 2018) when asked to tell something that they liked about the Learning By Doing program. Participant ET felt this was beneficial in being successful in the classroom. Participant ET stated, “It’s very helpful. Um, I mean because the lessons are laid out in their scripted and it goes in order you know, in an order to where you know, what you’re going to do, you know, what order the lessons are in, you know, what you need to say and do and what materials you need to have” (personal communication, 2018). ET further explained how the initial training was helpful in being prepared to deliver literacy lessons by saying “It was helpful to see it modeled and to also get some ideas for centers that you could do work stations to carry out, go further, I guess, and have the kids do more on their own and extend the lesson” (personal communication, 2018).

Theme 5 Summary

According to the participant’s responses, they felt as if the lesson layout was beneficial because the lessons were laid out and the program provides them with something to do daily. The program provides them with the lesson and the materials needed for the lesson. This helps them be successful in the classroom by being prepared. Classroom preparation benefits many areas in the classroom including classroom management. Oliver and Reschly state that:

Instruction that is effective in encouraging high rates of academic engagement and on-task behavior is characterized by several key features (Camine, 1976):

- Instructional material that students find educationally relevant.
- A planned, sequential order that is logically related to skill development at students' instructional level.
- Frequent opportunities for students to respond to academic tasks. For example, the use of response cards, choral responding, and peer tutoring are ways to increase such opportunities (Christie & Schuster, 2003; Greenwood, Delquadri, & Hall, 1989; Lambert, Cartledge, Heward, & Lo, 2006).
- Guided practice.
- Immediate feedback and error correction.

(Oliver & Reschly, 2007, p. 5)

The focus of theme 5 answered both research questions because the participants' perceptions were that the organization of the program as far as the initial training, the materials, and the continued support helped them be more successful in the classroom. Therefore, teachers felt the program provided them and their students with the skills needed to be successful in the classroom. One of the participants stated, "You have something to do every day. It's very organized. I like because every day you have the stuff to do in your class." (BT, personal communication, 2018). Another participant stated, "It's very helpful. Um, I mean because the lessons are laid out in their scripted and it goes in order you know, in an order to where you know, what you're going to do, you

know, what order the lessons are in, you know, what you need to say and do and what materials you need to have.” (ET, personal communication, 2018).

The Learning By Doing program also focused on teacher preparation in the classroom so everything was prepared and the students walked in to a classroom that is inviting, attractive, and ready for them to learn. Not only did the program focus on the environment but when the lessons were being modeled, the presenters provided the teachers with real life scenarios where something can go wrong. In a recent study conducted by the National Center on Teacher Quality, they found that teachers are not being prepared for classrooms with ethnic and socioeconomic diversity (Greenberg, McKee, & Walsh, 2013a). Therefore, the presenters showed them during the initial training that not everything is going to be perfect in the classroom and that they should be prepared for situations as they occur. The presenters walked them through scenarios of how a student may react with the materials, procedures, and more.

Through the responses of the participants, it was evident to that the Learning By Doing Program provided them training on not only the importance of a prepared environment, but the presenters helped them organize their environment (the instructional materials) in order for the participants to provide a prepared environment to their students.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in only school in a specific school district. The findings cannot be generalized to other Early Childhood campuses. Other limitations were the fidelity to which the teachers follow the *The Learning By Doing Program*, the different

levels of ability of the teachers based on their years of experience, and the positive influence of school leaders in the school where it was conducted.

Summary

Through the responses of the participants, it was evident that the Learning By Doing Program was beneficial to them in the classroom. The program not only provided them with a curriculum but it also provided them with materials, step-by-step instructions, immediate feedback and an instructional coach for the teachers to contact in case of any concerns throughout the use of the program. The teachers were able to use the curriculum in the classroom and make it their own.

Chapter V

Summary, Implications, and Further Research

Summary of Study

Early Childhood education is very important as it sets the foundation for the students' education. As an administrator, I want to make sure that I am setting a strong foundation for the students in Pre-Kindergarten so they are able to continue excelling as they are promoted grade levels. In order to do so, teachers must be well informed and trained to provide students with a rich curriculum that is able to create independent learners that are successful in the classroom. In an effort to complete this, the Learning By Doing Program was created and implemented in the Early Childhood center that participated in the study. The participants were provided with training and instructional materials to be used in the classroom. The presenters for this program modeled how to use the instructional materials. They modeled for the participants as if the participants were the students in the classroom. The participants then had the opportunity to practice with the materials while receiving feedback from the presenters. The training including information for the teachers from setting up the classroom, modeling lessons, hands-on use with the instructional materials, and small group instruction.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of teacher perceptions of the Learning By Doing Program. Specifically, teacher perceptions regarding the success of teachers and students in the classroom. The data was collected qualitatively and analyzed for recurring patterns or themes.

Review of Findings

The findings of the study showed credibility to the effect that the Learning By Doing Program has on teacher and student success. The responses from the participants helped develop recurring themes. The themes are: 1) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for students learning letter knowledge and letter sounds; 2) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt the program assisted in creating readers in the classroom; 3) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the program assisted in creating writers in the classroom; 4) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the students using the program became independent learners; and 5) Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the organization of the program, which included, trainings, materials, and the continued support assisted them to be more successful in the classroom.

The participants felt that the program was preparing their students to be successful and ready for beyond Kindergarten. When a participant was asked how they felt the Learning By Doing program helped them be successful in the classroom, the participant stated, “They (the students) are ready for more than just Kindergarten. They are beyond ready for Kindergarten.” (RT, personal communication, 2018). Participants felt that the program exposed students to the skills necessary for pre-reading and assisted in developing readers in the classroom. Participants also felt that the program was impacting other subject areas because students knew the basic skills necessary in order to read and write in other subject areas. Participants also felt that students were able to

make connections with the vocabulary taught in the Learning By Doing program and other subjects.

Some participants felt some drawbacks to the program initially. For example, one participant stated that she felt overwhelmed the first time she saw the program and all the materials. Another participant did not feel as she would be able to implement it correctly in the classroom. However, once the participants were trained and began to manipulate the materials, they stated they saw the benefits in the program and implementation was not difficult.

Overall, the participants liked the program because it helped them and the students be successful in the classroom. The layout of the lessons were provided to the teachers and the teachers felt that they were able to follow the sequence provided. The teachers also felt that the materials helped the students be successful because it was self-corrective. Therefore, the teacher's role in the classroom was that of a facilitator as the students work independently.

Implications for Educators

Teachers should strive to provide students with lessons that are meeting their needs. Teachers should strive to learn more about their students' backgrounds, learning styles, and their level of performance to make sure that they are teaching the potential of the student. It is essential for teachers to provide students with a rigorous curriculum and to provide students with small group instruction based on their needs. Teachers cannot continue to teach as if everyone learns the same way. Instruction should be tailored to the students.

It is essential for classrooms to offer students rigorous instruction where students are the leaders and the teacher is facilitating their learning. The instruction should be hands-on where students are able to be the ones that are “doing” instead of just listening to what their teachers are saying. Students are having time to practice which allows them to experiment and therefore, learn from experimentation.

Implications for School/Instructional Leaders

School Leaders should support teachers and students by providing them with training (teacher preparation) and instructional hands-on materials that will positively affect student success.

Improving teacher quality can improve learning outcomes for students according to Andrew Leigh from Australian National University (Teacher, 2007). Leigh’s study, Estimating teacher effectiveness from two-year changes in student’s test scores, asserts that “a teacher in the top ten percent of performance can achieve in half a year what a teacher in the bottom ten percent can achieve in a full year” (cited in Leech, p23). Some would argue that the accuracy of any study about measuring student outcomes can be rife with difficulties, with regard to accuracy, but most would surely agree that quality teachers can only improve student outcomes. Professional Development is critical for maintaining continuous improvement in teacher quality.

(Phillips, 2008, p. 37)

The staff development for teachers should be hands-on so they are able to work with it before teaching the students how to work it. The program is called Learning By Doing because the individual that is “doing” is the individual that is “learning”.

By examining the teacher perceptions in this study, the evidence indicated that the teachers felt successful using the program due to the modeling of the program during the initial training. The participants felt they were ready to present the lessons that were modeled to the students.

The participants also felt that the instructional hands-on material from the program helped their students learn. “Being hands-on is especially important in the classroom because it allows students to engage in kinesthetic learning” (Think Fun, 2015). Kinesthetic learning provides students with opportunities to learn through experiences and trial and error. Students should be provided with hands-on activities providing a focus or hook to grab the children’s attention, and appropriate goals should be set for each student (Schiller and Willis, 2008). From the evidence gathered, the participants felt that the instructional hands-on materials helped their students become readers, writers, and ready for more than Kindergarten. Participant BT stated, “We doing a lot of writing too and in sentences using the centers right now. And I have students they can bring out and they be ready, ready for Kindergarten” (personal communication, May 2018). Participant RT stated, “They’re decoding, as ET said, decoding the word. Umm. Most, I’m going to say 90 percent of my students know the minimum amount of letters for pre-k to be completed, but most of mine are decoding words. Ninety five percent” (personal communication, May 2018)/

It is also essential for school leaders to monitor instruction. Leaders should check weekly lesson plans and small group instruction documentation. This is important to know that teachers are tailoring instruction to each child in the classroom. By checking small group instruction documentation, school leaders make sure that teachers are

planning for the success of each child individually. The documentation will also show if students are growing. If students are not growing, school leaders are able to have critical conversations with the teacher to see exactly what is being done to help the student grow.

Researcher's Suggestions for Improving the Program

The program can be improved by creating a component for administrators/instructional leaders as well. This way the administrators/instructional leaders are also immersed in the program and helpful to provide assistance to teachers as needed. Additionally, administrators/instructional specialists would be able to provide insight to teachers as far as changes that should be made in the classroom based on the groups of students' independent work level.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to include different pacing charts based on students' needs as a guide for teachers. For example, include a slower and faster pacing chart for students based on their independent work level for small group instruction. Sometimes, teachers feel that they need a guide to know which direction to take especially when working with small groups in order to better help the students.

Further Research

For further research, it would be beneficial to look at the specific data in the classroom in comparison from beginning of the year to the end of the year using the tool the campus uses for testing. It would also be great to include data comparisons from the years that the campus did not use the program to now that the campus is using the program. In addition, it would be beneficial to conduct a study of the program with more participants while incorporating classroom observations. Furthermore, it would also be beneficial to conduct a program evaluation of the Learning By Doing program.

It would also be beneficial to conduct a quantitative analysis as further research. The formal assessment (Circle Progress Monitoring) used on the campus can be used to indicate growth and target specific areas of growth.

The Texas School Ready child progress monitoring tool, the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System (formerly known as C-PALLS+), is a user-friendly, technology-driven tool that enables teachers to assess a children's progress in a particular skill area almost instantly. This simplistic yet reliable data collection prompts teachers to focus on lessons that target their students' least developed skill areas.

("CIRCLE Progress Monitoring | The Children's Learning Institute," 2017)

Therefore, a quantitative study can be conducted focusing on this assessment.

Furthermore, a longevity study following the students from Kindergarten through third grade in order to see the performance of the students who started their educational career with the use of The Learning By Doing program. The study should include comparison of student work from beginning of the year to the end of the year and student portfolios that showcase student work and writing samples.

Conclusions

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of the Learning By Doing program and if the program provides them and the students they teach with the skills needed to be successful. Individual and focus group interviews were completed in order to gain an understanding of the teachers' perceptions. The information from this study is useful as school leaders think about how they want to impact student achievement based on teachers' perception. From the findings of the study, the teachers felt that it was

beneficial to be provided with a hands-on training before the school year starts where the expectations are modeled. Therefore, they are able to implement the curriculum correctly in the classroom and the student academic achievement will be positively impacted. Also, the teachers felt that the hands-on instructional material provided for the students helped their students learn. Therefore, this information is useful for school leaders and administrators as they plan the use of instructional materials in an early childhood classroom. Administrators should act as Instructional Leaders on campus with the selection of materials and the guidance/feedback they provide for their teachers. In conclusion, school leaders should take into account teachers perceptions regarding the types of trainings and programs that are used on campus in order to contribute to student success.

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Appendix A

Approval from the Division of Research Institutional Review Boards

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

March 13, 2018

Aylin Martinez

amartinez2@uh.edu

Dear Aylin Martinez:

On March 14, 2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Teacher Perceptions of the Learning By Doing Program
Investigator:	Aylin Martinez
IRB ID:	STUDY00000880
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Subjects Training Certificate, Category: Other; • Second Individual Teacher Interview Questions, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Letter of Permission from the District, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Initial Individual Teacher Interview Questions, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Updated 3.14.2018 HRP Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Aylin Martinez Written Consent, Category: Consent Form; • Email Wording for Teachers, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Focus Group Interview Questions, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.);
Review Category:	Expedited

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

Committee Names:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from March 13, 2018 to March 14, 2019, inclusive.

To ensure continuous approval for studies with a review category of "Committee Review" in the above table, you must submit a continuing review with required explanations by the deadline for the February 2019 meeting. These deadlines may be found on the compliance website (<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/>). You can submit a continuing review by navigating to the active study and clicking "Create Modification/CR."

For expedited and exempt studies, a continuing review should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted on or before March 13, 2019, approval of this study expires and all research (including but not limited to recruitment, consent, study procedures, and analysis of identifiable data) must stop. If the study expires and you believe the welfare of the subjects to be at risk if research procedures are discontinued, please contact the IRB office immediately.

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab. Attached are stamped approved consent documents. Use copies of these documents to document consent.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cpbs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cpbs/>

Appendix B

District Consent to Participate in Study

Independent School District

• Fax: () • Website: .com

November 15, 2017

To whom it may concern,

I am granting permission for Ms. Aylin Martinez to conduct research in ISD only for the purpose of obtaining information for her dissertation. The data collected may not be used for any other purpose.

Sincerely,

Superintendent ISD

Appendix C

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

- ☐ *I have read the consent information and agree to take part in the research.*

Signature of subject	Date
Printed name of subject	
Signature of person obtaining consent	Date
Printed name of person obtaining consent	

In the future, our research team may be interested in contacting you for other research studies we undertake, or to conduct a follow-up study to this one. There is never any obligation to take part in additional research. Do we have permission to contact you to provide additional information?

- ☐ *Yes*
☐ *No*

Appendix D

Individual Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- Tell me something you like about the Learning By Doing program?
- Tell me something you would like to improve from the Learning By Doing Program?
- Explain how you feel that the summer training helped you be prepared delivering literacy lessons to young students?
- Explain how you believe that this training indirectly helped you in other Prekindergarten subject areas? Why or why not?
- Explain how you feel the students benefit from using the learning materials?
- What specific academic skills does it help teach in the classroom?
- What specific social skills does it help teach in the classroom?
- How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps you be successful in the classroom?
- How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps your students be successful in the classroom?

Appendix E

Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus Group Interview Questions

- How does the program impact literacy skills?
- How did the program create independent learners? Impact knowledge skills and dispositions?
- What impact does the program for you as a teacher?
- What are you using/implementing that you learned during the 2 day training in the summer?
- What impact does the program have in helping students be ready for kindergarten?

Appendix F

Description of the Learning By Doing Program

Description of the Learning By Doing Program

This information was taken from the Learning By Doing Handbook.

2 Day Summer Training

The training begins in the summer preparing teachers for two days. The first day begins with the theory and best practices focusing on the classroom environment (setting-up classrooms and furniture), and how to set it up student workstations-the why's and why not's, developing purposeful workstations that align with an objective, classroom management research-based techniques throughout PBIS and logical consequences. The second day, teachers are able to experience being a "student" as they move through whole group, small group, and workstation time. Teachers are able to see how students are managed through the workstations, how workstations work, and how to successfully set-up students for success. Teachers are provided with participating in whole group and small group instruction using thinking strategies to engage all different types of learners and are able to experience how it is to differentiate instruction in small group using a flexible grouping management system where teachers are able to identify specific academic achievement for each student. After the foundation is set in prepare and managing the environment, developing purposeful and meaningful hands-on-lessons, teachers are provided with lesson presentations from the instructional coach; the teachers then take on the role of the student and experience once again how great teaching is delivered. Furthermore, teachers are able to use their LBDPD (Learning By Doing Professional Development) handbook as a reference. This is another tool teachers could reference throughout the school year as it

contains a collection of summer and yearlong training with pictures. The LBDPDP handbook, the how's and why's to set up the classroom, hands-on activities that align with Prekindergarten Guidelines, objectives to be placed at workstations, a review of Positive Behavior Initiative Support strategies, a review of thinking strategies for whole group lessons, a sample of a flexible grouping planner that differentiates instruction during workstations, how to create an objective, first week of Educational lesson plan, and tips from veteran teachers are all part of the materials given to teachers in this training. Teachers are then able to reference any of the items discussed and experienced through-out the school year. The LBDPDP handbook is a collection of artifacts and experiences through pictures. The LBDPDP handbook is given to all teachers who are participated in the training.

Appendix G

Tables with Data Example(s)

Theme 1: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the repetition of the program was beneficial for students learning letter knowledge and letter sounds.

Theme:	Interview Question(s):	Data Example(s):
Repetition of lessons is beneficial to the students learning letter sounds and letter knowledge.	Explain how you feel the students benefit from using the learning materials?	“Since there's a lot of repetition, they catch on a lot faster after the first couple of letter sounds. After about six, the first four weeks they start catching on and all I have to do is review those first six letters.” (RT, 2018)
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps you be successful in the classroom?	“And it helps the kids, you know, they're more familiar because once we've been through the first three letters, they know what to expect. They know what lessons coming next and what they need to do to, to work on it in their stations, on their own.” (ET, 2018)
	How did the program create independent learners?	“What you say, student repetition, repetition. They

	Impact knowledge skills and dispositions?	continue making by themselves to understand.” (BT, 2018) I also feel it's very self-corrective once they get the repetition down and they figured out there listening for that first sound. (RT, 2018)
	What specific academic skills does it help teach in the classroom?	“Letter knowledge, sound knowledge. Um, what is it called? Alliteration for sure.” (RT, 2018)
	How does the program impact literacy skills?	“Okay. How does it impact? It's very repetitive so they catch on to the letters a lot faster after about the fourth week and it does teach them to read as ET said.” (RT, 2018)

Theme 2: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt the program assisted in creating readers in the classroom.

Theme:	Interview Question(s):	Data Example(s):
The program assisted in creating readers in the classroom.	Tell me something you like about the Learning By Doing program?	<p>“It has really advanced my students to where they, not all of them are reading, but most of them can decode a word and put it together.” (RT, 2018)</p> <p>“I liked that the kids actually do learn to read and they, I've had a lot of students that now can read the sight words and the sentences, the silly sentences that we break apart and then they put it back together and they really liked that part because the, it's helped them to compose sentences.” (ET, 2018)</p>
	Explain how you believe that this training indirectly helped you in other	“They make connections and they when reading books in read alouds we

	Prekindergarten subject areas? Why or why not?	doing letter sounds and words.” (BT, 2018)
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps you be successful in the classroom?	<p>“I have more readers this year than I have ever had leaving my class.” (RT, 2018)</p> <p>“I can show the kids how they start with a few, start with the letter to reading. And I can see this year how the kids keep growing in reading because we start with zero and how hold the pencil to reading.” (BT, 2018)</p>
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps your students be successful in the classroom?	<p>“Everything that we do is based on letter and letter sound knowledge. Even later on in life when you're taking a math test or a science test, you're having to read the questions and if you cannot, if you don't</p>

		<p>know your letters and letter sounds, you're not going to be able to know the words, if you don't know the words, you can't read it. If you don't, if you can't read it, you can't answer the questions, so it gives them that strong, strong, strong foundation.” (RT, 2018)</p>
	<p>What specific academic skills does it help teach in the classroom?</p>	<p>“It teaches decoding skills, beginning sounds, ending sounds, sight words blending, decoding, blending and rhyming.” (ET, 2018)</p> <p>“We are doing now, I call a few students and ask what it say here. Identify words and reading. They four and five. The first time in school. They too little. They can do it.” (BT, 2018)</p>

	Explain how you feel the students benefit from using the learning materials?	“They can recognize the letters the word, how the word starts and the sound without pictures and they start reading words. That’s what we are doing now. They can read words now.” (BT, 2018)
	How does the program impact literacy skills?	“It teaches them to read, to become readers.” (ET, 2018)

Theme 3: Teachers who participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the program assisted in creating writers in the classroom.

Theme:	Interview Question(s):	Data Example(s):
The program assisted in creating writers in the	Explain how you believe that this training indirectly	“how to get the children to think about writing in other

classroom.	helped you in other Prekindergarten subject areas? Why or why not?	subject areas.” (RT, 2018)
	Tell me something you like about the Learning By Doing program?	“it's helped them to compose sentences, to be able to write their own and to understand what makes sense because they'll laugh and say that doesn't make any sense when it's all out of order and then they can put it back together and they understand about capitalization. They understand about punctuation.” (ET, 2018)
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps your students be successful in the classroom?	“Now we write in sentences and they choose one and what they want to write about the picture and make a sentence. We doing now that and they can write it pretty good too because

		they know the, the letters without pictures and we do pictures without words and they can make their word.” (BT, 2018)
	What impact does the program have in helping students be ready for kindergarten?	“This year, we doing a lot of writing too and in sentences using the centers right now.” (BT, 2018)

Theme 4: Teachers that participated in the Learning By Doing Program felt that the students using the program became independent learners.

Theme:	Interview Question(s):	Data Example(s):
Independent Learners	Explain how you feel the students benefit from using	“After about six, the first four weeks they start

	the learning materials?	catching on and all I have to do is review those first six letters that we do and they're, they catch on so much faster as to using the materials themselves.” (RT, 2018)
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps your students be successful in the classroom?	<p>“Well, they're successful because they become independent learners and they are more responsible for their learning and taking care of the materials and doing the lessons on their own once they're in their workstations because I have the one that is learning by doing and where they actually do use the materials on their own.” (ET, 2018)</p> <p>“They make independence too. Sit down there and they</p>

		can write independence now without help.” (BT, 2018)
	How does the program impact literacy skills?	“They make um, this program make more students independent” (BT, 2018)
	How did the program create independent learners? Impact knowledge skills and dispositions?	“They become independent learners because they actually have to do it. I mean it's not just the teacher doing everything. The teacher models and then they have to do it on their own basically or with their partner.” (ET, 2018)

Theme 5: Teachers felt that the organization of the program including the initial training, materials, and the continued support helped them be more successful in the classroom.

Theme:	Interview Question(s):	Data Example(s):
Classroom Instruction and Preparation	Tell me something you like about the Learning By	“You have something to do every day. It’s very

	Doing program?	organized. I like because every day you have the stuff to do in your class. That's what most I like. Yes.” (BT, 2018)
	How do you feel the Learning By Doing program helps you be successful in the classroom?	“It's very helpful. Um, I mean because the lessons are laid out in their scripted and it goes in order you know, in an order to where you know, what you're going to do, you know, what order the lessons are in, you know, what you need to say and do and what materials you need to have.” (ET, 2018)
	Explain how you feel that the summer training helped you be prepared delivering literacy lessons to young students?	“It was helpful to see it modeled and to also get some ideas for centers that you could do work stations to carry out, go further, I guess, and have the kids do

		more on their own and extend the lesson.” (ET, 2018)
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