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ECE STUDENTS' OBSERVATIONS OF ONTARIO'S FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

by

Bonnie Rose Marsh

BA (Honours), Ryerson University, 2010

A major research project

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the Program of

Early Childhood Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2011

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ECE STUDENTS' OBSERVATIONS OF ONTARIO'S FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Master of Arts

Early Childhood Studies

Ryerson University

Abstract

This case study examined whether and how students' perceptions of their role (as they recall them) in a full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement experience. Qualitative data was collected using a convenience sampling approach and semi-structured interviews. This study has the potential to contribute meaningfully to both the literature on educational practices in Ontario as well as to future policy. As well, this study has the makings for assisting pre-service ECE teaching programs to accurately reflect the role of early childhood educators in the education system in Ontario. The combined answers to the three research questions revealed that teachers and ECEs were struggling with the implementation of the FDK in areas of team approach, play-based learning pedagogy and family involvement.

Key words: Full-Day Kindergarten Program, Students, Teachers, ECEs and Perception

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"If opportunity doesn't knock, then build a door"
Milton Berle

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And of utmost importance, to my **Heavenly Father**, for making my dream a reality.

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work"
Thomas Edison

Dedication

"Every job is a self portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence"
Unknown

This research project is dedicated to my friends and
family for their patience, unconditional love and support that
enabled me to embark on this journey.

And

In memory of Nana Benson, my biggest fan

"I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle - victorious."

Vince Lombardi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION.....ii

ABSTRACT.....iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iv

DEDICATION.....v

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....vi

LIST OF APPENDICES.....viii

CHAPTER ONE.....1

Introduction.....1

Research Problem.....2

Importance of the Study.....2

Significance of the Study.....3

Overview of History and Context.....3

Overview of Methodology.....4

CHAPTER TWO.....5

Social and Culture Context of ECEC.....5

History and Context of ECEC in Canada.....7

Recent and Current Context of ECEC in Ontario.....10

With Our Best Future in Mind.....14

Toronto First Duty.....19

Significance of This Research.....21

CHAPTER THREE.....23

Research Questions.....23

Participants.....24

Instrumentation.....29

Data Collection.....31

Data Analysis.....33

CHAPTER FOUR.....34

Research Question 1.....34

Research Question 2.....37

Research Question 3.....39

Chapter Summary.....43

CHAPTER FIVE.....46

Implications.....46

Shortcomings of the Study.....51

Recommendations.....52

APPENDICES.....54

REFERENCES.....65

GLOSSARY.....69

Take the attitude of a student, never be too big to ask questions, and never know too much to learn something new.

Og Mandino

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDICES PAGE

Appendix A: Expression of Interest.....54

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate.....55

Appendix C: Consent Form.....56

Appendix D: Timeline.....61

Appendix E: Interview Questions.....62

Appendix F: Ryerson Ethics Approval.....64

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith"

2 Timothy 4:7

ECE STUDENTS' OBSERVATIONS OF ONTARIO'S FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter I: Introduction

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004), early childhood care and education are inseparable, yet in Canada and in Ontario specifically, early childhood care and kindergarten developed independently of each other. Historically, the federal government had no involvement in child care policy until World War II. At that time, the federal government offered to share the cost of child care with the provinces for women working in industries supporting the war effort but this financial support was withdrawn after the conclusion of the war. The following several decades were marked with federal initiatives such as the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), taxation assistance, the Canada Health and Social Transfer and a proposed national early learning and child care program. However, a reduction in federal funding, and the need for universal child care encouraged some provincial governments to take action.

In the 1990s, Ontario was marked by political policy shifts and, in the late 1990s, massive cuts to social services and education. Social and cultural changes and the growing interest in early learning programs before compulsory schooling prompted the Liberal provincial government elected in 2003 to consider making changes to Ontario and Canada's historical divide between early childhood care and early learning.

Following an election promise in 2007 to bring in full-day early learning in Ontario, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Dr. Charles Pascal with the task of developing the blueprints to meet this goal. Released on June 15, 2009, Dr. Pascal's report *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario,* envisioned a system of care before

and after school, extended programming opportunities for children year-round, pre-and-post-natal supports, parent resources, early identification and health assessments. The goal of this report was to create a seamless and integrated child care and education system by offering family services under one system.

Dr. Pascal stated that we must deal with the hodgepodge of child care and education services by placing the responsibility for implementing the full-day early learning program with the Ministry of Education. Critical to this vision for Ontario was the transformation of all elementary schools into community hubs capable of providing care and learning from the prenatal period to adolescence. Expectations of the full-day early learning program followed a year-long public consultation with parents, Aboriginal peoples, practitioners and experts. On September 7, 2010, approximately 600 schools in Ontario opened their doors to a full-day kindergarten program (FDK), part of the full-day early learning program (ELP) that Dr. Pascal recommended.

Research Problem

The purpose of this case study is to understand whether and how students' perceptions of their role (as they recall them) in a full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement experience. The following questions formed the basis of the research study: (1) what did the ECE students in this study expect they would experience during their placement in the full-day kindergarten program? (2) what observations did these students make during their placement at the full-day kindergarten program? and (3) what impact did these observations have on them?

Importance of the Study

The joining up of child care and kindergarten is a new initiative in Ontario. Historically, programs for young children and kindergarten developed separately with different systems of

governance, funding streams and training for staff. Child care is market driven and historically governed by social services. Not being universal in nature, it is funded primarily by parent fees. In contrast, kindergarten is governed by the Ministry of Education, universal and publicly funded. The amalgamation that was explored in the Pascal report provided the opportunity for an early educational program that was a new way of conceptualizing the integration of care and education for Ontario and Canada.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will provide an understanding of how expectations can affect placement experiences for early childhood education students and how these understandings may change following observations in the placement setting. This study has the potential to contribute meaningfully to both the literature on educational practices in Ontario as well as to future policy. This study has the potential for assisting pre-service ECE teaching programs to accurately reflect the role of early childhood educators in the full-day kindergarten programs in Ontario.

Overview of History and Context

The second chapter of this research project reviews the history and context of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Canada and in Ontario pertinent to the study. In addition, the social and cultural factors that have encouraged Ontario to move forward with the full-day kindergarten program are explored. As well, a review of the four key aspects of the Early Learning Advisor's report, and relevant description from the Toronto First Duty Project as it pertains to this research.

Overview of Methodology

The goal of this research is to understand whether and how students' perceptions of their role in the full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement. A case study was selected as the methodology. A case study is a qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, or one or more individuals. The researcher collects detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a period of time (Cresswell, 2009). According to Hatch (2002) qualitative methods are particularly effective in educational settings such as the full-day kindergarten program and as such a qualitative approach was used. A convenience sampling approach of four early childhood education students was used to administer the semi-structured interviews (see appendix E for interview protocol and questions). The basic nature of the questions was intended to facilitate easy and informal interview responses.

Data collection occurred once via 45-60 minute interviews with each student at the end of the placement period. Upon completion of the data collection process, interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed.

Chapter II – History and Context

The structure of the chapter is as follows. The first section will be devoted to the social and cultural factors that encouraged Ontario to consider full-day early learning/kindergarten. Following this, the second section reviews the history and context of ECEC in Canada. The third section discusses the current state of ECEC in Ontario. The fourth section explores aspects of *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*. Finally, the fifth section describes the Toronto First Duty pilot project as it relates to the full-day early learning/kindergarten program. This will provide a framework for establishing the significance of this study.

Social and Cultural Context of ECEC

Social and cultural changes over the last few decades have had implications for how ECEC programs were delivered. Key trends include the steady increase of women in the labour force, shrinking child population, child poverty and a shift to a diverse society. Perhaps the most important social and economic changes in the family began in the 1970's with the shift from the single breadwinner family unit to two employed parents (Cameron, 2006). The dynamics of the family unit has changed from the "*Leave it to Beaver* model of working father and stay-at-home mother complete with children" (Friendly & Prentice, 2009, p.15) to single parents, blended families, having children later in life and having fewer children than in the preceding 30 years. According to Statistics Canada (2006), in 1971, the family size was 3.7 people but had dropped to 3.0 in 2001 and to 2.6 in 2006.

Child population data shows that Canada has fewer children today than a decade ago. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004), Canada had 250,000 fewer young children than in 1992. The concern is that a shrinking child population can have

significant implications for a future labour force. In contrast, the Nordic countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark have provided a cohesive system of child care and family policy that some research suggests result in higher than normal maternal labour force participation and a relatively high birth rate (Daly, 2007). Further, Daly's (2007) research suggest that child care services are among the social programs that may boost birth rates as women are better able to balance work and family responsibilities.

Diversity and child poverty are other demographic factors that have implications for ECEC programs. According to Statistics Canada (2006), Canada's immigrants make up 20% of the population. Providing ECEC programs to support families while they transition will allow them to settle in, get jobs or upgrade their academic qualifications. Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the OECD, has a high child poverty rate. According to Statistics Canada (2009), approximately, 9.5% of children live in poverty. This is a concern because children living in poverty have poorer health and more difficulties with learning at school.

Recent years have seen a growing interest in early childhood education, with research highlighting the importance of early learning on later development. In Canada, this topic has gained public and political recognition. The value of developing early learning programs before compulsory schooling has been popularized by drawing on cognitive science to identify that the "early years" are a critical period of development that will prepare children for school (McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007). One effect of this has been that there has been enhanced debate about the wisdom of making changes to Canada's historical divide between early childhood care and early learning.

History and Context of ECEC in Canada

The role of different levels of government in child care policy must be examined to understand the current state of child care programs in Canada and Ontario. Canada was established as a federation by the Constitution Act of 1867 which outlined specific powers for federal and provincial governments. At that time, the federal government was responsible for trade, taxation and defence. Conversely, provincial governments were responsible for health, and education. In 1982, this Act was amended to include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which enacted civil rights for the people of Canada. However, issues of roles and responsibilities remained unchanged (Friendly & Prentice, 2009).

According to constitutional arrangements, the authority to develop and operate child care policy falls within the jurisdiction of the provincial government. This includes the power to implement child care programs, dictate the educational requirements of child care professionals and to provide funds to child care providers. While child care is a provincial and territorial responsibility, the federal government can use its spending power to influence these policies by providing transfer payments to the provinces and territories or financial supports to parents in the form of direct payments or tax credits (Makarenko, 2007).

In Canada, child care and kindergarten developed with two separate and distinct focuses. In the nineteenth century, child care was set up to provide supervision and religious education for children of working mothers whereas kindergarten was established "as a tool for social reform and as a way of assimilating immigrant children" (Friendly & Prentice, 2009, p. 72). Historically, the federal government had no involvement in child care policy until World War II. As men headed off to war, the need for wartime factory workers made the federal government consider offering child care programs as a way of encouraging women to help with the war

effort. The Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement was introduced in 1942. It was a federal-provincial agreement in which the federal government offered to pay fifty percent of the cost to provinces for providing child care programs to mothers in the war industry sector (Jenson, 2006). However, this financial support was withdrawn after the conclusion of the war (Collier & Mahon, 2008). Demonstrations by working mothers in Ontario lead to many of the child care programs remaining open while all six centres in Quebec closed[1]. In 1946, Ontario passed the Day Nurseries Act, the first provincial child care legislation in Canada and began to provide cost-sharing between the provincial and municipal governments (Friendly & Prentice, 2009).

Although the demand for more child care spaces increased, it was not for several decades that the federal government introduced measures to address families' child care needs: in 1966 the federal government began to provide funds to provinces for subsidies for low-income families through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), Canada's national welfare program (Jenson, 2006). The treatment of child care as a welfare service instead of an educational service contributed to the division in Canada - between "care," a welfare service for the needy and "education," a universal program that educates all children – that is still shaping ECEC today (Friendly & Prentice, 2009).

In 1971, the federal government allowed child care expenses to be tax deductible and maternity benefits for eligible mothers were paid under the Unemployment Insurance Act (Jenson, 2006). In the 1980s, the feminist movement called for a national child care program in light of the growing numbers of working mothers in the labour force. Statistics Canada has documented that the labour force participation rate of mothers with young children has been

[1] Child care programs existed in several provinces but the federal-cost sharing agreement only paid for those in Ontario and Quebec.

steadily increasing; it was 39% in 1976 but rose to 84% in 2007 (Beach, Friendly, Ferns, Prabhu & Forer, 2008). At the same time, half-day kindergarten program were introduced for five year olds in almost every province and territory.[2]

Between 1984 and 1995, the federal government made three attempts at setting up some variety of a national child care program: "the Task Force on Child Care set up by the Trudeau government (1984), the Special Task Force on Child Care set up by the Mulroney government (1986), and Red Book (1993) based on the Chrétien Liberal's election commitment" (Friendly, 2006, p.11). However, none of these efforts were successful in establishing a national approach to child care.

In 1996, the federal government abolished the Canada Assistance Plan; all federal dollars for provincial health, post secondary education and welfare programs were transferred to a block fund, the Canada Health and Social Transfer [3](CHST). In other words, the federal government allocated a lump sum of money to each province and provincial governments determined how to disperse these funds for social welfare, education, and health.

In 2001, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released *Starting Strong II* which summarized the organization's cross-national review of early childhood education and care (ECEC). The goal of this review was to strengthen lifelong learning by improving access and quality in ECEC. The data showed that, in a comparison of 20 countries, Canada was the fourth wealthiest but was near the bottom in spending on benefits and services for families, maternity and parental leave and at the bottom on public spending on early learning and child care programs (OECD, 2006).

[2] In Ontario, kindergarten was introduced to cover most four year olds.
[3] In 2005, The CHST was changed to the CHT (health) and the CST (social).

In its review of Canada, the OECD made a number of recommendations. Among these, they recommended "building a bridge between child care and kindergarten education, with the aim of integrating ECEC both at ground level and at policy and management levels" (p. 6). Second, the OECD suggested improving access while promoting greater equity. Third, they suggested devising an effective funding system that is transparent and accountable delivered by mixed providers, governed by public agencies. Last, the OECD recommended improving quality by developing a framework for all early childhood services (OECD, 2004). However, little progress was made by Canadian politicians until the 2004 election.

Child care remained more-or-less off the national policy agenda until 2004 when the federal Liberals promised to develop a national early learning and child care program based on four principles: quality, universality, accessibility and developmental programming (QUAD). Their campaign platform promised five billion dollars over five years to develop this program. Funding was to be transferred to provinces/territories using the CST formula. After the Liberals won the 2004 election, they began negotiating with the provinces on early learning and child care[4]. Each province was to develop an Action Plan based on QUAD and report how they were spending federal dollars. However, following a minority win in the 2006 federal election, a new Conservative government terminated the early learning and child care agreements with the provinces and territories. In spite of the reduction in federal funding, recognition of the need for child care has prompted some provincial governments to take action, but to date; Canada still has no national ECEC policy (Beach, Friendly, Ferns, Prabhu & Forer, 2008).

Recent and Current Context of ECEC in Ontario

In the 1990s, Ontario, like other provinces, was experiencing political policy shifts. Beginning in 1995, Ontario, under the leadership of Conservative Mike Harris, experienced

[4] Neither the territories nor Quebec signed agreements.

massive cuts to social services and education as the provincial government downloaded the cost of programs and responsibilities to municipalities without providing funding for them. When the Liberals followed the Conservatives, winning the provincial election in 2003, they promised to unravel Harris's social and education changes and increase spending. However, the level of funding for child care was not brought back up to the level it was before the Conservatives government.

While child care and kindergarten in Ontario continued to operate separately, there were two ECEC initiatives that helped pave the way for the full-day kindergarten program. First was a Toronto-based pilot project called Toronto First Duty (TFD), and the second, the provincial government's Best Start program.

Introduced in 2000, Toronto First Duty (TFD) was a children's service delivery model that proposed to combine education, child care and family supports into a single program. Toronto First Duty began as a partnership between the City of Toronto's Children's Services and Public Health Divisions and the Toronto District School Board supported by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. There were initially five sites that were intended to serve "as laboratories for best practices in service design and have allowed policy makers, academics, experts and practitioners to 'touch and feel' the difference between integrated and conventional service delivery" (TFD, 2009, p. 1). Phase 1 of the Toronto First Duty demonstrated how kindergarten, child care and family supports could be integrated to move the historically divided systems to a model delivering seamless access and integrated services. Phase 2 which began in 2006, was to promote system change in public policies related to early learning and care (Corter, Pelletier, Janmohamed, Bertrand, Arimura, Patel, et al., 2009).

It is important to recognize that the Toronto First Duty was implemented at the municipal level when the provincial government support for child care and education was being eroded. Cutbacks to funding meant that municipalities were struggling to maintain existing services. A change in provincial leadership in 2003 along with the first federal funding earmarked for child care since WWII, the Multi-Lateral Framework (MFA), lead to a new provincial project, the Best Start program. These two initiatives – Toronto First Duty and Best Start - moved Ontario closer to the full-day early learning kindergarten program (Friendly, 2008).

During the 2003 election, the Liberals promised "high-quality early years education and support as a seamless extension of our public education system" (Ontario Liberal Government, 2003, p. 132). The ECEC part of Best Start was a wrap-around program that extended child care for four and five year old children in kindergarten to a full-day. This initiative relied on the collaboration of municipal and provincial funding, schools, community partners and parents yet it was not the systematic change to a more seamless day that Toronto First Duty set out to demonstrate.

In the 2007 election campaign, the Ontario government made a new ECEC commitment: a new full-day early learning program that drew upon both Toronto First Duty and Best Start. However, this program was conceived as more ambitious than either. It promised to include all four and five year olds, and was to be publicly funded, not user fee-based as was child care, and it was not to be a pilot project; rather, the provincial government had committed to putting a full-day early learning program in place (Corter & Pelletier, 2010).

Following the election, Ontario Premier McGuinty appointed Dr. Charles Pascal as Special Advisor on Early Learning with the task of developing the best way to implement full-day early learning in Ontario. Dr. Pascal's report *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing*

Early Learning in Ontario was released on June 15, 2009 and outlined a comprehensive plan for full-day early learning in a full-day full-year extended program for four and five year olds, as well as care for school-age children and a system of Best Start Child and Family Centres for younger children. Dr. Pascal recommended that the responsibility for the program be placed under a new Early Years Division of the Ministry of Education; and that a "team" of certified teachers and early childhood educators implement a play-based curriculum based on the Early Learning for Every Child (ELECT) framework (Pascal, 2009).

Following the release of Dr. Pascal's report, reactions from various community organizations were positive. This report recommended the merging of public and private delivery systems, which was applauded by the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC). The CCAAC (2009) said:

> We commend the Ontario plan for ending two 'false divides' often created by governments when it comes to early learning and child care. The plan recognizes what parents already know – 'good child care educates' and 'good education cares.' The CCAAC calls on the federal government to follow Ontario's lead and end the false divide it has created by indicating that only provinces and territories are accountable for early learning and care (www.childcarecanada.org).

A press release from the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (2009) stated:

> The long awaited Early Learning Advisor's Report on full-day early learning recognizes the valuable role Early Childhood Educators have to play in a new vision for the province, one that would replace our patchwork services with a stronger, more accessible system of early learning and care (www.childcarecanada.org).

Lois Mahon, President of the Council of the College of Early Childhood Educators (2009) commented on Dr. Pascal's suggestion of "the team". She said:

> Today is a good day for children in Ontario. The report recommends that a team of both early childhood educators and teachers would work best for the Early Learning Program. Examples of these educator teams already exist in the province. As a result of the combined strengths of both of these professions, children are the ones who benefit (www.childcarecanada.org).

Finally, a press release from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (2009) stated:

> We believe an early learning team, consisting of both qualified teachers and early childhood educators who are board employees, using established curriculum and a consistent approach to learning will provide even more opportunities for success. The model will also provide four- and five-year-olds with access to existing board resources and early intervention supports (www.childcarecanada.org).

On October 27, 2009, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that he was moving forward with partial implementation of Dr. Pascal's report, with a phase-in of the full-day program for four and five year olds. In the period between this announcement and the opening of the first full-day programs in the fall of 2010, the provincial government's commitment to Dr. Pascal's recommended "extended day" was downgraded and the name of the new program was modified from "full-day early learning" to "full-day kindergarten" (FDK). The term FDK will be used thereafter to refer to programs for 4 and 5 year old children that were implemented in the fall of 2010.

With Our Best Future in Mind

Four major themes that are relevant to this study emerged in the Early Learning Advisor's report *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*: a seamless system of early learning, child care and family supports; a team approach; a play-based learning pedagogy and family involvement.

Seamless System of Early Learning

The report stated that the Best Start strategy had been aimed at improving service co-ordination in Ontario communities but that progress was hampered by different governance, funding and legislative mandates. It suggested that Best Start had laid the groundwork but that real systemic change was needed to deal with the chaotic mix of child care and kindergarten. Dr.

Pascal's report proposed developing a seamless and integrated system of early learning, child care and family supports.

To eliminate the divide between care and education, the report recommended that the province "create a continuum of early learning, child care and family support for children from the prenatal period through to adolescence, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education" (p. 14). It would be the responsibility of this Ministry to establish an Early Years Division to provide accountability and delivery of early learning and care programs. This Division would develop and implement the Early Years Policy Framework which would guide the transformation of programming supported by legislative requirements, policy, funding and accountability.

The report suggested that to support children's transitions to the Early Learning Program, the preferred location for Best Start Child and Family Centres would be schools. Critical to this vision for Ontario is the transformation of elementary schools into community hubs capable of providing families with services from the prenatal period to adolescence. In the report, Dr. Pascal referred to the Toronto First Duty model as an existing system of care and learning that provided seamless access to quality child care, health screenings, special needs interventions, family counselling and employment, immigration and housing services.

Essentially, the report recommended three linked integrated and seamless systems of care and learning: Best Start Child and Family Centres for children under four years of age, the Early Learning Program for four and five year olds, the Extended Day Primary Program for six to eight year olds and the After-School Program for nine to twelve year olds.

Team Approach

The report recommended that in Best Start Child and Family Centres, educators with ECE diplomas or degrees, as well as early childhood resource teachers, work under a municipal management system. They would provide family supports, and partner with public health and early identification specialists as part of a comprehensive team. Dr. Pascal suggested the teacher-to-child ratio be "three ECEs for 12 children up to 2.5 years old (unless there are more than three infants under 12 months, which would require more staff), three ECEs for 25 children ages two to four years or three ECEs for a mixed-age grouping of up to 18 children" (p. 35).

For the extended day primary program for six to eight year olds, an educator would be required to have an ECE diploma or degree and be full-time School Board employees. The educator would provide self-directed activities for children in this setting that would enhance early literacy, arts and culture and recreation programs as well as provide support to children with special needs. The report recommended one educator for 15 children aged six to eight years old.

For the early learning/kindergarten program, a team of kindergarten teachers and ECEs were recommended. It was suggested that the early learning room consist of no more than 20 children and include a certified teacher for half of the day, a full-time registered ECE during school hours, and one registered ECE for school hours plus extended programming. The report stated that the "team" would complement the seamless program for children, allow for individual attention to children and provide more preparation and planning time for educators. It drew comparisons to the Toronto First Duty model in which "early learning environments were constructed at each community site by teams of different professionals working together – family support and child care professionals along with kindergarten teachers" (Corter & Pelletier, 2010,

p. 48). This "team" approach was the choice of parents and educators who shared their experience and expertise during a year-long public consultation on full-day early learning (Pascal, 2009).

Dr. Pascal added that two irrefutable components that must be a part of the full-day early learning program are "educators with child development knowledge and skills, and an effective parent engagement strategy" (p. 33). The report noted that some primary school teachers may have acquired child development knowledge and skills through postsecondary education or in-service professional development however; those without these qualifications would be asked to complete additional training within five years to qualify as a teacher in the Early Learning Program. In addition, all ECEs in the program would hold an ECE diploma or degree and be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario.

Play-Based Learning Pedagogy

In his report, Dr. Pascal noted that early learning programs (regulated child care) for children from birth to age eight in Ontario do not require or provide a common curriculum. The ELECT curriculum framework, developed by child development and education experts through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ontario, was intended to guide the early learning environment from infancy into the primary years. ELECT "sets out the organization of the early learning environment, child assessment, scheduling of routines and activities, behaviour guidance, and the organization of indoor and outdoor space" (p. 26). It is not only a tool that educators may use in the classroom. Rather, it provides guidance for principals and other decision makers to allocate resources and set policies that will help meet the developmental needs of children and families. In addition, the Continuum of Development in ELECT lays out the sequences of skills for children 0 to 8 years old which focuses on physical, social, emotional,

language and cognitive skills. This document helps educators monitor children's learning and developmental progress.

Dr. Pascal recommended that the curriculum and pedagogy for the Best Start Child and Family Centres, the Early Learning Program and the Extended Day Primary program use the approaches found in ELECT and the existing Ministry of Education curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program (revised)*. The early learning program curriculum and pedagogy would include: developmental skills, that is specific abilities that are the foundation for later development and learning; essential outcomes that outline the skills children should know before starting grade one based on *The Kindergarten Program (revised)*; how children demonstrate their learning, that is merging specific expectations from *The Kindergarten Program (revised)* with the indicators from ELECT; interactions in the Learning Environment for example, those between children and adults and parental involvement.

Family Involvement

The Early Learning Advisor's report identified the importance of family involvement in children's education. However, for various reasons not all families are able to connect with the school or teacher. Dr. Pascal recommended supporting a two-way partnership that links a child's learning at home and learning at school. This required an exchange of information between parent and teacher about what will help the child to learn and develop. The report recommended extending the hours of operation of community schools to provide parents with more opportunities to visit with school personnel and to share and exchange information.

Dr. Pascal recommended that "systematic mentoring is needed to help school leaders be aware of the barriers, adopt a keen interest in opening schools to all parents, and implement the best

practices available in fostering respectful, reciprocal parent engagement" (p. 30). To increase parent engagement, the report suggested we look at who is included and excluded in the process.

The report noted that some parents are excluded from school involvement because of language, income, and culture. Dr. Pascal recommended locating Best Start Child and Family Centres in schools as a preferred location as this will help connect parents to the schools as well as other supports. In 2007, the Ministry of Education established a Provincial Parent Board whose primary responsibility it is to advise the Ministry on the most effective ways to engage parents at the provincial, school board and local levels. The report noted that this attention should also be given to regional and local boards.

The Toronto First Duty Project

As previously mentioned, the Toronto First Duty model focused on three main elements: seamless system of early learning, child care and family supports, an integrated learning environment staffed by various professionals and parental involvement.

Seamless System of Early Learning

Toronto First Duty integrates child care, kindergarten and family supports into a single, accessible program, located in primary schools and coordinated with early intervention and family health services. The goal of the TFD was to develop a universally accessible service that promotes the healthy development of children from conception through primary school, while at the same time facilitating parent's work or study and offering support to their parenting role. The project was designed to inform public policy by demonstrating the transformation of the existing patchwork of programs into a single, integrated and comprehensive early childhood program. Research from this project has shown that the joining up of child care services and kindergarten proved challenging and that no centre was able to reach fully integrated and

seamless access as that requires legislative and funding changes beyond the municipality's resources (Corter, Bertrand, Pelletier, Griffin, Mckay, Patel et al., 2006). However, the research did indicate that an integrated and almost seamless access to services has a positive impact on the daily lives of parents. Reasons given were that service integration was associated with lower levels of daily parenting hassles, greater satisfaction with some forms of support and fewer transitions for children throughout the day (Toronto First Duty, 2009).

Team Approach

Emily Noble, then-president of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, stated that "ECEs and teachers may share the same goals for children but legislated training requirements, professional organizations, teaching methods, philosophy, service location and curriculum differ" (The Atkinson Letter, 2004, p. 1). In the TFD model, integrated early learning environments were to be constructed with a professional team of kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, family support staff and teaching assistant. They planned and delivered the program working from a single pedagogical approach and using the same space and resources. Initial research findings showed that the collaboration of partnerships amongst team members was challenging. There were issues of professional turf and the lack of support for integrations across sectors made it difficult to collaborate (Corter & Pelletier, 2010). Nevertheless, the findings also showed that strong leadership and time to meet allowed the staff teams to come together to improve quality and delivery. A case study analysis of TFD phase one and phase two revealed a strong positive association between staff teamwork and program quality (Toronto First Duty, 2009).

Family Involvement

One of the core components of the Toronto First Duty was family involvement. There has been extensive research stating the importance of family involvement on children's readiness to learn at school, graduate rates and physical, social and mental health (Doherty, 2007; Landry, Swank, Smith, Assel & Gunnewig, 2006; Stipek, 2001). Research findings indicate that TFD facilitated parent participation in their child's early learning. Research from this site showed that parents were more involved with their child's learning, felt better able to support their children's needs, felt more empowered and able to communicate with program staff and were more likely to continue their involvement in the child's schooling than parents whose children attended conventional child care and kindergarten programs (Corter & Pelletier, 2010).

Significance of This Research

Recent studies focusing on the importance of early learning have begun to shift the public views of child care away from a welfare service for the needy to an education system that is universal for all children. Popularized by cognitive science, the value of early years programming has encouraged Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty to implement the full-day kindergarten program available to four-and five year olds[5] commencing September 7, 2010.

The joining up of child care and kindergarten that the Early Learning Advisor's report recommended would have been an entirely new initiative in Ontario, Canada. Although the FDK program that was implemented was not the extended full-day early learning recommended by Dr. Pascal, there was no official change to the idea of a "team", to the concept of play-based learning and to encouraging parent involvement. With the introduction of FDK, it was expected that there would be changes. The key changes include the teacher and ECE working together in the FDK classroom, the play-based learning pedagogy and family involvement. This study is a

[5] The full-day kindergarten program will be available to all four-and-five year old children by 2015.

preliminary examination of this ECE and teacher collaboration during the first year of implementation through the perceptions of early childhood education students who completed placements in FDK sites. The FDK is new, and as such, there is a gap in the research. Thus, this study provides an important opportunity to contribute to the understanding of the program by looking at the perceptions of placement students.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter was to detail the methodology and action plan that were used to conduct this study. The structure of the chapter is as follows: first, the research questions and theoretical constructs will be reviewed; second, a description of the subjects, placement setting and teaching program will be presented. Following this, the third section will be devoted to instrumentation, which includes the appropriateness of the instrument for the population and goals of the study. Fourth, procedures for collecting data will be outlined. This section details how the subjects were contacted and interviewed and how the data from these interviews were analysed.

Research Questions

The purpose of this case study is to understand whether and how students' perceptions of their role (as they recall them) in a full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement experience. The following questions formed the basis of the research study: (1) what did the ECE students in this study expect they would experience during their placement in the full-day kindergarten program? (2) what observations did these students make during their placement at the full-day kindergarten program? and (3) what impact did these observations have on them?

Theoretical Constructs

This research utilizes the social constructivist approach. Social construction is how we understand our world through subjective meaning negotiated socially, historically and culturally (Cresswell, 2009; Penn, 2008). A major focus of social constructivism is to uncover the ways in which individuals or groups participate in the construction of their perceived reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created. The phenomenon being studied is whether

and how student field placement experiences can change perception and the impact of their perceptions.

In this study, each interviewee who participated constructed her understanding of the experience. By utilizing a set of practical principles that are consistent with the constructivist approach one can focus on a "program, event, or activity involving individuals rather than a group per se" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 439). The product produced by this set of principles is case history. The history of each participant's experience is created with the researcher in a narrative that describes the participant's perceptions and experiences. In this study, these personal histories provided data that was analyzed and reported.

Participants in the Study

This case study is based on four early childhood education students[6] enrolled in a four year Bachelor of Arts program at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. All students were direct-entry students at Ryerson meaning they received their two-year ECE diploma from an Ontario college and were admitted into Ryerson's third year of a four-year Bachelor of Arts program in Early Childhood Education. Age and gender are not defining factors but all participants were in the third or fourth year of the ECE program. In addition, all participants had completed a placement in the full-day kindergarten program.

Description of Participants

Leanne

Leanne received her ECE diploma from George Brown College. She was a third year direct-entry student and she transitioned directly from college to university. She is employed by the Toronto District School Board as a part-time assistant support staff. Leanne has had field placement experience working in a classroom for seven developmental delayed children; five

[6] Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the confidentiality of the student participants

children were diagnosed with autism, one child was identified with Fragile X and one child was diagnosed with Down syndrome. She did not discuss her relationship with the field educator. Leanne's placement lasted for 11 weeks, 2 days per week for eight hours. Leanne reported having knowledge of Dr. Charles Pascal report *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* through her class on contemporary issues in ECE.

Leanne reported that there were 26 children enrolled in the full-day kindergarten program with a teacher and ECE. She reported feeling uncomfortable as the space was very small and there was no room to move around. She reported that the layout was inappropriate as the quiet area was next to the dramatic area which was also the block area. Leanne started field placement in January 2011.

Sheryl

Sheryl graduated from George Brown College with an ECE diploma. She was a third year direct-entry student. At the time of the interview she was enrolled in two courses: community psychology and schools, family and communities. At present, Sheryl is working in a child care environment with four to six year olds. Sheryl reported that the courses she had taken such as diversity in Canadian families and inclusion and consultation have helped develop relationships with the families in her care. She discussed her relationship with her field educator as open and friendly. She felt at ease discussing issues related to personal matters and the behaviour management strategies for children. Sheryl's placement was twice a week for 11 weeks for 40 hours a week. Sheryl reported that she had read and discussed in class the Early Learning Advisor's report.

Sheryl reported that the setting for the full-day kindergarten program was not conducive to learning. The physical set-up was small and the toys and materials were scattered around the

room with no real purpose. She reported that the classroom had 27 children enrolled in the FDK program with a full-time teacher and ECE. She started field placement in January 2011.

Donna

Donna received her ECE diploma from George Brown College and was a fourth year direct-entry student at Ryerson University. She reported that the continuum of development she learned at George Brown College helped her plan for individual and group activities during her field placement experience in the full-day kindergarten program. In addition, she reported that her daily journals helped her write a cumulative report that she presented to her field educator and to fellow classmates. She was not in constant communication with her field educator but there was an online communication tool that the students used to discuss issues with their placement and she reported finding that helpful. Her current experience lies in the policy and research field with a mandate to further ECEC policy and programs in Canada. She completed her placement for eight hours a day, two-days a week for 12 weeks. She reported having an awareness of Dr. Charles Pascal's report.

Donna reported that the family literacy room was converted into a kindergarten classroom. The room was located on the second floor of the school and was too small. There were 25 children enrolled in the full-day kindergarten program with one full-time teacher. She reported that the school did not hire a full-time ECE until six weeks after the school year began. Donna started field placement in September 2010.

Lisa

Lisa graduated from George Brown College with her ECE diploma. She was a third year direct-entry student. She made the transition directly from college to university and was not currently working in the field. She completed two field placements when she was at George

Brown College; one with preschoolers and the second was with children with special needs. Her third year placement through Ryerson was in the full-day kindergarten program. She reported having communications with her field educator via email. She used the continuum of development to record observations of children's abilities and to plan activities to enhance their skill level. She completed her placement of eight hours a day, twice a week for 11 weeks. She said that she had read the Early Learning Advisor's report.

Lisa reported that the setting for the full-day kindergarten program was not inviting, that "everything was crammed into the classroom" and there was no physical space to move around and explore various activities. She observed that there were no water or sand tables. The room had 26 children with one teacher and one ECE. Lisa started field placement in January 2011.

Content of the Ryerson ECE Program

The curriculum at Ryerson University emphasizes philosophy, theory, pedagogy, and practices related to the field. Students learn about child development, psychology, curriculum design, the nature of learning, teaching practices and the various family, community and social contexts that influence children's development and learning success. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program is made up of four types of courses: required courses (including field placements), professional electives, professionally related electives, and liberal studies electives.

Students must successfully complete seven required courses in the third year of study. These courses include: *cognitive development, research methods and applications, diversity in Canadian families, assessment for programming, Canadian politics and social policy and field placement.* Students are required to complete approximately 160 hours of field placement in their third year and about 200 hours in their fourth year. They are required to keep daily journals, record observations, write reports and prepare presentations on their experience to

fellow classmates and colleagues. The field placement experience is intense as students are required to complete school assignments such as writing a comprehensive internship report in addition to the requirements of the field educator and placement teacher. In their fourth year of study, students are required to complete four mandatory courses: *school, family and communities, theory and practice of family supports, inclusion and consultation and a senior internship*.

Along with the required courses, students need to successfully complete four professional electives. These courses are specialized studies. For instance, if a student was interested in applying to the faculty of education, he/she would be encouraged to take *early primary programming*. Other options include: *working with linguistically and culturally diverse children, infant mental health, multi-age programming, literacy and language development*.

Students are required to complete three professionally-related electives from the following subject categories: English, family supports, history, interdisciplinary studies, justice, politics, public administration, psychology and sociology.

In order to complete graduation requirements all ECE students need to successfully finish three upper-level liberal studies electives from the following subject categories: Caribbean studies, criminal justice, economics, English, French, geography, history, music, philosophy, politics, psychology, sociology and Spanish. In total there are 21 courses that all ECE students must complete in order to graduate from the Bachelor of Arts program.

Consideration of Human Subjects in This Study

According to Cresswell (2009), ethical practices include respecting the rights of participants, honouring research sites, and reporting research fully and honestly. Participants were given the option to participate and withdraw from the study at any time. An expression of

interest (Appendix A), an invitation to participate (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C) guaranteed responses were held in confidence to the letter of the law.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview was used in this study. The questions were designed to contribute to understanding how ECE students' field placement experience changed their perceptions. Each question in the survey was designed to yield data related to the research questions. Each question was built upon the previous question and was intended to follow the interviewee's experience within the parameters defined by the interview guide. Semi-structured protocols enable the researcher to follow a structure while permitting some liberty to follow up on interesting ideas or themes arising from the discussion with the person being interviewed (Hatch, 2002).

The Appropriateness of the Instrument for the Population

This instrument was appropriate for this case study because interviewing is the best method to obtain information about personal experience and perception. In a qualitative study, the researcher's "presence in the lives of participants invited to be part of the study is fundamental to the paradigm" (Marshal & Rossman, 1999, p. 79). The involvement of the interviewer in the case study in-depth interview was short in duration but personal. Due to the very short but personal relationship involved in this research, the researcher endeavoured to "build trust, maintain good relations and respect the norms of reciprocity" (Cresswell, 2009, p. 85) around interview issues. These issues included identifying the sort of information interviewees wanted shared, obtaining their confirmation regarding what was said and meant during the interview and using their words in the case study whenever possible. Interviewees were sent transcripts for approval for accuracy of information prior to publication.

The Appropriateness of the Instrument for Meeting the Goals of the Study

This case study, which is qualitative in nature, tells the story of how students perceived and adjusted to the full-day kindergarten program. It finds patterns that align this adjustment and then creates categories to explain these adjustments. As a result, the case study pursues a method of inductive rather than deductive logic. Unlike quantitative research, where a null hypothesis is produced and then either proven or disproven as a result of the research, a qualitative case study draws no conclusions until the data has been analyzed. In a qualitative case study, in-depth interviews are suitable for gathering data rich in detail and description (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2007).

This study was designed to understand the expectations formed by students and to understand what impact these expectations had on the students. Therefore, this research project is illustrative inasmuch as it shares the perception of students. According to Hatch (2002), in-depth interviews provide this flexibility and facilitate a process of discovery because although researchers come to the interview with guiding questions, they are open to follow the leads of participants and probing into areas that arise during interview interactions. They are in-depth in that they are designed to go deeply into the understanding of the participants. In-depth interviews are planned in such a way as to leave considerable room for interviewees to volunteer information and describe their own experiences, thereby enabling the researcher to collect data rich in detail. The in-depth format also enabled the interviewee to have a participatory rather than a passive role in the research.

Data Collection

Pre-Data Collection

The pool of participants was early childhood education students from Ryerson University. Once approval was received by the Ryerson Ethics Board (see appendix G), an e-mail was sent to the early childhood education students from the field placement co-ordinator at Ryerson University outlining this research and asking for an expression of interest (see appendix A). This e-mail explained the parameters of the study, time commitment, the benefits and risks involved and the criteria for participation. Once the early childhood education students had expressed interest via e-mail to the researcher, their suitability for the study was determined. After identifying participants, the researcher e-mailed each participant personally and invited them to participate in the study (see appendix B) with a scheduled day and time to conduct the interview as well as a reminder to bring their consent forms (see appendix C) with them, although the researcher would have extra on hand if needed. Once the researcher had received an e-mail back from a participant confirming day and time of interview, the seminar room at Kerr Hall South 354A was booked through the ECE office at Ryerson University. Participants were told they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. This study proposed to take place between April 2011 and August 2011 (see appendix D). The interviews took place in person and in English only. Interviews were not anonymous but the researcher changed the interviewee's names to preserve their confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned.

Data Collection

A convenience sampling approach of four ECE students was used to administer the semi-structured interviews (see appendix E for interview protocol and questions). The basic nature of the questions was intended to facilitate easy and informal interview responses. They were asked

to recall their perception prior to their field placement at a full-day kindergarten program and their perception following placement. The researcher, Bonnie R. Marsh conducted all interviews. Data was collected through 45-60 minute interviews, face to face. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview which included permission to audiotape. Additionally, oral consent to audiotape was recorded at the onset of the interview. Confidentiality requirements were described in detail (see Appendix C), and participants were informed that they will each be assigned a pseudonym that will protect their confidentiality.

Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed. The researcher used Dragonspeak Voice Recognition Software. A paid transcription assistant was employed to transcribe the interviews when the voice recognition software was unable to transcribe interviews verbatim. Interviews were transcribed and transcriptions sent to the participants for review in June 2011. Interviews were coded and analyzed as soon as they were completed. The project was completed by August 2011.

Design Issues

When engaging in a qualitative inquiry such as case study research, researchers must give careful consideration to any particular bias and/or assumptions they might hold. In case study research, constructivist researchers collect data by co-constructing the meaning of the data with participants (Hatch, 2002). Therefore, if those involved in the case study are not aware of and able to manage their bias the data can be corrupted and the results obtained through the data will become subject to question (Cresswell, 2009). Keeping a research journal helps researchers become aware of any bias and/or any assumptions one might hold. Maintaining a journal makes it possible for researchers to follow the personal side of their research experiences. The researcher used a journal to control for bias; however, it was not part of the analyses of data.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involved several components. It involved preparing the data for analysis, conducting an examination of the information, representing and making an interpretation of the data.

After the data was organized and read, a detailed analysis with a coding process began. This involved organizing the material into chunks of similar information. From this, the researcher was able to develop codes based on the information collected from the students' interviews. These codes created themes based on the categories set forth through the research questions. Hatch (2002) states that one of the primary decisions to be made in analyzing interviews is whether to begin with case analysis or cross-case analysis. This research used a cross-case analysis of four early childhood education students and also used the constant comparison method "to group answers to common questions enabling analysis of different perspectives on central issues" (Tellis, 1997, p. 8). The last step of the analysis involved making an interpretation or meaning of the data. This included a discussion of the findings which could confirm past information or divulge new information that requires further investigation.

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data and findings as they pertain to answering the research questions. The organization of this chapter allows the data to unfold in a narrative that compares and contrasts the perceptions the students[7] reported they had before and after they completed their placements in the full-day kindergarten classroom. The information is presented as responses to the research questions. Finally, the chapter will close with conclusions.

The purpose of this case study is to understand whether and how students' perceptions of their role (as they recall them) in the full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement. The following questions formed the basis of the research study: (1) what did the ECE students in this study expect they would experience during their placement in the full-day kindergarten program? (2) what observations did these students make during their placement at the full-day kindergarten program? and (3) what impact did these observations have on them?

Question 1: What did ECE Students Expect of their Placement in the Full-Day Kindergarten Program?

When students were asked to recall what they had believed they would experience during their placement prior to commencing, their responses varied. It should be mentioned that three out of four students only had to recall four months back from the interview date as they began their field placement experience in January 2011 whereas one student had to recall eight months back as she began her field placement experience in September 2010.

Seamless Day

As described earlier, the report of the Early Learning Advisor, Charles Pascal, had proposed developing a seamless and integrated system of early learning, child care and family

[7] Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identity of all student participants.

supports to create a continuum of care, learning and family supports for children from the prenatal period through to adolescence. It is noteworthy that the Pascal report received considerable public attention and was widely discussed within the ECE field, so students were likely to have been exposed to its proposals.

Students were asked what they thought the full-day kindergarten program was intended to accomplish in terms of its seamless approach. The responses were limited as most students completed their field placement experiences during school hours and were not exposed to the before- and after-school programming. Lisa stated:

> I believed that the full-day kindergarten program wished to create a brilliant world where children could discover what they desired, create whatever they imagined, visit countless journeys and learn all they could learn in one setting.

Team Approach

The Pascal report recommended that the seamless program be taught by a team of kindergarten teachers and ECEs. He suggested that the team be composed of a certified teacher for half the day for instructional purposes, a full-time registered ECE during school hours, and a registered ECE for school hours plus extended programming. Two of the four students recalled that prior to their placement they had want to observe the "team" approach in the full-day kindergarten classroom. Leanne said:

> Prior to this [placement] I thought for sure I would have the ECE and the teacher working collaboratively and I honestly thought the two of them would be lesson planning together. I just thought the dynamics would have been strong between them and they would have had collaborative ideas when working with the kids.

Sheryl's experience was similar to Leanne's. She stated:

> I predominantly wanted to go to this program to see the relationship between the early childhood educators and the teachers...I wanted to see how the program worked; I wanted to see the standpoint of the teachers and the ECEs, especially how strong the ECEs are in the surrounding that [they] are not familiar with.

Play-Based Learning Pedagogy

Recalling that Dr. Pascal had recommended that the curriculum framework and pedagogy for the Early Learning Program for four and five year old children use the approaches found in ELECT and *The Kindergarten Program (revised)*. All four students completed their placement in the full-day kindergarten room but none of them explained in any detail the pedagogy that they had expected to be involved with during their field experience. Most responses were similar to Donna's who reported "the curriculum was supposed to be play-based". Leanne added:

> I remember the big thing was focused around play and it was play-based learning, I think in terms of what they wanted to accomplish it was a great idea. I had been given the curriculum documents to review before beginning my placement so I knew what to expect.

Family Involvement

The Pascal report identified the importance of family involvement in their child's education. He recommended extending the hours of operation of community schools to provide parents with more opportunities to visit with school personnel and to share and exchange information. None of the students reported having any expectations of family involvement in the full-day kindergarten program prior to the field placement. However, Sheryl shared her thoughts about family involvement as it pertains to her personal philosophy. She stated that:

> My teaching style has always been [about] getting to know the family first. I include home visits so I can learn more about the families and their goals for their children. Sometimes it brings me a lot of opposition because my motives are put into question but I try to get to know the families and their culture and I strongly believe in incorporating families into curriculum planning...families are a core in my programming.

Question 2: What Observations did ECE Students make during their Placement?

Seamless Day

Students were asked if they thought the full-day kindergarten program accomplished what it set out to achieve in terms of a seamless approach. It is important to note that the researcher did not tell the students what the program's objectives were. Rather, the students drew their own perceptions from their understanding of Pascal's report, media coverage about it on television and in radio and newspaper articles and through colleagues and other students. Their responses reflect their interpretation of the program's goals and what they observed during their field placement experience. Donna stated:

> It [is] not very close at all. Essentially it is just a full day of kindergarten and that to me is all that has been implemented. Instead of having kids there for half a day they are now there the full day and now you have an ECE there, there is no extended day, extended year, no community hub and no child care....so I do [not] think it is very close to Pascal's report at all. I mean I went through the list of recommendations and maybe one or two suggestions were implemented: the full-day component and a teacher and ECE in the classroom.

Lisa reported:

> The [FDK] program still very easily reflects the factory model education system that filters through the "average achievers," does not have enough stimulation for the "overachievers," and leaves behind the "underachievers". There is not enough flexibility in the program yet. Everything still runs on a rigid schedule and even play is governed and sometime even dictated.
>
> Unfortunately, this program did not achieve its goals. I believe that when faced with this challenge most teachers fell back on what they knew their old style of teaching. For whatever reason, I found the full-day kindergarten learning was hardly any different than the kindergarten program we have always known.

Team Approach

As previously mentioned, prior to field placement two of the four students recalled wanting to observe the "team" approach in the full-day kindergarten classroom. Following her

placement experience, Leanne stated that her perception changed after her experience in the full-day kindergarten classroom:

> It was [not] like that at all. Mostly, I found the teacher was the one who was doing the lesson plan. I found the ECE would offer up ideas but that does [not] mean the teacher would use them. Overall, I found the dynamics between the two was not the greatest. You would see the ECE roll her eyes at the teacher or you would hear the back-talking between the two, the teacher would make a comment to me and say you know she is not really a team player...interesting dynamics but not what I expected.

Following her placement experience, Sheryl noted the dynamics of the principal's role during the implementation phase and made observations about the relationship between the teacher and ECE in the classroom. She reported that:

> My experience was a combination of things. The role of the principal is paramount due to the top-down effects from legislative mandates but I felt the principal showed a lot of opposition towards this program. The principal held traditional conservative views towards learning and she did not support the program or the classrooms implementing this program.
>
> However, the other dynamic to this equation was the ECE. She was very powerful [and] she knew her role as an equal with the teacher. There were some challenges at the beginning of the year and she met those challenges and the room was run beautifully [and] the room was play-based...but as I progressed through my experience I became more aware of how critical it is to be a good educator especially at the early stages of learning.

Play-Based Learning Pedagogy

Following field placement experience, three out of four students reported that what they expect in terms of pedagogical approaches to learning was not what they had observed. Donna stated:

> Play-based and table-top activities were the same [thing]. There was no distinction. The curriculum is supposed to be play-based but I [have] seen a huge focus on work sheets, tracing letters and other literacy activities. Transitions were too frequent and sending a four year old to sit in the office all day because he was not able to self regulate his anger because of all the changes in the classroom schedule was not good behaviour management skills. Is sticking to the schedule more important than supporting a child who is rightfully upset?

Lisa said:

> There was no play-based learning in my classroom. The main focus of this initiative was set aside in the program's expectations. For example, play-based learning occurred but in a very structured nature...there was plenty of paperwork being done by children and they were always expected to be quiet and still even during physical activities.

Leanne responded:

> I guess it goes back to the fact that they [teachers] have curriculum based expectations and they know they need to meet them. There is more value in the printed work, that is, the produced work, as opposed to the process of work. Parents want to see what they are learning and do not necessarily value the idea of them playing all day.

Family Involvement

Following their field placement, two of the four students commented on the family involvement they observed during their experience. Donna reported:

> The school put on a BBQ for parents and children and then invited them into the classrooms to look around and talk to the teachers. I thought this was a great approach to parent involvement because it was very open but it was during the afternoon and parents were [not] expected to come. So I was confused. Are we involving the parents?

Sheryl reported that:

> Most parents did really like the full-day program but there were some concerns. There was inconsistency about the roles. One parent asked "can my child bring his action figures into the classroom or does he have to leave them at home?" There were concerns about violence as a few parents commented that there were a lot more boys than girls. There were comments about the room size and the amount of children in the classroom but the teacher and ECE could not change that. I think parents knew that but just wanted to voice their concerns and the teacher and ECE listened. I think parents respected that.

Question 3: What Impact did these Observations have on the ECE Students?

Level of Satisfaction

All four students identified personal objectives that, prior to the field placement, they wanted to achieve. One student said that she had wanted to see if this could be a future career path and another wanted to effect change while two students said that they had wanted to experience the full-day kindergarten program as they had come to understand it through Pascal's

report. Donna stated that her intentions had been to discover if this setting could be a part of her future career path. She said:

> My reason for choosing the full-day kindergarten placement was ... to [make] sure it was not a direction I wanted to go. I was thinking that if it went well...it could be a future option [be] cause I would have that experience and could just keep it in the back of my mind but I was in the mind frame that if it went well it would be a future decision but I knew I was not going to teachers college and that I did not want to be a kindergarten teacher.

Following her experience, Donna was satisfied not only with her work but also that she was able to determine her future career paths. She reported:

> Definitely not [teaching] in my future. It was difficult because I am working with professionals who did not come from the same background as I did and [therefore] have different philosophies on education especially curriculum and pedagogy implementation [play-based learning], behavioural management, and school readiness.

Lisa's reporting of her intrinsic motives indicated that she wanted to make a difference and that she felt that her role in the full-day kindergarten program would be satisfying. She stated:

> I believed...I would acquire a new sense of accomplishment with my work with children. I truly believed the movement [full-day kindergarten program] was groundbreaking and that I would become a much better educator having played a miniscule part in its unfolding.

Following her experience, Lisa was let down that the program did not fulfill her goal. She responded:

> I feel disappointed, almost let down. I feel as though the program was left to wide interpretation and that the academic approach to learning was favoured over the hand-on emergent curriculum.

Leanne and Sheryl had both asked to complete their field placements in the full-day kindergarten program because they wanted to be a part of the roll-out. They were familiar with Pascal's report and they expected the full-day program to unfold as he recommended. However their experiences in the placement were not what they had expected. Leanne said:

> My placement felt like kindergarten. There was a time to read, a time to eat, a time to draw, and a time to build. Children were still assigned to centres, the activities and toys hardly changed while I was there and expression and creativity were often mistaken for misbehaviours. Children still sat in corners and were sent to the office, they sat quietly and listened to a lesson and answered closed-ended questions.

Sheryl, as previously mentioned, had noted that although the principal was not very supportive of the full-day kindergarten program the relationship between the teacher and ECE had resulted in a strong play-based program. What she took away from this experience led to satisfaction:

> After the program I realized how much the children had absorbed throughout this experience. It helped me realize the importance of early learning and the true impact that ECEs can have. I met older children and realized that some of the skills they demonstrated were skills that I had practised with younger children; the continuum, on which children learn, acquire and master skills were so concrete to me at that moment. This experience has solidified my role as an ECE.

Overall, the full-day kindergarten placement experience seems to have contributed to ECEs' satisfaction and positive attitudes toward their work. One student realized this was not a future path she wanted to pursue at this time whereas another student felt she was not part of a groundbreaking movement because the program was not what she had expected. Nevertheless, three out of four participants were satisfied that they achieved their own personal goals.

Feelings about Teachers

Two students said that, prior to the placement, they had neutral opinions of teachers; one had negative opinions and the other was more positive. All the students explained why they held these opinions. Donna's awareness of her bias prior to placement and following it is evident in her response

> I have a definite bias towards certified teachers just because of the training I have and I know the training early childhood educators have especially those who have a degree compared to a kindergarten teacher who has a year of teachers college under their belt and some experience is great and so my view of kindergarten teachers is that they are less competent then early childhood educators in terms of play-based curriculum, behaviour strategies, involving parents, and cultural competence and diversity.

Donna said that the placement affirmed her view:

> My opinion has not changed. I am still biased towards certified teachers because there are some kindergarten teachers who are really great and are more competent in terms of dealing with behavioural issues and redirecting and modelling, but there are other teachers who do not understand these concepts nor are they willing to explore them.

Leanne and Sheryl were more neutral. Leanne recalled her opinion of teachers prior to placement. She stated that "I really did [not] have a view of teachers in any negative way. Prior to [placement] I was okay with teachers and following placement I still feel the same". Sheryl's reply is similar: "I have [not] had any clear cut view about how to be feeling about teachers. As I said you know they can [not] be blamed for what is happening because this is all they know."

Lisa's perceptions of teachers were more positive. She stated that prior to her placement experience she had always had a high regard for teachers. This perception was reinforced following placement.

> I do not think that what failed me was the teachers surrounding me, more so their lack of a unified direction. I felt each educator was trying their best to interpret the new program as effectively as they could. As for the teachers, they were positive and gave me the opportunities to flourish as a student.

The findings show that field placement experience did not change the feeling or perception that the students had about teachers prior to placement.

Feeling about Themselves as Teachers

When asked how they had felt about their teaching abilities prior to placement, three out of four students said that they had felt insecure about their instructional skills. Lisa replied: "I felt I was committed but still very much a novice looking for the right definition of teaching skills". Following her field placement experience her confidence level did not change. Lisa responded "I felt ...that I [would] gain some experience, yet I remain quite insecure about my

own abilities". Two other students reiterated their insecurities about their ability to teach.

Leanne stated that prior to placement she was not completely comfortable:

> "...in terms of my own teaching abilities I did [not] think they were the highest I did [not] really feel 100% comfortable. If I had to run a classroom I did [not] think I would be able to do it all by myself"

Donna felt that:

> I have been working on the policy and research side of things for a while and I was scared that I had lost my ability to plan excellent curriculum and to work with groups and with individual children. My internship showed me that the skills and knowledge I have acquired though my practice and school is something that I will never lose as long as I continue to be an active member of the child care community.

Following placement, Leanne's confidence increased. She felt:

> a lot more comfortable and that was related to the fact that the teacher really mentored me and gave me the experience and the opportunity to do it.

Sheryl was the only participant who felt confident about her teaching abilities prior to beginning placement. She commented:

> I have always been very confident about my teaching abilities in an all-day kindergarten program believing in play-based activities [and] environment. The most recent concepts being incorporated into our teaching such as connecting home to school [and] I was looking forward to this experience but I have always believed in my teaching.

The findings show that prior to placement, three out of four students felt insecure about their teaching abilities but following their placement experience two of the four students believed they had the ability to teach.

Chapter Summary

This chapter told the story of how students' perception of their role in the full-day kindergarten program changed after placement. The students' stories were told by answering the research questions that addressed their recollection of their expectations prior to field placement, what they observed during their experience and what changed following their experience.

One out of four students shared her expectations on the seamless and integrated system of care and learning prior to field placement. During placement, none of the students observed an integrated and seamless system.

Two of the four students said that they had expected to observe the “team” approach as the Pascal report recommended. Two of the four students reported that, based on their observations, this approach did not unfold as proposed.

All four students said that they had expected a play-based learning approach to be followed in the full-day kindergarten program. Three out of four students reported that they had not observed play-based learning in the program.

Prior to placement, none of the students reported having any expectations of family involvement but following placement two of the four students reportedly observed that family involvement was part of the full-day kindergarten program however, one student reported the family involvement as a negative experience. The student recalled questioning how the school community could consider this a BBQ for parents during the afternoon hours as family involvement.

The observations made by students during their field placement experience in the full-day kindergarten program seemed to have an impact on their level of satisfaction, feelings about teachers and feelings about themselves as teachers.

All four students said that they had identified personal objectives to achieve during their experience. Three out of four students were satisfied that they had achieved their own personal goals during the placement.

The students’ feelings about teachers (one negative, two neutral and one positive) were reported as unchanged during the placement.

Three out of the four students said that they had felt insecure about their instructional skills before the placement. Two out of these three students reported that the experience helped improve their confidence and belief in their teaching abilities.

Chapter V: Discussion

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The first section is devoted to the implications of the findings of this study and how this research may be useful for policy development in educational practices. Second, shortcomings of the study are discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research will be offered.

The purpose of this case study was to understand whether and how students' perceptions of their role (as they recall them) in a full-day kindergarten program changed after a field placement experience. The following questions formed the basis of the research study: (1) what did the ECE students in this study expect they would experience during their placement in the full-day kindergarten program? (2) what observations did these students make during their placement at the full-day kindergarten program? and (3) what impact did these observations have on them?

On September 7, 2010, approximately 600 schools in Ontario opened their doors to a full-day kindergarten program (FDK) that included collaboration between teaching teams of teachers and ECEs. This research is a preliminary examination of the teacher and ECE collaboration during the first year of implementation that was part of the new program. The examination is seen through the lens of early childhood education students who completed their placement in the FDK sites.

Implications

The findings showed that teachers and ECEs were struggling with the implementation of the FDK in the areas that emerged from the interviews - team approach, play-based learning pedagogy and family involvement. Although these findings are limited and represent only a

snapshot of time, these observations may be useful for reflecting on and improving the FDK in areas of staffing structure, approaches to learning and family involvement.

Team Approach

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Dr. Charles Pascal with the task of developing a plan to bring full-day early learning to Ontario. The Early Learning Advisor's report (Pascal, 2009) recommended that for the early learning/kindergarten program, a certified teacher for half of the day, a full-time registered ECE during school hours and one registered ECE for school hours plus extended programming would work as a "team". Dr. Pascal stated: "it is critical that in-service and pre-service development strategies focus on the team, that teachers and ECEs learn together how to create something larger than their important respective contributions, and that they know how to engage in respectful, reciprocal mentoring, always with their learners in mind". (p. 37).

The students reported that their expectations about this were that kindergarten teachers and ECEs would be working together to plan and deliver programming for the FDK classrooms. However, students' observations reported that the "team" environment was not a collaborative effort; rather, the teacher was the "lead" teacher and the ECE was working more in a supportive role. Traditionally, kindergarten teachers have been the "lead" teacher with supporting staff but the expectations of Ontario's kindergarten classroom model were to be a team structure where both educators work together to deliver the curriculum programming.

Indeed some of the tools needed to support the early learning team are in development. The draft version of *The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program* (2010) identifies several components that represent a comprehensive approach to creating a healthy school. In order to ensure high-quality Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten programs, the Ministry of

Education recommends that the teaching team for Early Learning-Kindergarten participate in focused professional learning opportunities.

The Toronto First Duty (TFD) project was included as an exemplar in the Pascal report and had informed the development of the new program. Research conducted on TFD at Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre showed that a teaching team of kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, parenting staff and educational assistants delivered the program together. Initial findings showed the collaboration of partnerships amongst team members was challenging. However, a few years after its initial roll-out the research showed "that with strong leadership, joint professional development and time for program planning, the integrated staff team strengthens the common pedagogy, curriculum and learning environment for children" (Toronto First Duty, 2009, p. 2). A good step forward would be to revisit the findings of TFD on this process.

Play-Based Learning Pedagogy

The Pascal report recommended that the curriculum and pedagogy for the Best Start Child and Family Centres, and the Early Learning Program use the approaches found in ELECT and the existing Ministry of Education curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program (revised)*. Following field placement experience, students reported that although they expected play-based approaches to learning, this was not what they had observed. Leanne reported "that teachers have curriculum based expectations...and there is more value in the produced work than the process". As well, Lisa reported that play-based learning took place in a structured manner: she specified the amount of daily paper work that the children were required to complete before they could "play". She said that "there was no play-based learning in my classroom as the main focus of this initiative was set aside by the program's expectations". In addition, Donna stated that

there was no distinction between play-based learning and table-top activities. She reported that "the curriculum was supposed to be play-based but I have seen a huge focus on work sheets, tracing letters and other literacy activities".

These findings showed that based on these students' observations the play-based learning pedagogy recommended in the Early Learning Advisor's report was not fully part of the implementation of the FDK. This feedback from student observations on the front-line of the FDK suggests that more work needs to be done to ensure that the play-based approach to learning recommended in the ELA report and supported by the Ontario government is fully implemented.

Recent changes to *The Kindergarten Program (revised)*, suggests that the Ministry of Education is moving ahead with play-based pedagogy learning which will ensure full implementation as recommended in the ELA report. The new draft version of *The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program* incorporates the role of play in the FDK classroom. This document acknowledges that play is a vehicle for learning and team members are to guide learning experiences through scaffolding; that is, a temporary framework that is put up to support and enhance learning for students. This tool that was developed by the Ministry of Education was not implemented during the first phase of the FDK but will support the team as they plan to help children meet program expectations (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Family Involvement

The Early Learning Advisor's report highlighted the importance of family involvement as a primary focus of the full-day learning program proposed. However, the recollections of students in this study suggest there was limited family engagement in the settings they observed. Donna recalled the school BBQ for parents in which many parents would not be able to attend

because it was held during the afternoon hours and she questioned how the school community could consider this as family involvement. As well, Sheryl had stated that in her work environment in a child care centre, families were at the core of her programming, but during her experience in the FDK classroom she observed there was less clear communication with parents.

A promising step forward by the Ministry of Education is the new draft version of *The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program*. In this document, the role of parents as partners with the school and community is outlined. Of interest is that this document highlights parental involvement as suggested in the ELECT documentation.

One of the core components of the Toronto First Duty was family involvement. TFD was found to facilitate parent participation in their child's early learning. Research from this site showed that parents were more involved with their child's learning, felt better able to support their needs, felt more empowered, communicated better with program staff and were more likely to sustain involvement in the child's schooling than parents whose children attended conventional child care and kindergarten programs (Corter & Pelletier, 2010). Research conducted on TFD at Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre showed that parents were welcomed to eat lunch and snacks with their children, join in their children's classroom activities and participate in parent/child activities (2009). This research would be useful in suggesting ways of involving families in the FDK program.

Seamless System of Early Learning

The Early Learning Advisor's report recommended creating a system of early learning, child care and family supports for children from the prenatal period to adolescence. Essentially, the report recommended three linked integrated and seamless systems of care and learning: Best Start Child and Family Centres for children under four years of age, the Early Learning Program

for four and five year olds, and the Extended Day Primary Program for six to eight year olds and After-School Program for nine to twelve year olds.

The Pascal report came out in June 2009, and later that year the provincial government cancelled the requirement that extended day programming be provided (although schools could choose to offer it if they so chose). As this shift received considerable media coverage, the students may not have expected to see a seamless system, yet they were disappointed. Donna stated that "essentially it is just a full day of kindergarten and that to me is all that has been implemented. Instead of having kids there for half a day they are now there the full day and now you have an ECE there, there is no extended day, extended year, no community hub and no child care".

Shortcomings of this Research

There are a number of factors about this study that can be critiqued. The selection process was limited by excluding part-time students, whose participation could have contributed further to the findings. As well, the research was conducted during the summer break when most full-time students were away from campus.

Also, the background information, although detailed in its explanation of the history and shifts in ECEC reform in Ontario, only provided an overview of some of the themes highlighted in this research. A more in-depth review of the literature on some of the issues raised by the study's participants would have helped place their observations in context. In addition, the findings in this study represent a snapshot in time in the first phase of a new program and cannot be considered as generalizations. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study can contribute to an understanding of how perceptions can affect field placement experiences for students.

For the purpose of this study, the methodology was appropriate. However, the lack of interviewing experience on the part of the researcher may have contributed to inherent biases that might have skewed the findings. The purpose of semi-structured interviews was to allow the researcher to probe for additional information. It is this sought-after information that may have tainted these findings. Furthermore, some questions were worded imprecisely. For example, the researcher asked students: "prior to this experience how did you feel about your placement culture?" All students initially thought the question was referring to their native or home culture and an explanation was necessary.

One of this study's strengths – to investigate a very current issue – also provided one of the greatest challenges. This research was conducted just after the initial roll-out of the full-day kindergarten program. As this program is a new initiative, there are limited resources on which to draw and some of the elements of the program are still under development and in flux. This may, in part, explain why the students in this research were confused about what to expect during their field placement experience at the full-day kindergarten program.

Recommendations

Additional research regarding the effects perception can have on student placement expectations could confirm the results of this study. It would be interesting to extend the data collection to include all students in the ECE program and a before-and-after placement approach to ECE students pursuing a college diploma or university degree in early childhood education could prove fascinating. Further studies on student placements throughout Phase 2 and Phase 3 could show significant changes to their perceptions as well as the impact these observations have on them.

Further work, consultations and professional development with the kindergarten teachers and ECEs may help establish roles and responsibilities within the "team" environment. Very little support was given during the initial stage of implementation. In addition, ECEs have some experience working in various settings however; they may need additional support as they find their place within the FDK program.

If schools are to integrate family involvement, the program needs to provide encouragement and opportunities for parents to be a part of the children's education. As Phase 2 of the FDK is being implemented, schools and communities should find ways that include families. This could include an open-door policy, at least at the beginning and end of the day, more frequent parent meetings, and collaborative work on program and curriculum.

Conclusion

Ontario has the opportunity to become a leader in transforming and bridging the divide between child care and education. The Early Learning Advisor's report provides the provincial government with specific directions to effect change, and build on existing resources to make sure our children get the best start in life, that families are supported in their parenting role and that our communities are strengthened by stronger families.

Appendix A

Expression of Interest

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Early Childhood Educator's Role in Ontario Kindergartens:
Does Field Placement Experience Change Expectations?

Hello Undergraduate ECE students:

My name is Bonnie Marsh and I am a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Arts ECE program at Ryerson University. Currently, I am a student in the Master of Arts program degree in Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson. This spring I will be conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for this program. I will examine the expectations and experiences of Ryerson ECE students who have completed a field placement in a full-day kindergarten classroom. This letter will outline the research project I am conducting. Please review this information and if you are interested in participating or you have questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your interest.

Bonnie Marsh
bonnie.marsh@ryerson.ca

Risks: As this project focuses on a very small population (ECE with placement in the full-day kindergarten setting) and the interviews will be conducted at Ryerson University, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. To protect against this risk the researcher will use pseudonyms and change any identifying characteristics of the students.

Benefits: It is anticipated that the results of this study will identify and provide valuable insights into how perception affects placement experiences for student teachers. However, there are no direct benefits to individuals volunteering to participate in this research study.

Time Commitment: One interview between 45-60 minutes at Ryerson University and approximately 30 minutes to review transcription notes from the interview.

Criteria: You must be a student in the ECE program at Ryerson University and have completed one placement in the full-day kindergarten classroom.

Thank you again for your interest
Bonnie

Appendix B

Email from researcher that the student is accepted as a participant in this project.

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Early Childhood Educator's Role in Ontario Kindergartens:
Does Field Placement Experience Change Expectations?

Hello XXX:

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project.

Interviews will be conducted on Tuesday (May 3 & May 10) and Thursday (May 5 & May 12) between the hours of 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm. Interviews will be held at Kerr Hall South 354A and last approximately 45-60 minutes. Please email me with your preferred day and time.

Kind regards,

Bonnie Marsh
bonnie.marsh@ryerson.ca

Appendix C
Consent Form

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
FACULTY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies

Consent Agreement
Early Childhood Educator's Role in Ontario Kindergartens:
Does Field Placement Experience Change Expectations?

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigator:
Bonnie Marsh
Under the course supervision of:

Martha Friendly, Adjunct Professor
School of Early Childhood Education
Ryerson University
416-926-9264
mfriendly@childcarecanada.org

Rachel Langford, Professor
School of Early Childhood Education
Ryerson University
416-979-5000, ext. 7635
rlangfor@ryerson.ca

Purpose of the Case Study:
This case investigation is an assignment towards the completion of the course major research project (MRP) as part of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies degree program at Ryerson University. The purpose of this case study is to understand how early childhood education (ECE) student's perception of their role in the full-day kindergarten program changes after their placement and how this experience affects their job satisfaction, school culture and teaching ability. The number of subjects will depend on the amount of ECE students who wish to volunteer for this case study. Only eligible ECE students from Ryerson University who have completed a placement in the full day kindergarten program will be considered for this case study.

Description of the Study:
You will be interviewed using an in-depth individual interview about the change process in which you were involved. The interview will take 45-60 minutes. You will be asked open-ended questions and will be given the opportunity to elaborate on your perceptions and experiences. The researcher will ask questions related to your perception of your role in the full-day kindergarten program before and after placement and how your experience affected your job

satisfaction, school environment and belief in your teaching ability. Responses will be written down by investigator and audiotape. Location for interviews will be conducted at Kerr Hall South 354A at Ryerson University.

Risks or Discomforts:

Risk to early childhood education students could include the identification of individuals and their personal discourse. As this project focuses on a very small population (ECE with placement in the full-day kindergarten setting) and the interviews will be conducted at Ryerson University, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. To protect against this risk, pseudonyms and changes in identifying characteristics will occur. To avoid participants' being revealed any personal information that could be construed as an identifying characteristic will be deleted from the narrative.

Benefits of the Study:

The project will provide a deeper understanding and explanation of the impact of changes in perception of early childhood educator's teaching role on their job satisfaction, culture of school and belief in their teaching ability. It is anticipated that the results of this study will identify and provide valuable insights into how perception affects placement experiences for student teachers. However, there are no direct benefits to individuals volunteering to participate in this research study.

This study has the potential to contribute meaningfully to both the literature on educational practices as well as to future policy. An additional benefit is to encourage further research on the positive effects of collaboration in education.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be protected throughout the process of this study. A fictional name will be used for your organization and any specific identifiable characteristics will be altered. Your perceptions and opinions will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Direct quotes from you may be used in the final report but they will not be attributable to you or reveal your identity.

Each interview will be sent to a transcriber who will transfer the interviews to Word documents. The paid transcriber will not have access to the master list that identifies you. To ensure that I am comprehensive in my research, I will also be taking notes during each interview. Audiotapes and transcripts of the interviews will not be released under any conditions without the direct written consent of the individual involved. All data, including audiotapes and transcriptions, will be stored at Ryerson University in Rachel Langford office cabinet.

A master list of the participants and their pseudonyms will be kept separate from the data collected. The principal investigator will be the only person with a copy of the master list of participants that allows for identification.

Incentives to Participate:

The researcher will not be offering incentives to individuals volunteering to participate in this research study.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation:
You will be required to pay for your own transportation cost to the designated area for participation in this study.

Voluntary nature of Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether you would like to participate, or not, will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University, the School of Early Childhood Education or the agency where you completed your placement. If you choose to participate you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty.

At any particular point in the study, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether. Before and after the interview if you wish to withdrawal from this study you can notify me via email and I will not include your comments in this research project. If during the interview, you wish to withdrawal the interview will stop and your information will be erased from the audiotapes.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any questions about the study you may ask them now. If you have any questions later you may contact:

Student: Bonnie Marsh
bonnie.marsh@ryerson.ca

Faculty: Martha Friendly
mfriendly@childcarecanada.org

If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board for information.

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovations
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3
416-979-5042

Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that:

- You have read the information in this consent agreement.
- You have had a chance to ask any questions about the study
- You would like to participate in the study.
- You are aware that you can withdraw this consent at any time during the study without penalty by contacting the student investigator.
- You have been given a copy of this consent form with all contact information.
- You have been informed that by signing this consent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

I wish to take part in this research project ☐ please check if applicable

I do not wish to take part in this research project ☐ please check if applicable

_____

Name of Participant (please print)

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

Audiotape Recording Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that you are aware that this interview will be audiotape recorded and verbatim transcriptions will be later made from the audiotapes. It also indicates that at any time during the interview you may withdraw your consent. If this occurs the interview will be discontinued and your information will not be used in the final analysis and report.

I wish to take part in this research project ☐ please check if applicable

I do not wish to take part in this research project ☐ please check if applicable

_____
Name of Participant (please print)

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

Appendix D
Timeline

Proposal to Advisor	January 17
Read Time	January- February
2nd Proposal Draft to Advisory	February
Submit Proposal to Ethics Board	March 15
Write Chapter 1- Introduction	March
Revise Proposal for Ethics Board	March
Write Chapter 2 – Literature Review	March
Launch – Approval from REB	March 29, 2011
Revise Chapter 1 & 2	April
Write Chapter 3 - Methodology	April
Data Collection	May 3, 5, 10 & 12
Data Analyzed	June
Revise Chapter 3 – Methodology	June
Write Chapter 4 – Analysis of Data and Findings Write Chapter 5 – Conclusion	July
Draft to Advisor	August
Rewrite	August
Defence	August
Revise	August - September
Final draft	September 16, 2011 by noon
Commencement	October 20, 2011

Appendix E

GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEWER including interview protocol

Confirmation of the interview

One or two days prior to the interview, the interviewer will confirm the date and time of the interview to minimize last-minute eventualities. As well as confirming the appointment, the interviewer should also indicate the estimated duration of the interview and remind participant to review the consent form prior to attending the interview.

Commencement of the interview

Presenting the program and its aims: Before asking questions, it is important that the participant understand the program in which he or she is participating, and its objectives. The confidentiality of the information obtains in this project should be stressed. Prior to commencing with the questions, the researcher will go over the consent form and ask participate for verbal consent which is to be recorded on audiotape.

Interview questions

For Early Childhood Education Students:

1. What did you believe you would get out of this placement prior to commencement?
2. How do you feel now about this experience?
3. Prior to this experience how did you feel about your teaching abilities?
4. How do you feel now?
5. Prior to this experience how did you feel towards teachers?
6. How do you feel now?
7. Tell me about your placement?
8. Prior to this experience how did you feel about your placement culture
9. How do you feel now?
10. Describe your personal teaching style?
11. Do you have any stories that you are willing to share about how this program affected your style?
12. How would you describe what the full day kindergarten program wanted to accomplish with this program?
13. Do you feel they achieved it?
14. Why?
15. Prior to this program what were the tools you used as an ECE student?
16. Has this changed during your participation in the program?
17. Prior to this program whom did you speak to about your participation in this program?
18. Who do you tell about it now?
19. What do you tell them?
20. Prior to this program did you spend much time thinking about your role in education?
21. Do you think about it now?
22. Do you have a sense that your work matters?
23. How did this program affect that feeling?

The ensuing conversation should include clarifying the role of the interview, avoiding any examples that might interfere with the subject's response and ideas. During the elaboration of the interview, the interviewer should note the propositions, affirmations and new ideas put forward by the participant.

Closing the interview – Thank the participant for his or her time and co-operation and remind them that I will forward a copy of the interview for review by them via email. Participants will be reminded that they have two weeks to review the document and respond with any corrections via email or phone.

Appendix F

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

To: Bonnie Rose Marsh
Early Childhood Studies
Re: REB 2011-103: Early Childhood Educator's Role in Ontario Kindergartens: Does Field Placement Experience Change Expectations?

Date: March 29, 2011

Dear Bonnie Rose Marsh,

The review of your protocol REB File REB 2011-103 is now complete. The project has been approved for a one year period. Please note that before proceeding with your project, compliance with other required University approvals/certifications, institutional requirements, or governmental authorizations may be required.

This approval may be extended after one year upon request. Please be advised that if the project is not renewed, approval will expire and no more research involving humans may take place. If this is a funded project, access to research funds may also be affected.

Please note that REB approval policies require that you adhere strictly to the protocol as last reviewed by the REB and that any modifications must be approved by the Board before they can be implemented. Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication from the Principal Investigator as to how, in the view of the Principal Investigator, these events affect the continuation of the protocol.

Finally, if research subjects are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research.

Please quote your REB file number (REB 2011-103) on future correspondence.
Congratulations and best of luck in conducting your research.

Nancy Walton, Ph.D.
Chair, Research Ethics Board

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GLOSSARY

Discourses are characteristics that make up an ideology; it is the words and actions that construct meaning about our world (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gee, 2001; Purdue, Gordon-Burns, Gunn, Madden & Surtees, 2009).

Early childhood education and care is defined as formal teaching and care of young children in settings outside the home.

Early Childhood Educators are defined as educators that have received professional designation (RECE) from the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. They hold a two-year college diploma or a four-year undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education.

Early childhood education students are students enrolled at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario. Students are enrolled in the four year Bachelor of Arts program in Early Childhood Education.

Pedagogy is the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning. This includes teaching methods, strategies and techniques (City of Toronto, 2005).

Teachers are defined as elementary teachers with the Toronto District School Board that have received professional designation from The Ontario College of Teachers. They hold a four-year undergraduate degree plus a year of teacher training.