WHO IS THE EYT?
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO A FIRST YEAR TEACHER’S EXPERIENCES OF INTEGRATING A SOPHISTICATED THINKING SKILLS MODEL IN A STANDARDS BASED, KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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Although there are several people who have helped and supported me throughout this journey, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, John and Kitten, who are part of the core inspiration for committing to my professional calling. Thank you for the lifelong support and love.
The first year of teaching is full of many surprises, challenges, and insights; however, there is a paucity of experience by entry year teachers that shows the first year of teaching to be committed to the ideals of fostering Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) model of 3S understanding. This study lends itself to beginning research in this area by describing the engagement of a specific 3S model, *Philosophy for Children* (Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980). *Philosophy for Children* not only works with subject knowledge, but also enhances K-12 students’ understanding of the democratic self and social spheres of living. By engaging students in a disciplined and meaningful way of thinking, the participant in the study, an entry year teacher goes against the grain and provides insight and possibilities to working with curriculum through a lens of democratic understanding in order to challenge the dominant paradigms and initial habituation of first year teachers. Through collaboration and narrative analysis, this teacher’s first year experiences, perceptions, and interpretations are brought to the forefront of examining new ways of working with first year teachers. This study shows that working with EYTs is important for fostering subject knowledge and teaching responsibilities, but also important for developing democratic self and social responsibilities (Henderson & Kesson, 2004).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for the Study</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Points of Teacher Education Programs</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Year Teacher Socialization and Induction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Curricular Visions and Philosophy for Children</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S Understanding and the Linkage to Philosophy for Children</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Partnerships/Mentoring</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Research</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. RESEARCH DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY ............................................................... 63
  Setting and Participant ............................................................................................. 65
  Researcher’s Role and Ethical Understandings ....................................................... 66
  Data Collection Methods ......................................................................................... 68
  Data Management and Analysis .............................................................................. 71
  Indicators of Rigor ................................................................................................... 75
  Contributions to the Field ........................................................................................ 76

IV. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................. 77
  Introduction .............................................................................................................. 77

  Walking the Course: Moving From Standardized Management to Constructive Best
  Practice Into Curriculum Wisdom: An EYT’s Past Experiences, Present
  Perceptions, and Interpretations........................................................................ 85
  Past Experiences ............................................................................................. 85
  Present Perceptions ....................................................................................... 96
  Interpretations ................................................................................................. 105

  Philosophy for Children in the Classroom: Sarah’s Experiences, Perceptions,
  and Interpretations .............................................................................................. 108
  Experiences ........................................................................................................ 108
  Perceptions ........................................................................................................ 116
  Interpretations ..................................................................................................... 119

  On the Road to 3S Understanding-Using Reflective Inquiry: An EYT’s
  Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations of the Following:
APPENDIX K. DOCUMENTATION OF TEACHER/RESEARCHER COLLABORATION ........................................................................................................... 173

APPENDIX L. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS .............................................. 179

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................... 182
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Increased exposure to deliberative dialogue and reasoning in early childhood classrooms is designed to improve and enrich the curriculum with hopes of creating a deepened understanding of democratic experience. However, as stated by Li Li (2004), the lack of exposure to deliberative dialogue and reasoning is still widely acceptable in schools. In fact, Li Li clearly described the notion of silence as more widely regarded in schools (which is considered a disciplined approach to effective teaching and learning). This view further ignores the need for dialogue, which as Jones (2005) stated, “provides the opportunity for the development of tolerance, understanding, and ultimately unity: it can decrease instances of ignorance and racism and other prejudices that are the basis of social division” (p. 57), highlighting the need for dialogue in regards to developing democratic self and social understandings. However, one may ask, “How can dialogue also help subject understandings?” McCarty (2006) believed that this can best be achieved through dialogue because it will help children deeply examine the subject(s) of study and also help children think about the meanings behind the subjects. She stated that this form of dialogue, otherwise stated as “philosophy,” is part of enacting a love for wisdom (p. 1).

Inevitably, dialogue is important to the curriculum; however, this form of dialogue, through the usage of *Philosophy for Children* (Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980), is not widely recognized in research studies regarding the lives of first year
teachers. Unfortunately, many entry year teachers (otherwise known as EYT)s may be participating in mentoring programs during the first year of practice and possibly lack a focused habit of study in regards to embracing what Henderson and Kesson (2004) described as 3S understanding. 3S understanding is a shorthand notion referring to a balanced integration of subject matter understandings with democratic self and social understandings, one of many approaches to curriculum and a particular way to engage in professional discipline. However, in this study, the participant, Sarah, is working primarily out of a 3S orientation through a particular curriculum program that embraces the above definition of 3S understanding.

The particular curriculum program titled *Philosophy for Children*, used by Sarah in this study, is a specific teaching application of the “3S understanding” curriculum orientation. However, the usage of *Philosophy for Children* or other 3S models of curriculum are rare in the lives of first year teachers and ultimately lacking in the area of research on mentoring programs with first year teachers. The importance of this study rests in the quest for discovering how Sarah can integrate a particular model of 3S understanding into a Kindergarten classroom. However, in order to understand the value of researching an EYT that works with such a model, it is also important to discuss why other first year teachers may not have embraced a curriculum approach such as 3S understanding. This is discussed through concepts of EYT's developing particular habits during their first year of teaching, new teacher anticipation, undergraduate training, and mentoring program flaws. The discussion of these concepts are intertwined with literature
as well as my own assumptions in order to effectively introduce the importance of the study.

EYTs may develop habits during their first year of teaching; however, several of these habits align with the “good employee model” (following the status quo) of teacher education training rather than participating in a life of study aligned with the goal of 3S understanding (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Although other approaches to curriculum may also work against the grain of the “good employee model,” 3S understanding is the approach that is used during the study, through the application of *Philosophy for Children*. The reason this approach to curriculum is worth studying through the lens of an EYT is because of the characteristically challenging assumptions made regarding the habituation of dogmatic habits during the first year of teaching. Several teachers resist forming habits of innovation in subject matter, personal development, discovery for meaning, and the commitment to challenging civic responsibilities because they are working out of Wong and Wong’s (1998) guide to becoming an effective first year teacher (which ignores the above habits). Along with Wong and Wong’s first year of teaching survival pointers, EYTs become accustomed to validate the notion of dogmatic thinking, such as aligning their purpose with the HQT model (highly qualified teacher) that teachers are suggested to follow throughout their teaching career (Berry, 2002). Through dogmatic models such as HQT, it is assumed that new teachers are simply maintaining the status quo, practicing technical skills, and solely focusing on content knowledge. This act of behaving like the “good employee” or the “highly qualified teacher” possibly limits achieving an inquiry disposition beyond teaching subject
knowledge. To support this assumption, Berry (2002) stated, “Because of the almost singular focus on content knowledge, states will rely on rather simple subject matter tests to gauge whether or not teachers are highly qualified” (p. 1). This pressure by the state highlights why some teachers may continually follow the status quo position.

Although not every teacher goes through identical obstacles nor creates the same meaning making experience, most EYTs create a comparatively “roller coaster” classroom during their first year. Ellen Moir (1990) provided a breakdown to these roller coaster classrooms and the challenges they present to entry year teachers. She designed the challenges in forms of stages and claimed that most first year teachers follow the same sequence of stages, while acknowledging that the experiences in the stages may differ. Anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection are the stages through which Moir believed all teachers walk during their first year of teaching. However, if we consider Moir’s stages to be aligned with researched EYTs that follow dogmatic habits of study, Moir’s stages may help to inform why most EYTs disregard or embrace an inquiry disposition, such as 3S understanding. Or should the EYT’s skepticism as a result of inadequate mentoring and/or induction programs be considered?

Although Moir’s (1990) claims may be valid, she failed to conduct research on EYTs that were able to initially or continually articulate the importance of transformative approaches to curriculum, such as 3S understanding. Instead, Moir researched EYTs that participated in traditionally based preparation and mentoring programs. However, I do recognize validity to Moir’s stages of development and assume that most EYTs would begin the practice with Moir’s first stage of new teacher development. This first stage
seems especially intriguing for this study due to understanding the expectations and experiences of new teachers. Moir (1990) stated, “New teachers enter with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals” (p. 1).

From this understanding of new teacher anticipation, it is alarming how many entry year teachers shake off their eagerness, fall into Moir’s (1990) survival stage after just a short few weeks of teaching, and continue to remain in the stage throughout the majority of the school year. According to Rodriguez (2002), this would be known as the status quo position, where EYTs revert to the historically traced habits of entry year teachers. Although many diverse challenges can be presented in any given classroom, some EYTs ignore or alter their initial expectations for teaching after they begin their practice of teaching. Some educational theorists may claim the alteration as the victim of unsuccessful teacher preparation, whereas others lead readers to the assumption that this change is represented by poor induction and/or mentoring programs during the first year of teaching (Wong & Wong, 1998). My assumptions are aligned more with the second notion of understanding. I assume that the swift change of stages is the result of lacking induction practices that focus on developing and sustaining teaching for 3S understanding.

Brock and Grady (1998) discussed the need for new teachers to connect theories and teaching methods learned in pre-service education experiences to classroom practices; however, research shows that many EYTs are not receiving this form of support in their district induction programs. Rather than mentoring programs’ mission
statements aligning with a life of study for democratic living, mentoring programs are aligning the mission of teaching with a “tied product” business model. DePaul (2000) stated that teachers are leaving the field within their first five years of teaching as a result of many issues; however, a vast number of promising teachers are leaving due to their lack of professional confidence and inadequate support. Paese (1990) also argued that most beginning teachers want the advice and assistance of experienced teachers; yet, EYT s are also fearful of looking unskilled if they inquire about particular topics, have concerns with school politics, and may feel as if they are a nuisance to the district mentor. Additional to the literature, my assumption is also a result of a constructed view of re-storying my experiences as an EYT.

Reflecting on my first teaching position in the fall of 1999, I was offered a full time Kindergarten position, teaching a maximum of 12 students. The pay was high average, the school was newly built, and there was a surplus of student materials; however, there was also a lack of human resources. Although the above components to being hired were enticing and had surpassed my highest expectations, I quickly began to realize the personal need for critical companions. The new school only had three teachers, a reading specialist, and a secretary. The principal, also the mentor for all EYT s, was housed in a building 10 minutes east of the new school; therefore, personal contact with the mentor was rare and relationships were not immediately formed. This provided a detrimental kink in the smooth chain of events during my first year of teaching.

Certainly the new classroom and materials, competitive salary, and schedule seemed appealing; however, I quickly realized the support I needed as an entry year
teacher. This type of support was beyond another teacher or secretary providing a map of the building, a phone number to the personnel office, or a 10-minute training on how to read an “IEP” form. According to Huling-Austin (1992) and Rust (1994), I was experiencing what most teachers view as the reality shock syndrome, defined as expectations quite different from what they were as pre-service educators. However, my “shock syndrome” was placed in a slightly different category. I was not shocked by cultural ignorance or behavioral management predicaments, but by the paucity of deliberation, discussion, and relation to connecting the practice beyond the classroom. I felt as if I had been sucked into a vacuum that solely consisted of a school building, rather than feeling as the building was part of a larger world and did not realize until later that this aspect of my past was directly correlated with future goals. Rogers and Babinski (1999) referred to this missing state as a psychological form of isolation. I was not sullied with several time constraints; yet, I had few people to dialogue with in my particular environment. I had several concerns about how to consider my work with students in relationship to democracy and could not figure out how to begin researching or understanding the puzzlements due to a lack of support and guidance in the areas that were most needed. The secretary was helpful when I needed a phone number or more paper for the copier machine; however, this was her first year in an educational setting and she was traveling through similar stages of isolation and “mechanic” training. The new teachers were helpful with sharing practical ideas, and the reading specialist was helpful with offering advice on “time saving” techniques.
Aside from the received advice, I wanted the children to make better connections with their knowledge and wanted to engage them in meaningful work, beyond textbook, constructivist learning. However, my practicing line of inquiry at the time was more aligned with dogmatic discovery than deepening my understanding of democratic experience. I had the desire for such experience, but in practice, I was following the “good employee” model. As I re-visited Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) following statement, I now recognize that my entry year of teaching was lacking in professional interaction.

The more we interact with diverse others, the more varied stimuli we are required to respond to, the more our intelligence grows. We construct ourselves in relation to others and we grow in self-understanding as we reflect upon our relationships with others. We make moral choices not as isolated individuals but as members of communities. (p. 57)

Yet, according to Ryan (1979), I may have contributed to my own isolation from my lack of questioning and quest for support. I aspired for help and accepted help when delivered; however, I was not seeking help in a professionally reflective manner. This may be a natural component of the life of an EYT. From my recollections, I did not want to seem either incompetent or “in a different world,” a natural comment shared by many EYTs. During the few conversations that I did have with colleagues, I could tell that issues of behavior management, bulletin board structure, and parent communication were the tacit concerns and pressures on the weekly discussion board. I was bothered by those
discussions because I was also habituated in following the “good employee” model of becoming a highly qualified teacher.

During the evaluation process, my principal was impressed at the level of reflection that I was performing as an EYT and later proposed other colleagues to execute similar reflections following formal evaluations. However, I was not convinced that my current state of reflection was to be emulated. I was disgruntled with my performance as a teacher because I did not spend sufficient time reflecting with others on the connections between real world problems and contrived classroom ideas. Instead, I was following the reflection stages (1-2) that Jacobs (2002) described when referring to the developmental sequence of reflection stages:

- **Level 1** is termed *technical rationality*, which is not really reflection but simply a reporting of events. This level is seen as an important aspect of initial teacher development and is a precursor to the other levels. **Level 2** is identified as *descriptive* and includes providing reasons for ones actions based on personal judgment or the professional literature. **Level 3** is *dialogic* reflection and is a form of deliberate cognitive discourse within ones self that includes weighing different viewpoints and exploring alternatives. **Level 4** is described as *critical* reflection involves thinking about the effects of ones actions on others, taking the broader historical, social, and/or political context into account, and questioning ones practice. **Level 5** is described as *contextual* and involves being able to apply levels 1-4 as new situations arise. (pp. 30-31)
In this instance, I remained stagnant at level two, where most EYT's remain in their first year of teaching without proper support systems (Jacobs). I was quietly starting to embrace critical literacy; however, I was only performing this level of reflection as an individual, rather than as a critical friend in dialogue with others. My practical focus was connected with subject knowledge and behavioral objectives, rather than preparing students for civic responsibility. Yet, I was constantly questioning how to better my teaching without apprehending how to focus these questions. Unrealized at the time, I wanted a supportive, theoretical framework to make sense of what was happening in the practice. I had the desire to make wise judgments and participated in some collaboration to solve problems; yet, I was inducted to follow a different form of habituation.

Aside from collaborative mentoring programs, the Philosophy for Children curriculum allows for novice teachers to participate in an alternative habituation (different from my above experience), otherwise known as the disciplined practice of 3S understanding. Fortunately, this habituation can become concretized due to the practical guides and support systems provided through the Philosophy for Children books. In Sharp and Splitter’s (2000) manual to the P4C text, *The Doll Hospital*, the authors made both novice and veteran teachers feel comfortable participating in a model of balancing subject, self, and social understandings in the classroom. They supported this by explicitly providing an introduction that foundationally and practically grounds 3S understanding. They stated,

Your children will work in what is called a community of philosophical inquiry—a group of people who are willing to deliberate together about matters of
importance to them. In the process they will learn to listen to one another, question each other’s assumptions, give examples and counterexamples, ask each other for reasons, make good distinctions, build on one another’s ideas and follow the inquiry where it leads. They will learn to take turns talking, to read faces, to listen for the meanings behind the words, and to look at issues and problems from more than one point of view. Why should children learn these things? Because it is in the mastery of thee cognitive and social skills that children come to make better judgments. (p. 1)

We would advise you, with your students to take stock every few weeks and ask yourselves how you’re progressing in becoming a working community of inquiry. For example: Are the children asking each other good questions? Are we giving each other reasons for our views? Are we listening to each other? Are we able to stick to the point? Are we able to give examples and counterexamples? Are we able to build on one another’s ideas? The community of philosophical inquiry is not just a cognitive enterprise. It is a social enterprise that can take on great meaning for children and adults. (p. 2)

However, although the above introduction clips help the novice recognize both the value and the support offered by the P4C manual, the novice will also need to participate on a self-examined journey to recognize the positive and negative aspects of personal experiences that lead to the implementation of such a disciplined program as Philosophy for Children.
From this understanding and my previous experiences as an EYT, I agree with Nozick (1989) that when examining our lives, we should realize that our lives are written upon both types of positions, positive and negative. We may not ask for the negative positions to exist; however, when they do, they can be enlightening to the examinations of our lives and the lives of others. As stated by Nozick,

True, we would not, even if we could, change all of that negative past which has shaped and deepened us, made us what we are (though this is not to say we would not change any of it); yet, few of us therefore seek out even more of the negative to gain further deepening still. Intense negative emotions, then, get valued not for their negativeness but only because of what they make of us; we don’t choose them. (p. 127)

However, I also believe that when examining our lives, we need to consider the possibilities open to examination. This study attempts to acknowledge the examination process through means of disciplined collaboration. These collaborative efforts not only enhance understandings, but also provide the potential for growth throughout the study.

This recollection of personal experience is a small, yet, integral part of my current interest in understanding how an EYT could develop an understanding of 3S understanding. In addition, I am also interested to observe how a collaborative researcher (or what Doll [1978] stated as an educational leader) impacts Sarah’s implementation of such a sophisticated program as Philosophy for Children.

This study is important due to the findings that a thinking skills model such as Philosophy for Children, which encapsulates 3S understanding, has the possibility of
being implemented, regardless of age or entry into the teaching profession. In addition to closely working with the participant as a critical companion partaking in collaborative research, I believe my reading of relevant literature will shed light on how Sarah experiences integrating a sophisticated thinking skills model in a standards based, Kindergarten classroom. I also believe that the particular pieces of literature regarding teacher education programs and induction, as well as identifying the paucity of research that ignores the reason or reasons why EYTs do not attempt to integrate sophisticated programs with a democratic trajectory (as opposed to a traditional compulsory trajectory) can shed light on this assumption. I am interested in describing the life of an entry year teacher that attempts to employ a different path of study and challenge the traditional compulsory trajectory with a thoughtful and feasible approach to teaching children how to become better thinkers in the classroom (despite the possibility that scholarly literature, teacher preparation, and colleagues may continue to suppress the well sought initiative of the first year teacher).

My goal for this study is to thoroughly describe the interaction between Sarah, the teacher, and her understanding of teaching for 3S understanding through the use of Philosophy for Children. I have immersed myself in this literature throughout the study so that I can better understand the story that will unfold as the entry year teacher and myself collaboratively research this particular case through narrative methodology. I have collected data from Sarah in forms of journal entries and interviews and have attempted to develop an understanding of her story and experiences with using a model of 3S understanding by observing her interactions inside the classroom environment and while
facilitating *Philosophy for Children* sessions. I analyzed journals, interview responses, and field notes through use of a narrative story map. By using this adapted story map (Richmond, 2002), Sarah and I were better able to examine how the participant’s past experiences, present experiences, and perceptions and intentions help the story to unfold in a meaningful way that informs her practice and possibly the practice of future first year teachers.

During the study, I observed and participated as a resource in the classroom and also spent quality time with the teacher inside and outside of the school setting. This level of relational commitment may help to develop a more authentic and collaborative narrative to understanding and describing the experiences and structure of an EYT who employs a disciplined life of study by integrating a refined thinking skills program into a Kindergarten classroom with the support of a critical companion or what Doll (1978) referred to as the “educational leader.”

The setting for the study was a co-educational, full day Kindergarten classroom in Northeastern Ohio. The participant, Sarah, was an entry year Kindergarten teacher that volunteered to work collaboratively with me taking the role as a critical companion in this particular study. The classroom studied offers a context in which to examine the experiences and structure of Sarah using *Philosophy for Children* in the classroom. The dialogue and behaviors of the teacher have become the main focus for the observation as well as the teacher becoming the main focus for interviews. The findings from this study hopefully support the efforts of new teachers that desire to abandon dogmatic thinking or a body of knowledge such as a tradition or ideology and instead, create more democratic
environments in standards-enforced systems while examining what Henderson and Kesson (2004) stated as “the dynamics of power, justice, and equality to determine the fit between the ideal and the real” (p. 145).

I also hope this study provides insight to future EYTs on the topic of first year socializing, participating in reflective inquiry, and attempting sophisticated ways of teaching (whether it be an actual thinking skills methodology or a new way of examining and interpreting the good life). I hope this study will shed light on the relevance of continued support from critical companions or what Doll (1978) described as “an educational leader” (p. 238).

As I take on the role of a critical companion, I reflect on the following traits that Doll (1978) explained as educational leader characteristics. He stated the list to include:

A. The educational leader should be empathetic,
B. The education leader should be “surgent,”
C. The educational leader should be a recognized member of the group,
D. The educational leader should be helpful to the person he/she leads,
E. The educational leader should be emotionally controlled,
F. The educational leader should be adept,
G. The educational leader should be interested in assuming the leadership role.

(PP. 238-239)

This narrative exploration describes how one entry year teacher succeeds in attempting such an approach to teaching that remains a critical feature to democratic living. Also, based on one particular EYT, this study adds to the field and shows breadth
and depth similar to other multi-case or multi-participant studies. As Muchmore (2002) stated,

Although an in-depth life history study of the beliefs and practices of a single teacher has little value for making generalizations about other teachers in a statistical sense, it can be extremely useful as a vehicle for elaborating an understanding of one’s own beliefs and practices. (p. 6)

He explained how narrative descriptions of teachers’ lives and experiences can provide opportunities for self-reflection. In fact, in his particular study on a teacher named Anna, Muchmore stated,

Anna’s story provides readers with a tool for reflecting upon their own beliefs and practices. By actively weighting Anna’s experiences against their own evolving life stories, readers may gain deeper insights into the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that shape their own teaching and research practices. Engaging in this kind of self-reflection has been shown to be an essential part of teachers’ professional growth and development. (p. 6)

Agreeing with Muchmore (2002), I decided to choose one participant for this study due to the underlying collaborative, critical companionship that was designed to take place. Like mentoring or induction programs that pair one teacher with one mentor for deep communication purposes, I also wanted to make sure that this study would allow Sarah focused companionship in the professional relationship during the study. Furthermore, she was the only known EYT in the local area that was participating in such a sophisticated thinking skills program as Philosophy for Children during her first year of
teaching and also happened to be a pre-existing acquaintance. This pre-existing relationship only added to the study in the same way Muchmore’s relationship with Anna added to his study of her life history. Again, Muchmore stated, “because our pre-existing friendship was based on ideals of honesty, parity, trust and mutual respect, it was only natural that our research relationship continued with these same ideals” (p. 10).

In addition to the above points, participating in a single case study can also prove to bring about new theory, new questions, and new visions. Like Rodriguez (2002) argued, honest and holistic interpretations of the world can be deeply connected with narrative studies and can immensely impact the inquiry of the researcher as well as the readers of the narratives. Muchmore (2002) stated that “an in-depth study of a single teacher can also be used to build theory” (p. 6). Both of these qualitative researchers influenced my choice to examine the first year experiences of Sarah integrating a sophisticated thinking skills model in a standards based, Kindergarten classroom.

In addition to my reasoning of carefully choosing one EYT for the study, I also had assumptions prior to the study based on my knowledge of Sarah, my understanding of the Philosophy for Children program, and my work with reflective inquiry in the past year. Although assumptions are recognized and prevalent, I also presume that the study will be insightful based on Gareth Matthews’ (2003) understanding of Socratic perplexity:

If I am right in thinking that this is Socrates’ idea, then we are to suppose that, when we have only latent knowledge of what virtue is, there is “room” left to add
manifest knowledge. Moreover, having latent knowledge should be enough to enable us to recognize it, should we stumble on it. (p. 62)

My personal assumptions and the review of literature may suggest the importance of initiating such a disciplined way of study; however, these assumptions and literature engagements are only considered latent knowledge due to the unknown piece for present perceptions. Moving in and out of study in collaboration with Sarah will surface the dormant knowledge and bring forth new meaning to the study habits of EYTs.

The collaboration between a researcher and a teacher and the scaffolding of interviews are also vital to the study because this is currently not happening in most mentoring programs and serves as a model of 3S understanding in its own right. Instead, according to Keng (2006), many teachers want to carry out the process of inquiry; however, they need to be taught and mentored in this process instead of being taught how to conduct the role “of an expert and dispenser of information” (p. 6). Furthermore, if Philosophy for Children claims to engage children in the process of reflective inquiry in relation to subject, self, and social understandings, it is also important to recognize that the same form of scaffolding exists with the EYT. For as Keng said, most teachers want to carry out this process; however, the current indoctrination prevents this from happening.

Statement of the Problem

A paucity of research highlights ways that entry year teachers cultivate reflective inquiry or can begin to implement sophisticated thinking models such as Philosophy for Children. However, research shows the initial habituation that exists during an EYT’s
first teaching assignment. In fact, Dewey (1910), although not directly referring to only novice teachers, does state a generalization to all teachers regarding initial habituation in their thinking. He discussed the issue regarding beliefs in terms of unconscious and conscious consideration and claimed that “some beliefs are accepted when their grounds have not themselves been considered, others are accepted because their grounds have been examined” (p. 4). Unfortunately, some teachers make reference to their practice with lack of examination such as reflective inquiry and EYTs may become habitual at processes that undermine the democratic ideal of teaching. This may be assumed because most EYTs are exclusively working with “in house” mentors who are providing only technical advice and support which work solely out of the standardized management paradigm of reflection and teaching. The implementation of reconceptualizing curriculum for democracy and participating in what Henderson and Gornik (2007) stated as “multifaceted reflective inquiry” is not known or may be too painful to sustain in existing mentoring programs (Dewey, 1910). Dewey further remarked on this painful notion of reflective inquiry. He stated,

Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful. (p. 13)

In fact, the majority of existing programs lack relevant resources such as funding and training (Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997), to support effectively such efforts of
reconceptualizing the ways schools help teachers begin their first years of teaching, which can further make this suspense become even more painful. Rather than supporting inquiry based teaching and participating in reflective inquiry (through models such as P4C and curriculum wisdom problem solving), EYTs are only exposed to support in terms of developing classroom management skills, working with day-to day issues, learning where to find necessary supplies, cultivating basic forms of reflection, and learning school routines and procedures (Gordon, 1991). This would then become what Dewey (1910) again stated as the “unnoticed channels [that] they insinuate themselves into acceptance and become unconsciously a part of our mental furniture” (p. 4). Are EYTs learning a way of practice that is consciously reflected upon using reflective inquiry or is it an unconscious habit based on a form of authority such as Dewey described as tradition, instruction, or imitation?

Although most mentoring programs align with Gordon’s (1991) understanding of EYT support, I disagree with Gordon’s notion of what constitutes the needs of new teachers. Unfortunately, Gordon dismissed the important consideration for the necessity of developing teachers beyond technical experts and worked out of a techne orientation. Aside from learning how to use a copy machine, research supports the needs of new teachers that request less isolation (than what typical mentoring programs provide) so that more inquiry and dialogue with colleagues can exist (Gold, 1996). This study explores how Sarah can work beyond Gordon’s expectations of entry year teachers through the support of a critical companion and the cultivation of going beyond the standardized management and constructivist paradigm of problem-solving and instead engages in the
cycle of curriculum wisdom problem solving. Enacting this form of problem solving will eventually assist the “marriage of reflective practice and democratic curriculum inquiry” (Henderson & Gornik, 2007, p. 65) and bring meaning to using a sophisticated thinking skills model, Philosophy for Children, in an early childhood community. However, the problem lies in how an entry year teacher in a Kindergarten classroom can begin to cultivate reflective inquiry through the protocol discussed in Henderson and Gornik’s third edition of Transformative Curriculum Leadership. How will the protocol help or hinder her reflective inquiry process?

Lastly, in spite of the problem, this genre of work may present challenges to Sarah and the school community due to the notion that few entry year teachers enter an environment where the majority of teachers are participating in Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) notion of initiating and sustaining the reflective inquiry process. To a certain extent, most teachers in a standards based (standardized management paradigm) or constructivist environment (viewing knowledge as and outcome of experience) are aligning their reflective methods and instruction with Bloom’s Taxonomy or other non-holographic models, rather than using what Henderson and Gornik stated as using “reflecting activities that facilitate students’ subject matter meaning making in a context of active democratic learning” (p. 64). Without participating in this form of problem solving, teachers will not be able to become informed of reflecting through the multimodal notion of inquiry described by Henderson and Kesson (2004) and Henderson and Gornik (2007). Since most EYT’s are only provided with a mentor, rather than a critical companion, EYT’s are usually getting advice from what Henderson and Kesson
(2004) remarked as models of familiarity amongst most teachers, such as Bloom’s Taxonomy, and therefore, possibly lacking in the area of developing inquiry based judgment.

The multimodal protocol for reflective inquiry can effectively be altered and integrated into such classrooms; yet, the work to do such curricular decision making would be time consuming and require collaborative planning and debriefing sessions that would need somewhat conducted via Socratic dialogue. In fact, according to Weiss and Weiss (1999), effective programs to support new teachers in inquiry based development are rare. Furthermore, Brewster and Railsback (2001) stated, “Although many schools provide orientation programs for new hires, they often focus primarily on school policies and procedures, falling short of the ongoing professional support, training, and encouragement that new teachers need” (p. 5).

Hopefully the collaborative work of the research will help reduce or make sense of the complexities faced by Sarah’s understanding, implementation, and reflection on sophisticated thinking skills models such as Philosophy for Children and also illustrate that the problem of dogmatic habituation can be changed when study support into reflective inquiry is established.

From these points, the problem becomes foundationally situated in the following questions and remarks: How does an EYT articulate an understanding of 3S understanding? If there is an initial degree of 3S understanding, then the focus on study inquiry has to be handled differently. Therefore, how can an entry year teacher begin to implement holographic thinking models or thinking models such as Philosophy for
Children without the necessary preparation background or assumed district, collegial support that helps models become successful in the classroom? Through collaborative, narrative research, understandings to how an entry year teacher attempts to integrate theory and practice via Philosophy for Children in a Kindergarten classroom surface. This was also comprehended through reviewed literature and personal and collaborative narratives in order to understand the decision making process (recognizing, defining, establishing criteria, etc.) as well as the reflection of any complexities surrounding Philosophy for Children. Finally, the teacher and myself narratively describe the collaborative awareness between Sarah and me according to four dimensions (but not limited to only these four dimensions) that Doll (1978) described as intellectual, social, personal, and productive in regards to participating in the reflective inquiry process (Henderson & Gornik, 2007).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to describe a Kindergarten teacher’s experiences (through intellectual, social, personal, and productive dimensions) as both an entry year teacher and as a collaborative researcher that is attempting a disciplined way of study by facilitating a sophisticated thinking skills program in her first year of teaching. This description is situated within a narrative inquiry disposition and actively allows for a collaborative description to surface.

Motivation for the Study

The initial motivation for the study centered around a deep interest in developing democratic classrooms and the profound importance of beginning such democratic
thinking skills in the first years of schooling. Another inspiration to propose such a study revolved around the lack of research regarding entry year teachers that ignore Moir’s EYT stages and attempt to implement sophisticated thinking programs in their classrooms (specifically within early childhood classrooms). Can this attempt become successful in the entry year of teaching or is Philosophy for Children only effective after extensive experience in the field?

Central to Socratic learning is the understanding that students will master the details of a subject during the course of discussing its ambiguities and their meanings in depth (Moses, 1989). However, many early childhood classrooms are using more traditionally acceptable models of thinking such as Bloom’s taxonomy to complement the standards based curriculum and not participating in refined thinking models such as Philosophy for Children. Instead, they are skeptical of what young children can comprehend and often doubt the moral and intellectual capacities that young children can bring to the curriculum (Coles, 1984). Although this approach is theoretically relevant to meaningful classrooms, it is not widely accepted in the classrooms of practicing early childhood teachers. When an entry year teacher suggested her interest in trying Philosophy for Children in her Kindergarten classroom, I became motivated to learn why she would attempt such a program and wanted to discover what her habits, experiences, and structure would be as an entry year teacher that implements such a model. Reflecting on my own teaching experience, I remember subconsciously thinking of myself as employed to produce practical work, even though my beliefs, opinions, and assumptions were aligned differently. Early in my teaching career, I had the desire to examine the way
to educate others in regards to making sense of the world through deliberative meaning making experiences. I was later enticed with readings about Socrates, Dewey, the Reggio Emilia model of early childhood education, and other democratic teaching methodologies. At the same time, I noticed student frustration during the time where I let socialization pressures and dogmatic habituation reduce my enticement to a level of nothingness. Although I knew my beliefs brought more meaning to the lives of students, there were times where something in the practice overcame the state of being that was committed to the ideal of Woodruff’s (2005) “teaching democracy democratically.”

Many local EYTs state reservations about the current mentoring system in regards to providing support for facilitating programs as Philosophy for Children in the first year of teaching. The reservations that EYTs express may come from a result of habitual thinking that the first year of teaching is to survive. However, Dewey (1910) would disagree with the notion that habits of survival cease the notion of using higher level thinking skills as an EYT. In fact, according to Dewey, “the mastery of skill in the form of established habits frees the mind for a higher order of thinking” (p. 268). Do we want EYTs to become initially habitual in regards to learning the usage of a copy machine or habitual in engaging young children how to think and converse and become engaged in a way of living that promotes democratic ideals? Once a habit is instilled, more time can be devoted to higher thinking skills; however, should we recognize the context of habitual patterns and structures and seek possibilities for entry year teachers to readdress their level of convention?
The statements taken from conversations with various EYTs led me to believe that providing opportunities for energized teachers to work with curriculum leaders in their first year of teaching rather than solely working with general guidance “in house” mentors may help inform and describe the determination and process of learning experiences and habit formations with EYTs. From this brief restorying experience, I find it motivating to learn how Sarah may approach and experience the implementation of “holographic” or Socratic style thinking models (specifically Philosophy for Children) when first year socialization pressures may not be aligned with similar goals.

Research Questions

Several questions were explored within the context of an entry year teacher’s Kindergarten classroom. These questions helped guide the research.

1. How does an EYT articulate an understanding of 3S understanding?
2. How do the EYT’s experiences and perceptions influence and/or sustain her study habits and her transition to implement Philosophy for Children into the classroom?
3. How does an EYT, as a collaborative researcher with a curriculum leader (i.e., Doll, 1978), impact her understanding of teaching for 3S understanding and the implementation of Philosophy for Children (in regards to Doll’s four dimensions and Henderson and Gornik’s [2007] cultivation of reflective inquiry)?
Assumptions

Coming out of these research questions are working assumptions that *Philosophy for Children* would serve as a practical way that an EYT could concretize 3S understanding (due to the notion of explicit curriculum materials provided by the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children [IAPC], 2007). It was also assumed that a journey of understanding needs its own locomotive, which in this case is reflective inquiry. The reflective inquiry scaffolding was assumed to be an appropriate vehicle for helping Sarah look beyond the techne of teaching and the structured usage of *Philosophy for Children*. Instead, it was assumed that she could better articulate a journey of understanding through the means of reflective inquiry. However, it was unknown how the critical companion piece would play into the reflective inquiry articulation since there is a paucity of research that highlights mentoring in this way.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to understand the problem statement that guides this inquiry, it is necessary to include a historical foundation on the integral pieces to understanding the developments that take place during the story of the study. Five particular areas further address the experiences, perceptions, and interpretations that unfold. The areas of understanding revolve around the following: Turning points of teacher education programs, entry year teacher socialization and induction, democratic curricular visions and philosophy for children, professional development partnerships/mentoring, and collaborative research. However, it should be understood that these five areas of study are also continually interwoven throughout the data analysis.

Turning Points of Teacher Education Programs

Before we begin to explore brief turning points of entry year teachers according to theory and personal assumptions, I would like to address the notion of teacher preparation prior to the teacher induction and socialization phase. During the first two centuries, teachers were not formally educated in becoming teachers. However, more formal education experiences were offered and examined in the 19th century. Urban’s (1990) historical prospective of teacher education programs walks us through the understanding that most formal education experiences are situated in one of the following contexts of studies: liberal, technical, professional, and general. These types of studies are
historically relevant to the development of teacher preparation programs; however, the meanings behind the studies are different. Urban clarified the difference between two of the four studies (liberal and technical) as follows:

Simply stated, technical concerns are those that impinge directly on the practice of teaching as conceived of by teacher educators. Liberal studies, on the other hand, are those that provide an intellectual context within which teachers can reflect upon their occupational activities for the purposes of analyzing and perhaps even altering their viewpoints of the work. (p. 59)

This fine line of difference between two kinds of preparations clearly draws the historical timeline for how we started thinking about education when transitioning into formal preparation programs. Prior to starting such programs, the preparation for the field of teaching was based primarily on a liberal home experience. Most teachers were taught in the home environment and not instructed in a definitive, technical manner. However, it was assumed that teachers required a more technical base of skills. This dichotomy of skills versus meaning continually exists in the realm of teacher education programs today. The importance for this study relies on the question, what is the significance of teacher education preparation in regards to implementing democratic teaching models to improve practice?

Raths (2001) stated, “teacher education programs are largely ineffective in improving the current practice of teaching. Some programs choose not to improve practice, but instead they strive to prepare teachers who fit into the patterns of current practice” (p. 1). Due to Raths’ understanding, can we place fault on entry year teachers
that do not partake in the implementation of multidisciplinary teaching methods such as facilitating Socratic dialogues (such as *Philosophy for Children*) in their classrooms? If EYTs do partake in such implementation, what value or significance can we place on Raths’ statement? Raths also noted that many teacher education programs seem to discourage teacher candidates to question the current ways of teaching, such as the didactic, traditional approach to covering standards based curriculums. This situation that Raths described seems more aligned to indoctrination than preparing teachers to effectively prepare students to live a more examined life. On this remark, Raths also stated that this later notion may be impossible for teacher candidates or EYTs to understand because their values clarification status is still in the stage where they hold unexamined beliefs. In fact, most EYTs begin their year memorizing faculty handbooks, school mission statements, previous schedules and syllabi rather than having time to examine the art of teaching similar to that of Elliot Eisner (2002).

Yet, instead of feeling a sense of pity for this mold of an EYT, John Kekes may see this as a sign of evildoing that has and continues to be present while in opposition with those that are disenchanted with ordinary life. Kekes’ (2005) following statement sheds a different, yet, harsh insight into why both novice and veteran teachers may continue following the habituated patterns and routines that do not always lead to the democratic good life. He stated, “All the evildoers I have discussed so far went about their deplorable labors with grim determination. With the possible exception of Manson, they did not enjoy what they did. They saw evil as something they had to do” (p. 101). Although this statement by Kekes may be harsh to read, the last sentence seems to shed
light on why some teachers do what they need to do in order to complete their jobs or to
become the “good employee.” I am not claiming that all teachers doing their jobs or
following rules are “evil;” however, Kekes does help us see that teachers who are not
preparing their students for the “good life” may only be doing this out of bleak
willpower, rather than from an informed judgment point of view.

The beginning of a teaching career can be discouraging for those entry year
teachers that do not have the “liberal” experience or “professional” knowledge needed to
become a teacher that thoroughly examines curriculum similar to Eisner (2002) or
beyond what Dewey stated as an “isolation of intellectual activity from the ordinary
affairs of life” (1910, p. 7).

However, the lack of satisfaction should also be a marker to stakeholders that
something is wrong with the system and needs to be addressed. Yet, although many
stakeholders are aware of problems and evildoings, they choose not to confine their time
to redefining the roles of teachers. Many stakeholders and mentors of EYTs believe that
the way EYTs and veteran teachers have been habituated presents little or no threat to the
system. This agreement with “boredom” is as Kekes (2005) stated, concerning and
“recognized by a wide array of reflective people” (p. 106).

This discouragement also confirms what Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, and
Yusko (1999) said in regards to the correlation between the first year of teaching and
years to follow: “What happens to beginning teachers during their early years on the job
determines not only whether they stay in teaching but also what kind of teacher they
become” (p. 1). If EYTs are not able to possess the willingness to try a new approach to
conquer the inequities of a standardized curriculum, what does that mean from the theorists that positively align their definitions, understandings, and ideas of curricular reform alongside practice?

When a teacher remains stagnant, bored, or unsatisfied, this may lead him or her to a self-destructive and unconsidered life (Kekes, 2005). Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) seemed to hold little faith that new teachers will surpass the dogmatic teaching approaches that currently exist due to the tragic and technical indoctrination that exists in many teacher education programs. However, even in the most superior teacher education programs, there is still a scarcity of entry year teachers (coming out of the program/s) that partake in implementing refined thinking models in their classroom for the simple reason of developing a deliberative classroom for their students to examine democracy through democratic teaching.

Entry Year Teacher Socialization and Induction

Can it be possible that teacher education programs are not profoundly foundational to an EYT’s future advocacy of democratic teaching? This could be expected because the many aims of education are in opposition of helping students participate and examine the active life of citizenship in a democracy. If so, we need to examine how EYT’s interpret their first year of teaching when aims are so diverse from the theoretical literature that describes “best practice” and good teaching in an early childhood classroom. If EYT’s had a valuable teacher education experience and understand the theoretical literature that currently exists regarding teaching democracy democratically, what are the other factors that play into the challenges of implementing
models that align with such democratic teaching? The socialization of teaching can be considered an integral factor in such a predicament.

Zeichner and Gore (1990) acknowledged Danziger’s understanding of teacher socialization research as: “Teacher socialization research is that field of scholarship that seeks to understand the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers” (p. 329). They further remarked on the three main traditions that follow such socialization research. The three paradigms revolve around functionalist, interpretive, and critical modes. Most teachers are seemingly categorized in one of the three paradigms during their first year of teaching. Of these three distinct historical socialization processes, the oldest approach is functionalism. Zeichner and Gore said that “functionalism is a view characterized by a concern with providing explanations of the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, needs satisfaction and actuality” (p. 330). They also referred to a study by Hoy and Rees (1977) that focused on bureaucratic socialization of student teachers. In this study, the student teachers seemed to turn more bureaucratic and dogmatic towards teaching orientations and models after their student teaching. Hoy and Rees’ study is significantly interesting when examining the lives of EYTs because it deals with the transition into a real teaching experience from a theoretical or temporary experience as a student teacher.

The next school of socialization is a paradigm that challenges the functionalist paradigm by asking for subjectivity of the individual, not the observer, and seeks to interpret as a way of socializing (such as the phenomenological and hermeneutical schools of thought). And lastly is the critical paradigm that regards social transformation
as an integral aim for education. This type of socialization is concerned with justice, equality, freedom, and human dignity (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 331). However, no matter what category we place EYT's, a multitude of paradigms can exist in a school culture. This multitude of paradigms can often create more tension than cohesion in a school district; however, influence can continue to survive (unfortunately, some influences are not those that promote a democratic trajectory).

Zeichner and Gore (1990) stated,

There is little question that the influence of colleagues needs to be taken into account in attempts to understand teacher socialization, despite the existence of an ethos of privacy and individualism within many schools. Given that teachers in a given school work under generally similar conditions, collegial influence is probably closely tied to the common circumstances that teachers face in the structural characteristics of schools and in the ecological conditions of the classrooms. (p. 339)

This concurrently shows that EYT's face a lot of pressure from their colleagues to become part of a different paradigm or to socialize in a role they may not have considered prior to the socialization. However, this socialization can also help productively shape an EYT’s first year in the field when the influence is geared toward the trajectory of “teaching democracy democratically.” This is seemingly necessary to achieve such a goal; however, it will be interesting to examine an EYT that aspires for such a goal without the possibility for positive, interactive socialization within the school system; yet, with an educational leader (Doll, 1978).
As Martin (1991) stated,
If we are to help beginning teachers find pathways that will lead to professional competence, rather than merely to survive, it seems essential that we understand how teachers themselves feel about their first teaching experience, what they see as their major problems, and what they believe would have helped them in their initial teaching. In other words, we need to listen to the teachers’ own stories. (p. 218)

Martin highlighted this critical role of an EYT and discussed that developed strategies, coping mechanisms, or what Dewey called “habits” helps in determining the future journey for an EYT. She again stated that “how the first year teacher deals with these realities has a tremendous impact upon his or her continuing professional development” (1910, p. 218). Therefore, it is vital that we find out what the habits of an EYT are when working with an educational leader or researcher and how these habits may or may not differ from the habits developed from other EYTs in the literature.

Democratic Curricular Visions and Philosophy for Children

“We may not regard children as mere objects of our studies; they belong together with us to what Kant once called the sphere of ends.”

~Gareth Matthews, 2003

Monica Glina (2007) stated the following in regards to understanding the importance of teaching democracy democratically with young children and the importance of helping students understand their thoughts and actions in relationship to others: “In classrooms in which content is delivered by transmission and passively
acquired by students, students are effectively denied the opportunity to actively participate in a shared, thoughtful experience” (p. 11). Furthermore, the current way that standards guide curriculum and inquiry is driven from academic leaders wanting to impress knowledge upon young children rather than discovering what children are actually thinking and understanding. In fact, Weber (2006) stated, “We pedagogues often find ourselves in a vertical dialogue with children. This means we explain the world to children. We give them instructions. Or we ask them questions to whose answers we already think we know” (p. 9).

This current notion of coercion is similar to the strict “moral instructions” books written in the 1700s, which further told young children that to understand and live a life of obedience, specific standards needed to be followed without considering that these rules of obedience may not have fit particular cultures or understandings of young children. One book in particular, The History of Little Goody Twoshoes written by Thomas in 1787, was a book that implied coercing young children’s perceptions regarding gratitude and humility. Although these moral topics may be important to living the good life, they also need to be discussed in terms of historical roots as well as understood through the experiences and discussions provided by young children.

Woodruff (2005) stated, “In democracy, every adult citizen is called upon to assist in managing public affairs. Therefore, the democracy should see that every citizen has the ability to do so. Citizen wisdom is common human wisdom, improved by education” (p. 156). If this idea by Woodruff is true, what grounds the educational climate to separate ideals of democracy into 10 minute structured, social studies lessons rather than
constructing a curriculum that informs young citizens to make wise, well examined understandings and decisions of their life journey? Is the idea and implementation of reconceptualizing curriculum for democracy difficult for entry year teachers? EYT’s lack of experience in the field, teacher socialization process, and/or compulsory demands from administration and other stakeholders can all lead to the opposition to implement models of thinking that follows such a democratic course. However, this does not necessitate a negative finality to an EYT’s implementation of democratic teaching models. In this study, an EYT will attempt to look at the guidelines of using Philosophy for Children in order to participate in Weber’s (2006) explanation of a genuine exchange. Weber stated:

A genuine exchange, one in which the child and the adult are of equal value and have equal rights, is impossible within such structure of communication. Seldom do we discuss with children issues which we ourselves find awkward or problematic. (p. 9)

The EYT in this study has decided to try such a model (in a standards based classroom) that correlates with the idea that many researchers have come to recognize as the need for young children to explore, examine, and think collectively about presented truths in their current cultures and societies. Since the late 1960s, the National Endowment of Humanities has supported the curricular ideas and materials regarding Philosophy for Children, a program designed to develop a community of inquiry with a foundational base of critical, collaborative, creative, and caring thinking. Particular topics of humanity such as truth, reality, knowledge, evidence, freedom, justice, goodness, rights, mind, identity, love, friendship, rules, responsibility, action, logic, language,
fairness, reason, existence, possibility, beauty, meaning, self, time, infinity, human nature, and thought are conveyed to the community of inquiry through various measures. IAPC (2007) stated,

The curriculum is designed to engage students in exploring the philosophical dimensions of their experience, with particular attention to logical, ethical and aesthetic dimensions. Since their publication over 30 years ago these materials have been translated into over 40 languages and are now used in over 60 countries. The IAPC curriculum consists of novels for students and manuals for teachers. Each novel is about 80 pages in length and is written in formal language, without technical terminology. Each manual is about 400 pages in length and contains conceptual explanations for teachers as well as discussion exercises and activities that can be used to supplement the students’ inquiry. These manuals are indispensable for conducting dialogical inquiry. Students begin each philosophy session by reading aloud or acting out an episode from one of the novels and identifying issues that interest them, in effect creating their own agenda or lesson plan. For the remainder of the session they deliberate about these issues together as a “community of inquiry,” paying attention to the kinds of good thinking and democratic interaction that make their inquiry meaningful. Teachers facilitate these dialogues in a number of ways. They encourage students to share their questions and ideas with the community. They model many kinds of good thinking “moves” such as clarifying terms, giving good reasons, offering examples and counterexamples, drawing inferences, and challenging assumptions.
They reinforce the social aspects of dialogue such as listening to each other and building upon each other’s ideas. They maintain a sense of where the discussion is going so that they can “scaffold” rather than direct it. They share their own sense of wonder about the issues and their willingness to learn from the community. (p. 1)

The founder of Philosophy for Children, Matthew Lipman et al. (1980) also wanted educators to understand that this curriculum is not only based on the craft but on a deeper understanding about democracy and the notion of creative, caring, and critical thinking. Although many educators work with creative and critical components of curriculum, Lipman et al. is trying to get across to educators that caring based on a natural or relational ethic will not always be recognized as a superior education. Instead, children should learn to care through thoughtful practice, such as deliberating in the form that Philosophy for Children allows. This thoughtful practice is done through a structured, cognitive process. So what does this structuring for thoughtfulness look like? Lipman et al. later stated,

Thinking is natural, but it can also be recognized as a skill capable of being perfected. There are more efficient and less efficient ways of thinking. We are able to say this with confidence, because we possess criteria that enable us to distinguish between skillful and clumsy thinking. The aim of a thinking skills program is not to turn children into philosophers or decision-makers, but to help them become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, and more reasonable individuals. (pp. 14-15)
This notion of caring and the purpose of thinking as defined by Lipman et al. are integral pieces to discovering how and why *Philosophy for Children* is an example of Henderson’s (Henderson & Kesson, 2004; Henderson & Gornik, 2007) 3S understanding model.

*Philosophy for Children’s* clarification of caring thinking seem to have a layered importance central to democratic visions. However, many readers may rest their understanding of caring as defined by Noddings (1984, 2005) and not accept other definitions of caring, such as Lipman et al.’s. In such cases, they automatically dismiss the concept of caring as a particular course of action that is accessible to all students. Instead, many teachers and students believe that caring is an inner spirit and/or characteristic that has been graciously bestowed upon us, rather than seeing caring as something we can become better at through better thinking.

Lipman et al. (1980) critiqued these assumptions by explaining that although caring may begin naturally (through exposure to relational care), it is not easy to improve without recognizing the interest of the children and taking the interests “as its means and materials” (p. 58) to develop better thinking skills in a group of children. However, he did not dismiss the notion of a relational caring altogether. In fact, relationships are not only desirable, but necessary to his concept of caring thinking. In fact, he believed that his program and/or any other educational program to promote democratic values and caring, thinking citizens can not make significant differences in the moral lives of children without a good environment for the children to learn. Lipman et al. stated a good environment to produce democratic visions, needs to be emulated as such,
Thus once the teacher begins to assume responsibility for actively creating environments that are supportive, and that lend themselves to the building of self-respect and self-mastery, a most essential step has been taken towards engaging in moral education. Unless an environment is created that is conducive to mutual trust and respect for each individual in the classroom, no educational program, neither philosophy for children nor any other, is going to make much of difference in helping children to become moral individuals. (pp. 156-157)

Aside from the beginning of his quote, which shows the importance of a caring environment through a relationship with the teacher and peers, Lipman et al. also clarified why this relationship should exist. He proclaimed that the relationship itself with the students is not what helps the students (those cared for by the teacher as Noddings, 1984, would infer) become caring but the relationships help the children to improve their care by providing an environment conducive to doing such thoughtful reasoning. However, he did not define the relationships that create the environment in the same way as Noddings would portray relationships in the classroom. Instead of solely seeing relationships as a support group that offers respect and encouragement, Noddings highlighted a more natural, caring relationship in this setting between the teacher and the student. The relationship would need a teacher that truly understands the motivation of the students and the students would need to show response to the one caring (the teacher in this situation). This reciprocity ultimately needs to happen for a relationship to flourish (although she understands it may not be permanent or constant) and not simply rest on the one caring (Noddings, 1984, pp. 69-73).
Lipman et al. (1980) may support this idea of reciprocity; however, he would not view the inquiry to solely rest on the notion of reciprocity as Noddings described affective reciprocity. Noddings stated, “there is reciprocity, but not affective reciprocity or manifestation of feeling for us as the ones caring” (p. 161). Instead, Lipman et al. would view reciprocity as intellectual rather than affective. Lipman et al. clearly expressed the following idea of P4C in relation to reciprocity: “Thus one justification for teaching logic, other than to compel children to think rigorously for themselves, is that it enables them to compel their opponents to think rigorously as well” (p. 45).

One of the most essential ways to elicit discussion in a Philosophy for Children session is through literature; Lipman et al. (1980) noted that Lipman’s novels help foster the above comments and understandings of developing a community of inquiry (the relationship between the students and teacher and students with students) and the classroom dialogue (which promotes structured thoughtfulness) by focusing on dialogue as part of a story. The first book regarding Philosophy for Children was Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery, written in 1969 by Matthew Lipman (1982b) in quest of challenging children to individually and collectively analyze their thinking in an effective and meaningful way. Under this context, philosophy was not considered a course or the study of notable philosophers through time. Instead, philosophy was regarded as the process of questioning, challenging, and examining inadequate frameworks. The two main drives revolved around creating culture and critiquing culture through collective deliberations. Philosophy for Children was intended to be a democratic response that would provide breadth and depth to educational redesign.
Lipman et al. (1980) stated the need for educational redesign which leads to promoting a philosophical framework for curriculum goals: “Over and over again, we have recourse to remediation rather than to redesign. And when the remediation turns out to be inefficient, compensatory approaches proliferate in an effort to remedy the ineffectual remediation” (p. 3). They later posed the following question: “If the educational process were to be redesigned, what criteria could be used to determine that the new design would be of optimum serviceability?” (p. 3).

Lipman et al. (1980) did not imply that Philosophy for Children is an immediate resolve to educational dysfunction; however, they did believe that using such a method of thinking over time will induct what they call “the lost dimension in education” into the K-12 curriculum.

Although educators and facilitators of educational facilities promote the idea for children to think for themselves, they may not necessarily develop this process in an organic, Socratic manner. According to John Dewey (1990), young children are unable to participate in such reasoning without experience to guide their thinking.

He is told to think things out, or work things out for himself, without being supplied any of the environing conditions which are requisite to start and guide thought. Nothing can be developed out of the crude-and this is what surely happens when we throw the child back upon his achieved self as finality, and invite him to spin new truths of nature or of conduct out of that. (p. 196)

Historically, children were not equipped to “think things out” in the early years of education (i.e., preschool/kindergarten) due to a lack of experience. However, Lipman et
al. (1980) directed to change such opposition regarding the capacity of children’s thinking and provide teachers with simplistic tools to develop multidimensional thinking based on the Socratic Method. The tools that Lipman et al. used were manageable for integrating into all levels of curriculum, K-12; however, Lipman et al. (1980) unfortunately remarked that this is difficult for the novice or EYT to perform.

Such an instructional performance obviously demands considerable skill and astuteness, and it is a reasonable question whether existing elementary school teachers can be entrusted with such responsibility. The answer is that with rare exceptions they cannot. Without appropriate training, most teachers cannot be entrusted to deal with the rigors of logic or the sensitive issue of ethics, or the complexities of metaphysics. This is not to say, however, that teachers cannot be educated to handle such issues appropriately at the level at which they teach. (p. 46)

They further acknowledged the intellectual potential of teachers and disclaimed that the intelligence of teachers is not what halts such a model from implementation, but the poorly designed teacher training programs (whether be educational preparation or EYT mentoring). It is unfortunately the disconnect from knowledge and practice that teacher training programs fail to unite. Instead, the mentors and guides of EYTs are acknowledging what Sacks (1999) called the “Meritocracy’s Crooked Yardstick.” Sacks (1999) stated,

Most Americans take standardized mental tests as a rite of passage from the day they enter kindergarten. Gatekeepers of America’s meritocracy-educators,
academic institutions, and employers have used test scores to label people as bright or not bright, as worthy academically or not worthy. Some, with luck are able to overcome the stigma or poor performance on mental tests. But others do not . . . although the anti-testing bandwagon has gathered new adherents, the wagon itself has crashed head-on into an entrenched system that is obsessed with the testing of American minds. (p. 5)

Fortunately, the aims of Philosophy for Children are to help children learn to think and not to prepare them for taking a test that requires one line of thinking. Philosophy for Children is not only critical to enhancing democratic understanding in the classrooms but also provides a researched and workable alternative to labeling students and canning knowledge as if knowledge has a shelf life.

The particular Philosophy for Children books aligned with early childhood education and the suggested literature from the researcher used in this study help to foster the Philosophy for Children sessions in the EYT’s classroom. Although some of the odds are stacked against the claim that young children can participate in philosophy, Sarah continues to surge in an effort to attempt implementing a particular model of 3S understanding.

However, when introducing the texts during Philosophy for Children sessions, it is wise to recognize the words of the critics. Murris (1992) stated the following in regards to Philosophy for Children critics.

The generally accepted belief is that we are a ‘tabula rasa’ when born and that all our knowledge comes from experience and doing philosophy requires knowledge
upon which to reflect. Therefore, the older we are, the more is ‘written’ on our ‘slate,’ and therefore the more knowledge we have acquired. Children have insufficient experience (i.e., knowledge) and as a result are not capable of doing philosophy. (p. 6)

In another article, Murr is (2007) further attempted to help the reader acknowledge that these critics make claims about children that may remain underdeveloped due to their assumption that children are not currently citizens and are not believed to be responsible enough as their “reasonable” counterparts (adults and teachers) to participate in such worth discussions. Murr is’ remarks on the issue of “citizen to be” or “citizen” already become a fundamentally situated problem as this study and others set forth to not only implement such dialogue with children but also believe in the Philosophy for Children approach to teaching thinking.

Table 1 provides a scaffold approach to how Philosophy for Children dialogues are embraced, modeled and managed. This table presents a guiding path for Sarah during the P4C sessions. However, although this table seems appropriate for use with Philosophy for Children, it is actually designed for developing thinking skills in children throughout the school day. And aside from using Table 1 as a structured guide for teachers to invoke thinking, teachers also need to realize that some children may lack the dispositions deemed necessary for participating in both a community of inquiry and model of 3S understanding. However, Lipman et al. (1980) offered some feedback and insight to how all students can still be rewarded through the participation with Philosophy for Children, the novels and the discussions. For instance, in Lipman’s books Harry
Table 1

*Dialogue Scaffolding*

1. questions (What don’t we understand here? What questions do we have about this?)
2. hypotheses (Does anyone have any alternative suggestions or explanations?)
3. reasons (What reasons are there for doing that? or evidence for believing this?)
4. examples (Can anyone think of an example of this? or a counter-example?)
5. distinctions (Can we make a distinction here? or give a definition?)
6. connections (Is anyone able to build on that idea? or link it with another?)
7. implications (What assumptions lie behind this? What consequences does it lead to?)
8. intentions (Is that what was really meant? Is that we we’re really saying?)
9. criteria (What makes that an example of X? What are the things that really count here?)
10. consistency (Does that conclusion follow? Are these principles/beliefs consistent?)

*Stottlemeier’s Discovery* and *Lisa* (Lipman, 1982b, 1983), the novel is said to show how caring is shared with one another. The example set in this book and examples set in other novels written by Lipman helps the children naturally assume the caring role in their own dialogue. However, Lipman et al. acknowledged the possibility that there are those that do not have caring dispositions. Having asserted that some students may lack a caring (or other form of) disposition, Lipman et al. believed that they will grow to care through listening and “discovering one another’s perspectives and share in one another’s experiences” (p. 199). This statement helps clear those that are uncertain of traveling the
path less traveled by assuring educators that teacher bewilderment (in regards to children lacking appropriate dispositions) can always be reconsidered when thinking of alternative possibilities for how to involve students in the democratic process of learning.

3S Understanding and the Linkage to Philosophy for Children

3S understanding is not an easily packaged term or concept that can be defined in the same way that the word “children” may be defined in the dictionary. It is also not as widely acknowledged as the word “curriculum” nor does it take on as many different interpretations. However, 3S understanding does encompass several dimensions that allow for deeper understanding of the foundation and historical roots that trace years prior to when the actual phrase was addressed. Table 2 taken from Henderson and Gornik (2007) grounds 3S understanding and the necessary components that provide the balance to allowing for the subject, self, and society to surface within curriculum frameworks. This table is also a starting point to exploring the roots of the paradigm shifts that have taken place in curriculum studies, which have helped pave the way for 3S understanding to not only exist, but also become necessary in today’s society. It is within the curriculum wisdom paradigm that 3S understanding thrives and is apparent; however, it is also necessary to understand that the curriculum wisdom paradigm is closely linked with the other dominant paradigms in education, the standardized management paradigm and the constructivist best practice paradigm.

Within Table 2, one can see the shift in curriculum decision making that has not only surfaced in the historical roots of American education, but still continues to take place in the American education system today. In fact, there are several schools that
Table 2

*Educational Paradigms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Paradigm</th>
<th>Organizing Paradigm</th>
<th>Problem-Solving Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Management</td>
<td>Student performances on standardized tests</td>
<td>Goal-setting, decision making, and reflecting activities that facilitate students’ subject matter meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivist best practice</td>
<td>Student performances of subject matter understanding</td>
<td>Goal setting, decision making, and reflecting activities that facilitate students’ subject matter meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Wisdom</td>
<td>Student performances of subject matter understanding embedded in democratic self and social understanding</td>
<td>Goal setting, decision making, and reflecting activities that facilitate students’ subject matter meaning making in a context of active democratic learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
continue to work out of the above defined “standardized management” paradigm as well as many schools that work out of a “constructivist best practice” orientation. In fact, to most educators, the “constructivist best practice” orientation is viewed as one of the most progressive paradigms in education today (Illinois Loop, 2008). However, this can be assumed that this view is based on the lack of knowledge regarding the curriculum wisdom paradigm which is seemingly far more progressive and particularly situated for 3S understanding to exist. Another reason this view may exist is due to the lack of knowledge regarding the historical roots of general education and curriculum ideals. Fortunately, Tanner and Tanner (2007) shed light on this search for understanding, stating:

Society looks to the school and something that has come to be called the curriculum as necessary for enabling the rising generation to gain the needed insight and power to build a better society. The changing nature of knowledge, changing conceptions of the learner, and the changing demands of social life have called for a changing conception and function of curriculum. (p. 225)

This claim by Tanner and Tanner tells today’s public that something needs consideration that has not been sought in the past. Demands on social life are far different today than 40 years ago; therefore, adjustments to curriculum and instruction need to be considered. They also seem to take into consideration the words of Joseph J. Schwab (1969) when he said,

The other effective difference between theoretical and practical origins of deliberate change is patent. Theory, by being concerned with new things to do, is
unconcerned with the success and failures of present doings. Hence present failures, unless they coincide with what is repaired by the proposed innovations, go unnoticed—as do present successes. The practical, on the other hand, is directly and deliberately concerned with the diagnosis of ills of the curriculum. (p. 113)

Yet, to understand why 3S understanding is necessary, the root of curriculum is undeniably linked to the bridge of traveling the curriculum wisdom terrain, which connects theory and practice and brings balance to subject, self and social understanding.

To understand the foundation, Tanner and Tanner (2007) walked the reader through the function of the school, the changes in the knowledge and the curriculum, and the phases of schooling particular to general education. They noted that the function of schools have had similar missions with slight alterations depending on the time in society. However, for the most part, schools functioned as agents of societal change. The needs of society may have differed throughout history; yet, for several years, the schools functioned as places where students not only received knowledge but also in hopes of what Tanner and Tanner stated as “shaping society’s future” (p. 226). Yet, although the mission to reshape society remained prominent throughout curriculum history, the way this was actually addressed in schools differed.

Prior to the formation of 3S understanding, curriculum was compartmentalized. The functions of balance did not exist in regards to advancing not only knowledge of the subject, but the self and the advancement of society. Several schools were participating in isolated forms of this balance or missing the piece that could serve as the whole picture. As Tanner and Tanner (2007) stated, “the advancement of society is predicted on its
capacity to resolve practical problems” (p. 226), yet, this can not be effectively done when the schools are focusing on solving practical problems without the need of developing self and subject understanding in relation to the societal problems. Through the historical phases of schooling, trends persuaded educators to focus on one or two of the areas of 3S understanding; however, most phases left out the development of the whole: subject, self, and social. In fact, the modified teaching arrangements, nongraded school, open classroom, and individualized instruction arrangement trends not only proved unsuccessful, they also lacked the development of 3S understanding. However, although these few phases mentioned above proved unsuccessful, the designs continue to exist in American Schools. In fact, the self-contained classroom in elementary schools continues to remain even though it has been discovered that many self-contained classrooms continue to follow a schedule of subject transitions or subjects organized into units (Quillen & Hanna, 1948) rather than a deep integration of the subjects (Tanner & Tanner, 2007). The meaning behind self-contained classrooms was designed to integrate subjects; yet, this integration not only lacks the integration of self and societal components, it also lacks the integration of subjects themselves. Fortunately, there are practical models of 3S understanding such as Philosophy for Children that can take these phases of schooling and make sense of their downfalls and achievements in order to better create a balance that will allow for all three of the important components to exist in curriculum (the subject, the self, and the society). It is within models such as Philosophy for Children that we can begin to see what Henderson and Kesson (2004) claimed as the diagonal dimension of obtaining curriculum artistry (otherwise known as participating in
the curriculum wisdom paradigm). Tanner and Tanner (2007) remarked on the horizontal and vertical dimensions of curriculum; yet, seem to be unaware of how to practically tap into the diagonal dimension, as Henderson and Kesson stated as cultivating curriculum artistry.

*Philosophy for Children* provides a starting point to participating in the curriculum wisdom paradigm because it simultaneously utilizes the three forms of dimensions (horizontal, vertical, and diagonal). The program itself provides the opportunities for students to explore problems and deliberate on these problems through a social component such as the community of inquiry in *Philosophy for Children* sessions. This community of inquiry not only provides what Schwab (1969) stated as “a means of channeling its discoveries into sustained improvement of the schools” (p. 113) but also helps channel students problem solving and deliberative judgments into becoming wise citizens. This practical community of inquiry shoots across the curriculum playing field and allows for the other arrows to vertically and diagonally shoot through the field so that “dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (Freire, 1970, p. 127). Fortunately in *Philosophy for Children*, the caring thinking component to the curriculum also seems to allow for the horizontal dimension to metaphorically “have legs” and/or exist. Freire would agree that this caring component to the horizontal dimension is critical. Freire stated,

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for men. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation,
is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the
foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. (p. 126)

Fortunately, the grounds of Philosophy for Children initiate children to begin thinking of
their own ignorance, their personal experiences, as well as their current level of
knowledge to begin making judgments and to participate in the community of inquiry
dialogues. This sense of humility is profoundly important in the Philosophy for Children
program and greatly enhances the dialogue habits of young children that participate in
community of inquiry settings early in their educational career.

As for the diagonal dimension of 3S understanding, the inquiry and the
connection to the subject knowledge during P4C sessions is profoundly foundational as
well. The subjects that students undertake during P4C sessions are not compartmentalized
in the same way that Tanner and Tanner (2007) described schools through history.
Instead, the subject matter knowledge is integrated within the problem at hand. Again
Tanner and Tanner can shed light on this understanding of integration and the importance
of connecting subjects or areas of discipline to real life problems. They shared a highlight
from a chemist that surprisingly realized later in life that his time researching secondary
education was directly connected, although previously he saw the two disciplines as
completely unrelated. Tanner and Tanner stated,

The concern for the environment gives rise to the study of ecology, a study that
bridges the natural sciences and social sciences. Only tradition separates the
humanities from the natural sciences, for if the humanities exemplify the great
human achievements and moral concerns, how can the humanists exclude science and technology? (p. 229)

This level of inquiry shows an alternative form of understanding than understandings made in isolated forms of disciplined knowledge. Fortunately, Philosophy for Children is a program that can allow for such inquiry to exist, making it more practical for teachers to participate in 3S understanding. IAPC (2007) stated the following in relation to inquiry using a particular book, Kio and Gus (Lipman, 1982a) from the Philosophy for Children curriculum. This statement shows how the inquiry of subject knowledge is not to be examined through an isolated lens. IAPC (2007) said,

This . . . aims at helping children think about the world by encouraging them to acquire reasoning and inquiry skills. Through hundreds of exercises and discussion plans, children are shown how these cognitive skills can be applied to the concepts by means of which we understand the world of nature. As a result, this program is an ideal introduction to science and environmental education, as well as an excellent language arts curriculum. There is also a strong ethical thread in the novel revolving around a myriad of issues in environmental ethic, our relationships with animals and nature and the fostering of ethical perception. (p. 3)

And lastly, Philosophy for Children, although set up as a thinking skills program that primarily uses conversation as the vehicle to represent thinking, can also be challenged and driven through diverse means of representation (such as aesthetic representation). This aesthetic representation not only enhances subject, self, and social understandings but it also helps children think through a variety of experiences. Although the P4C
curriculum is designed around literature and conversation, it permits the teacher and students to drive the thinking processes and allows the individual and the collective to do what Gurin (1990) suggested as fostering:

A sense of independence and by the ability to see one’s work through from beginning to end. Conversely, principles unfriendly to wholeness are impersonal corporate structures or the failure by employers to delegate responsibility to employees and the division of labor and the divorce between process and product. (p. 80)

This invitation to aesthetic development (which P4C allows for) is fruitful and important to fostering 3S understanding. 3S understanding does not “divorce the process and product” nor does it simply connect the two. Instead, it holistically engages the self, subject, and society within the curriculum. Philosophy for Children not only allows children to begin contemplating the “good life” in relation to the self and subject but allows them to think in terms of wholeness in relation to the aesthetics of life and society.

Professional Development Partnerships/Mentoring

According to the position of the National Education Association (2008), Mentoring is critical not only to recruit teachers, but also to keep talented teachers on the job. The National Center for Education Statistics (1994-95) reports that 9.3 percent of new teachers leave the profession after only a year. An additional 11.1 percent leave their assignments for teaching positions elsewhere after their first year. In rural areas and inner cities, these rates are often dramatically higher. (p. 1)
The above statement is not surprising, nor does it provide innovative information to educators; yet, the statistics remain the same for schools that are overwhelmed by the need to hold mentoring programs. However, the lack of resources in how to make them successful needs reconceptualized if mentoring programs will interact beyond the surface level of mentoring that currently exists in many public school districts.

Historically, many mentoring programs associated with teachers are either defined as formal or informal mentoring systems. Many new teachers consider their mentors in the field as colleagues they shared ideas with, friends that were also teachers, college professors or previous cooperating teachers. In fact, until recent years, Burbank and Kauchak (2003) stated that “as a profession, teaching is often described as highly individualistic” (p. 500). However, schools have now decided that formal mentoring programs need to exist due to substantial pressures of first year teachers. The National Education Association (2008) suggested mentoring programs to embrace the following components: adequate time to meet, communication, confidentiality, a mentor separate from an evaluator, a mentor that provides local knowledge, incentives, identifies local and state policies, and works with the mentee on the greater good. Although some of these are understandably necessary (providing local knowledge and local and state policy knowledge), they are unfortunately addressed too often, which leaves the mission statement calling for the “greater good” to remain on the sidelines. The partial mentoring provisions are worthwhile; however, they seem to be inappropriately divided and also lack an area for the mentee or EYT to develop self-reflection or more importantly reflective inquiry.
J. Wang, Odell, and Schwille (2008) gave a critical view on the effects of mentoring systems and their relationship with the thinking patterns of EYTs. They focus primarily on the way teachers think about their own teaching, their teaching practice and methodologies, and about students and the larger society. Rather than simply helping EYT's adjust to school policies and basic teaching management skills, Wang et al. stated that “any analysis of the effects of induction on beginning teachers’ learning to teach is not adequate without a proper theorization of teaching” (p. 133). This statement further addressed the need for new teachers to continue participating in active study of theory during their first year of teaching. Many teachers are provided with the needed theory and pedagogical preparation to begin a lifelong study of becoming a teacher. However, if new teachers leave the study behind after completing undergraduate school, the balance of theory and practice is also eradicated and the self reflection piece will become solely embedded in the practice.

As educators reflect on what mentoring programs should consist of and appropriate the need for strong mentoring programs, most organizations and districts seem to agree that providing support to new or novice teachers is a necessity. In fact, the state of Virginia Department of Education remark on the importance below: “Losing a well-educated and talented teacher in the first year of teaching is a tragic loss. Losing a talented teacher because of inadequate support and guidance during the early years is a tragic loss that can be avoided” (p. 8). Agreeably, losing a teacher to another field of study is a tragic loss; however, losing a teacher to standardized management habits during the first year of teaching can also be detrimental when the goal of teaching is to
build the thinking capacities of students in order to be democratically good in society. Furthermore, I think it is important to focus efforts not only on teacher retention but on teacher excellence. Although excellence can be defined in several ways, I refer to excellence in teaching in regards to teachers moving beyond the standardized management and constructivist best practice paradigms and into Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) and Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) description of the curriculum wisdom paradigm. Although there is little research done on the pace of such movement, there is theoretical research that states that teachers will become habituated in practices and paradigms during their first year of teaching. As an alternative, this study provides a mentoring relationship and/or partnership between the EYT and the researcher that approaches a meaningful process similar to the process undertaken in the collaborative study by Burbank and Kauchak (2003). In their progressive alternative to professional development and teacher collaboration, they highlight the importance of teacher research, teacher autonomy, active participation, and collaborative efforts as important structures for professional development. Following Doll’s (1978) outline of educational leadership measures, I believe this study correspondingly aligns with the important areas to an effective relationship.

Collaborative Research

Although a paucity of literature discusses collaborative research in the particular form that is used in this study (researcher as critical companion), there is some research that guides the importance of why researchers decide to engage in collaborate efforts when exploring and/or describing a situation.
When beginning to discuss the importance of collaborative research, one can identify with Radi, Hildebrandt, Martin, and Peters (2006) and their reasoning that, “articulation and expression are important factors in our self-awareness and growth as well as a way to gain multiple perspectives on the experiences rather than relying solely on our singular, and perhaps, limited views” (p. 7).

Therefore, when we look at the meaning behind collaborative research, we can envision a democratic purpose. Defining a problem or looking into the life of another with an isolated eye can be a detrimental attempt to put our own assumptions, beliefs and values in an uncontested battle. Collaborative research not only proves a desire to go back and forth in discovery, but provides the opportunity not to see the discovery as a battle at all.

Instead, Radi et al. (2006) suggested that one thinks of collaborative research through inquiry, action, and collaboration. With a dedication to these three forms, they suggested that theory and practice can not only be united but also have an impact on more than the subject and self but on the social component as well. This notion of collaborative research also seems to ignore Pinar’s (1998) reference to practitioner resistance and scholar’s privilege. In his piece, Gracious Submission, he discussed the possibility that teachers request the help of scholars, mentors, researchers, or other professionals in the field in an unconscious state of reminding those professionals that they actually know nothing about the daily grind or the practice of day to day school life. This form of understanding may be true in some situations that have a hierarchical framework; however, in most collaborative research settings, the understanding is opposite Pinar’s
rendition. In true collaboration, both members of the party feel shared ownership, where growth should exist in both the teacher and the researcher.

However, collaborative research among a teacher and a researcher can possess other problems outside of the earlier issue stated by Pinar (1998). The various degrees of time constraints, flexibility, and requirements can sometimes force one party over the other to become more involved. However, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) helped clear this struggle by developing a reasonable progression of the timeline so that both parties can adjust and be flexible.

Overall, collaborative research can be extremely beneficial for social change and can provide multiple benefits such as ensuring a more effective use of talents, transfer of knowledge, source of stimulation and creativity, providing intellectual companionship, extending the individual researcher’s networks, and enhancing the dissemination of information from the research or the project (Loan-Clarke & Preston, 2002).

Summary

To be able to implement such a refined model of “teaching democracy democratically” in a standards based curriculum, a teacher needs to be committed to initiating a disciplined life of study, have an acute sense of democracy and reasoning (Lipman et al., 1980) as well as a strong teacher education background and/or supportive induction or socialization as an EYT. However, it is the purpose of the study to discover what lends Sarah to continue teaching students to lead an examined life when the odds are stacked against her as a first year teacher. Philosophy for Children is one of many models to aid teachers to deliberatively and democratically teach democracy. Another
important aspect can be the efforts of collaborative research. Going beyond the self in terms of reflection and understanding can also be beneficial to developing a disciplined life of study. However, a problem still exists when the creators of the P4C model question the accessibility and capability of an EYT to become entrusted with such a demanding and challenging way to teach. Does this discourage or encourage Sarah to continue executing such a model? How does an educational leader relate to the process?

Unfortunately, there is no existing research on an EYT’s experiences with P4C implementation or the pacing on beginning a study habituation beyond the realm of standardized management and constructive best practice paradigms. Nevertheless, research states the complexity of an EYT’s first year and his or her survival in the classroom (Moir, 1990) and the usage of the program by veteran teachers. Using narrative inquiry methodology seems to be the best way to capture such a phenomenon of an EYT’s experience teaching P4C in a standards based curriculum and the experiences of participating in a reflective inquiry process that aligns with the curriculum wisdom paradigm.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY

This study employs a narrative methodology in an attempt to examine the multi-faceted nature of a single classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) and to describe a first year teacher’s experiences and structure of integrating the *Philosophy for Children* approach in a standards based curriculum. I attempt to describe such an experience and structure through individual and collaborative narratives formed by both the teacher and the researcher. This helps to create what Bogdan and Biklen described as “dialogue or interplay between researchers and their subjects” (p. 7). This type of interplay can become meaningful when telling stories. Along with Bogdan and Biklen, Clandinin and Connelly (1990) believed that “humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves” (p. 14).

The importance for finding meaning in research is significantly important and the use of narrative inquiry helps to “teach us something of our past, our present, and our future as inhabitants of this planet” (Furlong & Randall, 2005, p. 11). Therefore, since the goal of this research is to better understand and make meaning of a particular EYT experience, it makes sense to describe the setting in a meaningful way. This methodology also seems to align with the current relationship that exists between the teacher and the researcher. According to Nash (2004), the “dark and bright sides” of educational narratives need to exist; therefore, in order to be able to deeply inquire and acknowledge these two sides, the teacher and researcher need to be able to trust one another and feel
comfortable to acknowledge authentic stories and discussions when on this journey to understand the life an EYT implementing a sophisticated thinking skills program as a collaborative researcher.

Due to the notion that humans live stories, many readers of such research can better engage with the research when the structure is focused upon an actual experience of what Greene (1995) referred to as seeing things or people in a big lens format. She explained that we must see from the view of the participant to truly understand and examine the situation. Furthermore, it makes sense to go beyond simply surveying and interviewing the participant (in this case, Sarah) and create “The EYT’s story” through collecting self-narrated journal entries from Sarah, transcribing stories developed in formal interviews and stories created from the observations and field notes that take place in and out of the classroom environment. This would be similar to what Hones (1997) said, “the inquirer collects, retells and writes” (p. 2).

Conle (1999) also stated, “Narrative work seems to invite us to consider new conceptions of self and others, new ways of thinking about schools and about settings for research” (p. 27). The narrative interpretation and restorying of data is continually checked with Sarah to help create a level of trustworthiness or rigor in the study as well as connected with a greater body of literature to make the narrative methodology more scholarly (Nash, 2004).

Narrative methodology goes beyond simply collected stories and retelling lives, it connects with a larger meaning, which can be obtained through more collective literature.
Nash (2004) stated the following as he worked with a student that was formulating an SPN (Scholarly Personal Narrative) dissertation:

We moved quickly from small talk to big talk. I explained to him, in gentle yet clear terms, that SPN was more than just writing about himself. Sure, he might be a great storyteller, but, in writing an SPN, the stories must be universalizable. They needed to be a conduit for larger meanings—the means to deliver readers to greater ends. An SPN might not require structured interviews or statistical analyses, but it did call for much proof texting and scholarly referencing. An SPN might not ask writers to do extensive ethnographic research, but it did demand that they be willing to do in-depth self-inquiry. (p. 113)

According to Nash, a SPN must attend to guidelines and have a thoughtful way of organizing the writing. Nash describes 10 tentative guidelines for writing SPNs and several are applied in this particular study and laid out in the data analysis description.

Setting and Participant

The site for this study is in a Kindergarten classroom in Northeast Ohio. The private, Catholic school is committed to educating students in partnership with the church, parents, and community. The mission statement calls for the curriculum to prepare students for life. The students follow both the parish standards as well as similar standards to public schools in regards to disciplines and content. It is primarily a standards based environment that delivers content in traditional ways. The disciplines revolve around art, computer, English, handwriting, health, language arts, math, music, physical education, reading, science, social studies, Spanish, and religion. The
Kindergarten class is co-educational and has one full time entry year teacher. At the 2000 census, the city in Northeast Ohio had a population of 50,278. This city is also considered a diverse community encompassing residential, industry, and commerce (Wikipedia, 2007).

The teacher of study, Sarah, is a traditionally aged first year, Caucasian, female teacher. She is also a recent graduate of a Northeastern Ohio university and northeastern Ohio high school and a prior student at the research site. Sarah has a BA in Early Childhood Education as well as a reading endorsement from a Northeastern Ohio university.

Sarah was chosen because she was a known companion that was vaguely familiar with the ideals of Philosophy for Children prior to the study. However, Sarah had not participated (prior to the study) in Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) reflective inquiry scaffolding during the application of a 3S understanding model. In fact, Sarah had not been introduced to Henderson and Kesson (2004) or Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) curriculum approaches and theories in her undergraduate studies, nor in her personal preparation to become a teacher. She and I were holding conversations the summer before her first year of teaching regarding Philosophy for Children; yet, we had not discussed 3S understanding until the study. Sarah was asked to participate in the study because of her known interest and study disposition in regards to curriculum alternatives.

Researcher’s Role and Ethical Understandings

Throughout the study, I have been in a role beyond participant observation because of my collaborative role in the process. In fact, I was studying myself at the same
time as studying and working alongside the EYT in the study. This “mentoring” role as the educational leader provides support according to Doll’s (1978) understanding of educational leader traits and also highlights the importance of collaborative research. To support Doll’s traits, I also interacted with the teacher inside and outside of the classroom in order to build a positive and trusting relationship with the teacher. These interactions helped to interpret and examine Sarah’s personal self-narrated journals as well as the observed engagements during the P4C sessions in the classroom. I consistently acknowledged Postholm and Madsen’s (2006) approach to developing common understanding and mutuality while participating in continuous dialogue with the EYT around the notion of 3S understanding. As the EYT turned in self-narrated journal entries, I read the narrative text and responded with my insights to her entries in a timely manner. These journals were self-initiated by Sarah and did not encompass a particular structure of organization. Sarah simply was asked to journal about anything upon which she wanted to reflect or highlight in regards to her first year of teaching. This sharing of insights in regards to journal entries helped establish a natural way to check understanding and to collaborate with the EYT. The duration of the back and forth discussions were ongoing and helped provide a meaningful step in the inquiry process. Without this form of communication, the EYT may only be developing an understanding of self through an isolated lens, whereas the collaboration and back and forth discussions helped provide an emphasis of mutual structure that could allow for new meanings to surface. This form of collaboration also compelled the EYT to move beyond the telling of her experiences and stories and allowed her the opportunity to make meaning of them
through means of interviews and additional conversations that were held during the course of the year.

In regards to ethical considerations, I have responded in a way that aligns with my ethical position to be caring, open, and trustworthy. I also gathered an informed consent from the participant and remained clear about any confidentiality concerns. Pseudonyms were used to conceal identities, and in addition, I made sure to acknowledge Nash’s (2004) understanding of ethical relationships. He described this relationship in regards to being “scrupulous in using others in our best, ethical manner” (p. 134). It is important to remember that we need to be caring when disclosing the lives of others; yet, we also need to recognize the greater importance of why the story needs to be conveyed. However, no particular ethical dilemmas were anticipated or discovered in this study.

Data Collection Methods

Data were primarily collected through observations documented in field notes, journals, and face-to-face interviews that were documented and transcribed. During the interview sessions, I focused on Sarah’s immediate reactions of structure and flow for P4C, the overall experience of the spring P4C sessions, and the EYT’s perceptions of 3S understanding. In order to collect this data, I used Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) reflective inquiry scaffolding questions to outline the interviews (see Appendices B-H). The reflective inquiry questions are organized within a “reflective inquiry map” under the following sub-headings: reflective disciplinary inquiry, reflective poetic inquiry, reflective critical inquiry, reflective multiperspective inquiry, reflective ethical inquiry, reflective political inquiry, and other reflective inquiries (Henderson & Gornik, pp. 69-
However, some of the interview questions were adjusted to fit Sarah’s needs and level of understanding during the process. The face-to-face interviewing took place throughout the 2008 spring semester in a safe, neutral, and relaxed environment where she felt comfortable sharing her point of view. By this means, I attempted to be able to understand the Sarah’s perceptions of 3S understanding and her experiences with Philosophy for Children. I also kept in mind Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) notion of thoroughness and accuracy during the interviews by following what they shared: “thoroughness requires preparing follow-up questions when evidence is missing or thin, or when you hear something that sounds puzzling” (p. 70).

I also believe that Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) notion of believability was important in this study because the methodology was not as structured as other methodologies in the field. However, due to the collaborative research component to this study, the believability was open and naturally discovered due to the developed partnership that occurred during the year.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed through methods of narrative analysis using a narrative story map, which is further described in the data analysis section. Although the interviews followed Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) inquiry map scaffolding, I also conducted follow-up interviews on any narrative recollections that the participant acknowledged during the self-narrated journal entries that she has been writing throughout the semester. Again, these self-narrated journals were simply reflections or highlights that Sarah chose to represent in her writing. Fortunately, Sarah provided consent to share these self-narrated journals with the researcher. After collecting
these stories from self-narrated journals, I intended to help “textualise” the stories (Rhodes, 1996) by connecting the stories with the literature and drawing larger implications from the stories while continually checking such understandings with Sarah. These times of data checking were conducted via telephone, face to face, and through email communication and are described and noted in the appendices.

In addition to interviews, observations were conducted in the classroom during the spring semester of the 2007-2008 academic school year and also described and noted in the appendices. These observations were conducted during Philosophy for Children sessions as well as during times that Philosophy for Children sessions were not being implemented. In order to better gauge why Sarah was participating in a practical application of 3S understanding, it was important to observe her classroom during various parts of the school day as well as during Philosophy for Children sessions. In order to clearly represent observations, field notes were written and later processed. However, like Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) suggested,

Field notes grow through gradual accretion, adding one day’s writing to the next’s. The ethnographer writes particular fieldnotes in ways that are not pre-determined or pre-specified; hence fieldnotes are not collection or samples in the way that audio recordings can be, i.e., decided in advance according to set criteria. Choosing what to write down is not a process of sampling according to some fixed-in-advance principle. Rather it is both intuitive, reflecting the ethnographer’s changing sense of what might possibly be made interesting or
important to future readers, and empathetic, reflecting the ethnographer’s sense of what is interesting or important to the people he is observing. (p.11)

Furthermore, the field notes collected from day to day were not seen as separate entities. Instead, all field notes were “inseparable from the observational process” (Emerson et al., p.11) as well as connected with previous field notes. These field notes helped me to capture the observations as well as understand the larger meaning and connections that the observations had with interviews and teacher journal entries.

During all observations during the spring semester, I also made sure to note Bogdan and Biklen’s (2003) idea of “observer’s comments” (p. 151). Writing observer comments helped address my personal thoughts and feelings alongside taking field notes during Sarah’s facilitation of *Philosophy for Children* sessions as well as during other observation periods. This form of notation was also helpful in future interpretation of the examination and description for my research as I began to conduct my own scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004) of Sarah’s stories and experiences.

Data Management and Analysis

Riley and Hawe (2005) stated,

Narrative inquiry attempts to understand how people think through events and what they value. We learn this through a close examination of how people talk about events and whose perspectives they draw on to make sense of such events. This may reveal itself in how and when particular events or activities are introduced, how tension is portrayed, and in how judgments are carried out. (pp. 229-230)
Since the reflective inquiry scaffolding (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) aligns with Riley and Hawe’s statement of key features of narrative inquiry, one can begin to understand how the collected data will be integral to understanding Sarah’s experiences. However, the unanalyzed data may not clarify the stories in connection with the literature, nor provide a complete understanding of illuminating the research questions. Therefore, I needed to analyze the data in order to shed light on such understandings. In order to effectively dissect the data collected, I used narrative analysis as the central means of analyzing.

Riley and Hawe (2005) stated the following on narrative analysis.

Therefore, the researcher's role is to interpret the stories in order to analyze the underlying narrative that the storytellers may not be able to give voice to themselves. (p. 227)

They further stated the following on why the context and time relayed in collected data is valuable to the construction of meaning in narrative analysis.

This is something that Ricoeur calls the ‘threefold present’ in which the past and the future co-exist with the present in the mind of the narrator, through memory in the first case and expectation in the second. A thematic analysis might document different themes arising at different stages of the intervention. (p. 229)

Again, Riley and Hawe stated that “narrative analysis focuses on who is mentioned in the telling of events (and who is absent) and the role they have in the telling of events” (p. 230).
Therefore, for the data to be analyzed through narrative analysis, particular examinations need to be addressed, such as: examining narrative segments (from interviews, stories written in journals and observations) and focusing on the description and transformation, focusing on why the story is being told in the manner that it is told, exploring the process of meaning making and how it interacts with broader institutional or cultural measures, and identifying points and schemes of the stories (Riley & Hawe, 2005). I examined these particulars through creating a schematic story map (Figure 1) design that is related to Riley and Hawe’s narrative analysis examination; Doll’s 4 dimensions; and Sarah’s past, present, and future experiences of working with 3S understanding.

The importance of appropriating this through narrative analysis is so the complete story is interpreted. However, there is a paucity of research in regards to narrative analysis that takes the interpretation of stories, interviews, and observations and later connects these to theory. Fortunately, Nash’s (2004) work on Scholarly Personal Narrative elucidates this important part of data analysis. After organizing and analyzing data through the story map design chart, I looked at what Riley and Hawe (2005) stated as “the inter-relationship of the organizing theme and form that creates what is called ‘coherent directionality’ in the narrative. This means how it makes sense over time” (p. 7). This coherence can come to light through use of the story map, as well as through connecting theory to Sarah’s narrative text. Additionally, I reflected on Nash’s understanding of narrative inquiry by focusing on several of his 10 guidelines for creating a SPN.
Table 1. Schematic story map for narrative analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Experiences</th>
<th>Social (Social)</th>
<th>Personal (Self)</th>
<th>Productive (Democratic Action)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Intentions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Schematic story map for narrative analysis

The first, “moving from the particular to the general” (p. 59), guideline helped me bridge the concreteness and the abstractness that surfaced in the narratives. Second, I reflected on the importance of drawing larger implications from the narrative clips through the use of a story map with hopes to discover “larger implications” (p. 60) of subject, self, and society. Drawing larger implications from the narrative clips and mapping the clips through Figure 1 helped me develop an SPN. Long narratives were not developed by the EYT; however, the narratives were developed by me through using interview clips, field notes, and teacher journal entries and mapping these data sets using Figure 1. Next, I decided to go beyond developing the literature connections prior to the study and draw from the literature during the analysis phase of examination. This not only enabled me to continue making sense of the narrative underpinnings, but also helped Sarah and me look beyond the stories and envision how others would understand the process. Nash’s 6th and 10th guidelines described the need for showing passion and
developing a love for the story and the words to the narrative. Both of these guidelines were extremely important in this study and always were attended to during the writing phase. In fact, through this study, I agreed with Nash when he said to “resist the conventional academic temptation to be . . . distant” (p. 63). Although this study is not meant to advocate, it is clearly a study that shows passion from both the EYT and the researcher in regards to understanding the experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of a teacher attempting to integrate a 3S orientation during her first year of teaching.

Indicators of Rigor

Indicators of rigor in narrative inquiry methodology have become scrutinized in several accounts. For instance, as stated by Merrill (2007), many researchers and theorists would question narrative inquiry as an “essential conduit for the development of self and reality” (p. 7) and instead claim narrative inquiry to be considered a methodology with fabrication in the generalizations. However, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) argued for criteria beyond validity, reliability, and generalizability when assuming indicators of rigor. I believe that the consistent member checking with Sarah in regards to interpreting all data (field notes, interviews, self-narrated journals, and memos) was shared and negotiated for the internal coherence and consistency of the story provided. The chosen methods of data collection also helped to develop a deeper sense of what was being examined.

In addition to member checking with Sarah, I also used various forms of data collecting techniques such as interviewing, observing, and collecting teacher journal entries. Although many researchers may refer to this as triangulation, I recognize the
suggestion by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) to simply note the data collection techniques for what they are instead of placing them with a particular term. Nevertheless, using multiple sources of data collecting techniques was also helpful in sustaining rigor in the study as well as deepening the narratives.

Contributions to the Field

I hope to contribute a beginning knowledge base of the non-traditional roles of EYTs. What roles can the past, present, and future intentions of an EYT’s personal life, teacher education, and induction/teacher socialization experiences play in an EYT’s effort to match his or her instructional practices with his or her underlying belief systems about “teaching democracy democratically?” What role or impact can be observed when an EYT collaboratively participates in a study with an educational leader in regards to her first year of teaching and implementation of a non-traditional thinking model in a Kindergarten classroom? I hope to contribute knowledge on how an EYT implements a democratic thinking model and how this implementation may evolve over time. In addition, I hope the study contributes knowledge to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of an educational leader researching and supporting the efforts of an EYT.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

Through analyzing the data that extends into the realm of the personal and educational life of Sarah, I found that it is vital to acknowledge my part in this analysis and my initial views while in the data collection phase. Through use of a narrative analysis story map and connecting literature with the mapping understandings, I am able to analyze the data in an effective way which shows the interrelationship between practice and theory in the midst of self-discovery. An introduction to the participant’s meaning making experience is highlighted below by my initial reactions and narrative that addresses segments of field notes. These reactions provide an alternative view on how Sarah goes against the traditional approach to teaching and focuses on the attempt of reaching her idealistic views of preparing students for what she stated as “responsible citizens.”

Nickerson, Perkins, and Smith (1985) stated,

Traditional approaches to education have focused on the teaching of course content material, which is to say on imparting factual knowledge. By comparison, relatively little attention has been given to the teaching of thinking skills—or at least to the teaching of the skills involved in higher-order activities as reasoning, creative thinking, and problem solving. (p. 48)
This wrestling of ideas in order to reason is clearly present in Sarah’s classroom due to her notion of modeling and teaching *Philosophy for Children*. Throughout several observations of daily classroom interactions, *Philosophy for Children* sessions, and interviews with Sarah, it is clear that she understands and acknowledges the interdependence between knowledge and thinking skills. Throughout the collaborative research experience, Sarah has grown as an educator and as a reflective person. This study addresses the balance of analyzing authentic stories through means of scholarly narrative analysis that incorporates both stories of practice and their connection to theory.

On the first day I met with Sarah and asked of her interest in collaboratively researching her first year experiences with implementing a sophisticated thinking skills program into her classroom, she was ecstatic. She immediately volunteered to participate and remarked of her love for learning and hopes of bettering her teaching. After such a quick and meaningful response, I realized the study would be productive and worthwhile. Given this view, it was natural to consider the study as a collaborative effort in which we would narratively describe our roles within the study and Sarah’s experiences with *Philosophy for Children*.

In order to synthesize the field notes, interview data, teacher and researcher journal entries, memos, and collaboration notes, it is important to remember the value of using scholarly narrative inquiry. Scholarly narrative inquiry not only uses theory to make meaning from narratives, but can be collaboratively and professionally discussed to make the connection between the practice and theory. Sustaining this value helps to understand the experiences that the relationship brought to an EYT implementing a
sophisticated thinking skills program into the classroom during her first year of teaching. We were able to maintain this value by collaborating on a weekly basis, sustaining communication through means of email, telephone conversations, informal meetings, formal interviews, classroom visits, and self-narrated journals. This form of collaboration similarly exemplified what Christenson, Eldredge, Ibom, Johnston, and Thomas (1996) stated as “collaboration is about altering relationships” (p. 187). Our relationship and positions on personal inquiry were dramatically altered due to the open nature of study provided in this work. Following Nash’s (2004) notion of SPN, I realized that as our narratives unfolded, the ideas may not “always be scientifically defensible, or even erudite.” But as Nash also stated, this could help keep the “language somewhat simple—not simple minded, but fresh, personal, and down-to-earth” (p. 67). Both of these quotes by Nash were important to remember during the phase of looking into the EYT’s life and making sense of her experiences, perceptions, and interpretations by the use of a narrative story map. This helped to do what Nash referred to as the “balance” of scholarly narratives (p. 66).

The following story was developed from sections of field notes regarding an introduction to Sarah and serves as an introduction to the unfolding collaboration between myself, Sarah and her experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of creating a community of inquiry.

As stated by Jack Miller, “two qualities that the soulful teacher can usually bring to the classroom are presence and caring. Presence arises from the mindfulness where the teacher is capable of listening deeply” (n.d., p. 12). This is exactly what Sarah brought to
her classroom on a daily basis and to our morning discussion. It was a rainy morning when I conducted my first formal interview. I invited Sarah to meet wherever she felt most comfortable and even suggested a neutral spot, if needed, so we decided on meeting at my home because of its presence in the country. As she came in the house, we sat down at the kitchen table near the windows that allowed a view of the back yard, where several deer normally graze. It was a peaceful and calming spot to begin a deep discussion on values and beliefs. During the previous times spent with Sarah, I was in awe of her pervasive commitment to the study during her first year of teaching. Aside from her several first year obligations, she held steadfast to fueling her professional practice beyond first year requirements. This pervasive commitment alone brought a grateful endorsement of respect to Sarah for her courageous and unwavering discipline in a contrived world of homogeneous teacher preparation. At the least, I was shaken by this desire and emotionally connected to hearing more about her experiences, perceptions, and interpretations.

Prior to our first formal interview, I had visited her classroom several times and had a good feeling for her as a teacher as well as a person. In my classroom visits, I learned a lot about the way she handles her classroom, the community of learners that existed within her classroom, and her methods of teaching. However, I wanted to find out more about why all of this took place in her classroom. What are her values? What are her belief systems? Why is she so committed to engaging in philosophical thinking with young children? What drives Sarah to work with this study? Several other questions were driving my intentions; however, the Henderson and Gornik (2007) scaffolding was used
as a starting point for initiating reflective inquiry in terms of understanding her experiences, perceptions, and understandings of 3S design (such as Philosophy for Children) and also to allow for her reflective inquiry capacities as an EYT to surface.

Sarah describe herself as a caring, easygoing, humble, and sociable person. I would agree and describe her using many of the same characteristics that she has noted about herself throughout the study. However, she also has an internal sense of the importance for self-examination. She constantly portrays a person that critiques her actions, her thoughts, and her belief systems. There has never been a conversation with her that did not end with a question. Although she is passionate and has strong feelings on particular topics, she is always open to learning about my point of view, and the viewpoint of other researchers, theorists, and teachers. She constantly questions her thinking, while still displaying a confidence about her teaching and insights.

Yet, beneath such humble and religious roots lies a person with not only a strong faith about life but also a thirst for wisdom. She is dedicated to a study that will not only improve her life, her teaching, and her students but the lives of those people that her students will touch as well. She thinks “big,” although she may not seem to verbally admit cumbersome thinking in some of her responses during formal questioning. She seems to embrace the “good life” that I also desire to embrace and plans on living the religious mission of her school district to the best of her abilities. Yet, through all of these good intentions, she is also open to ideas, help, suggestions, and discussion related to contextualizing the practice with the theories learned in undergraduate school. Unfortunately, from our informal conversations at the beginning of the year, Sarah’s
mentor was not providing this type of help. This lack of assistance could have been related to the withstanding problem of induction programs today. Many current induction programs are providing the help with management tasks; yet, not looking at the management and instructional procedures in balance with the proper theorizing of teaching (Odell, Schwille, & Wang, 2008). The importance of this undetectable form of instrumental mentoring was fresh on Sarah’s mind. As I once again thanked her for coming, thanked her for participating in the study, and for giving up her free time to allow me to formally interview her, she noted,

Please. Thank you for all of your help. I love to share ideas and talk about teaching with others. Unfortunately, I am unable to have that relationship with my school mentor. In fact, I think I have only met with her twice since the beginning of the year. Plus, I constantly analyze things anyways so it is helpful to do this. (Collaborative Planning, 1/8/08)

Although one would think the level of gratitude during a study comes from the researcher to the participant, this study showed otherwise. Although I was deeply appreciative to spend time and understand the life of a disciplined first year teacher, Sarah was just as appreciative to involve herself in the study. Speaking from her above verbal note of appreciation, I also agreed with her definition of mentoring as she perceived in the schools. As an EYT, I too felt the same sort of distance with my mentor. I was also searching for a relationship that could not only deepen my instruction and management of the classroom, but, my thinking skills. I was searching for a mentor that could push my thinking beyond the standardized management aura that was lurking in the school. As a
first year teacher, I remember feeling an idealistic form of excitement coupled with a frustration that would only be defined several years later. This idealistic form of excitement was also sensed with Sarah; however, as our conversations progressed, she was able to define her frustrations with more ease than I was as a first year teacher. Her frustrations were clear, pronounced, and dissected, and we discussed alternative manners of acknowledging the frustrations.

For example, during the poetic interview on March 25, 2008, Sarah mentioned:

Some people are so far in their own bubble that they do not want to share. I want to converse with people, hear their ideas, test my own but when others are not willing to share, I either have the mentality that I should be grateful for what I have been given or make another choice on how to converse. (Formal interview: poetic, 3/25/08)

What was ultimately discovered was that she recognized her frustrations, had the good intentions of implementing a sophisticated thinking skills program; yet, had several moments (that are expressed in narrative clips and analyzed through Figure 1) that were withholding her from “walking the talk” during parts of the school day other than Philosophy for Children thinking sessions. Walking the talk is different from talking the talk because some teachers are able to understand theories and curriculum approaches; yet, they may not be able to participate in the approaches that they understand and believe in due to outside pressures. This was not initially realized until further conversations were addressed and member checking of data analysis was brought to the table.
The back and forth discussion, sharing of stories, literature, and experiences in the classroom, was just the beginning of a unique form of collaboration that rarely surfaces during an educator’s first year of teaching or in mentoring and/or induction efforts of school districts (Gottesman & Jennings, 1994). In fact, Gottesman and Jennings stated:

Teachers have not been well-prepared to serve the society that now exists, much less the society we are trying to create. We have tried for years to overcome the hurdle of inadequate teacher preparation in preservice by continually inservicing them. (p. 10)

Since the collaborative efforts of this research also introduced a new skeleton to mentoring new teachers, it is vital to deeply examine and unfold the intricacies of the collaboration as well as Sarah’s experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of implementing *Philosophy for Children*. In order to establish an understanding of this research experience, I have guided the reader with headings to the developments of the study. The headings are as follows:

1. **Walking the Course: Moving from Standardized Management to Constructive Best Practice into Curriculum Wisdom: An EYT’s Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations**
2. **Using Philosophy for Children in the Classroom: An EYT’s Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations**
3. **On the Road to 3S Understanding-Using Reflective Inquiry: An EYT’s Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations of the following: Discipline, Poetic, Critical, Multiperspective, Ethical and Political Modes of Inquiry**

The analyzed data presented under these headings help to gain an understanding of what Nash (2004) stated as “we profess who we are by the way we live our lives” (pp. 59-60). Who is this EYT and why does she attempt to integrate a sophisticated thinking skills model during her first year of teaching?

Walking the Course: Moving From Standardized Management to Constructive Best Practice Into Curriculum Wisdom: An EYT’s Past Experiences, Present Perceptions, and Interpretations

Past Experiences

Many past experiences prevail in the realm of educational theory and practice due to the notion that all teachers were students themselves. Past experiences that directly correlate with our present can be either negatively or positively influential. I have described Sarah’s past experiences of walking the course in connection with the intellectual, social, personal, and action phases of her experiences. In the case of Sarah’s experiences as a student and as a teacher, they are in the realm of both worlds. Light (2001) questioned, “Why do some undergraduates feel they are making the most of their years at college, while others are far less positive? What choices and attitudes distinguish between these two groups?” (p. 1). Similarly, educators ask what makes novice teachers feel as if they are ready to take on the teaching domain and what makes others feel as if they can merely survive? These questions are extremely useful when trying to understand Sarah’s experiences. What makes this novice teacher want to participate in a study that
provides possibilities for her to step outside of the usual standardized management and constructive best practice paradigm? The experiences she holds as a student, a daughter, and a responsible person seem to highlight why this path was even considered.

As I began informal conversations with Sarah, I was amazed at the breadth of assimilation that she experienced. First of all, she did not initiate discussions of her childhood in the self-narrated journals; however, she did tie aspects of her past (childhood and schooling) with the present when I brought the topic to the forefront. When I initially and informally asked her to describe her childhood, she responded in regards to her ability to adjust to the adult world very quickly. Sarah was from a divorced family. She lived with her mother since a very young age and was an only child to her mother. She also began the understanding of building self-discipline at a very young age while at the same time recognizing the reliance that an “only child” has with dependence. She depended on her mother as well as her teachers. She was emotionally involved in both settings and wanted to participate in both roles as the “good child” and one which avoided conflict. Yet, despite the dependence, she also grew up understanding how to translate courage into actions and how to exist and balance the life of being a child in an adult world. Balance was also a key ingredient in Sarah’s life. She had to learn how to balance the love of two parents in two separate households, the life of a child and the life of an adult, the role of a daughter and the role of a friend to her mother, the role of contentment and the role of adversity. Therefore, when it came time to balance the understanding that education is a balance of both theory and practice, she was open and willing to embark on a journey of understanding in regards to this balance.
The insights that Sarah shared have emphasized the importance of what Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) proclaimed as the core values needed to participate or recognize the rapid learning curve that takes place in education. Without particular core values, it is difficult for some teachers to rapidly make meaning of old experiences with new knowledge for the benefit of the students. Fortunately, Sarah represents the qualities that are mentioned in Korthagen and Vasalos’ work, such as empathy, flexibility, courage, creativity, and decisiveness, which allow her to embark on this rapid learning curve. In addition to these qualities, Sarah described what it means to be a teacher as:

One who is compassionate, dedicated, patient, funny, competent, a life long learner, a hard worker, a communicator, a child at heart, one that can hear different points of view, a model and one that can think outside of the box.

(Formal interview: poetic, 3/25/08)

Fortunately, she also believes that these qualities can still be present regardless of previous schooling experiences that may have been negative. Her own schooling experiences can highlight this belief.

I never had a problem with school. I was a good kid and usually always listened to my teachers. There were really no disciplinary actions that needed to take place when I was a kid (I really didn’t misbehave). I was quiet and did not like to deal with conflict. (Collaborative planning, 1/24/08)

Sarah also believes the past can help a teacher realize that “you cannot teach all children the same remote way that has been done in the past” (Email entry, 3/6/08). She
understands that we learn from the mistakes of others and the mistakes of our own wrongdoings.

As a student and as a daughter, the EYT was also assimilated into a world of standardized management. She felt what Campbell (1995) described as the significance relating to the term “freedom.” Although we understand the mission of the United States of America in relation to words like “freedom” and “liberty,” we also acknowledge the indifference of these words in practice, specifically in regards to childhood. Do children have the right to “freedom?” What does this freedom look like and how should we make sure that children do not feel oppressed as students and as citizens? Unfortunately, the EYT’s life ran on schedules and dependence, lacking the Deweyian notion of freedom that is described by Campbell. For instance, Sarah mentioned the following: “I was always a disciplined student. I went to Catholic school and had a very traditional, religious schooling experience. Everything was based on religion” (Formal interview: disciplinary, 3/16/08). She stated that her entire educational career in a religious setting helped her view personal and professional relationships, how she treats other people, how she manages her classroom, and how she views life. Yet, even though she went to Catholic school and followed a traditional schooling plan, she stated that although she is a Roman Catholic, she remains curious to the unknown and is willing to embark on a long journey to obtain meaningful understandings. In fact, she stated, “I am a Roman Catholic. I am from a soul filled with many unanswered questions. I understand that I need patience” (Informal conversation, 1/24/08). The two quotes above began a conversation regarding what traditional and religious curriculum looked like. As we
further discussed the topic, she had the following to say regarding the relevance of traditional and religious schooling and the notion of “freedom.” She stated that attending a religious school throughout her academic career has

Disciplined my life in a way to always look towards God. God was the center of what I did throughout my life (its still a part of my background and values). I am the only child living with my mother and I believe that my mom let me spread my wings, but there was (and I still feel that there is) some black and white lines with different issues. She affects the way I live my life. I value her opinion and I did not like to deal with conflict. (Informal conversation, 1/24/08)

She discussed both positives and negatives of her experiences with religious schooling and the topic of freedom and later discussed what helped her finally “deal with the conflict” of traditional schooling today. I further asked Sarah how she decided to “deal with the conflict” and break away from this being the only way to teach. She stated,

Another piece that made me break away was seeing the children and realizing that you cannot teach all children the same remote way that has been done in the past.

College did have an impact on how I view education as well. (Informal conversation, 3/18/08)

To further understand Sarah’s beliefs on freedom and the role of conflict, I asked her informal questions and also suggested her to write an “I am from” poem (after sharing my own and the original by George Ella Lyons).

Within Sarah’s “I am from” poem, she stated, “I pretend to put myself in my children’s shoes. I feel like I can soar with my students” (I am from poem, 2008). She
may understand the need for freedom in schools; however, it is not positive experiences with schooling that paved the way to such understanding. Instead, it was the less positive experiences in the past that influenced Sarah to search for ways to allow children not to feel oppressed within their minds and souls. Yet, these negative experiences in her schooling are just as important to the more positive experiences regarding “freedom” that happened at a later period of life for Sarah. Similar to H. Wang and Hoyt’s (2007) reaction to Janet Miller’s “Sounds of Silence Breaking: Women, Autobiography, Curriculum” is Sarah’s struggle with the understanding of freedom. For instance, Wang and Hoyt stated,

Such an ability to both belong and not belong is essential for good translation, as I will discuss later. What is clear here is that words of one’s own are co-emergent, supported by both solitary and relational spaces. The authority of a woman’s voice is acknowledged here with a deep sense of connectedness. (p. 4)

For it is the breaking of silence, the recognition of unfortunate experiences in the past that help pave the way for a more rapid understanding of how to move from one paradigm to another or even more importantly, how to move from a past understanding of the self to a new understanding of self and others. Without the meaningful transitions from past to present experiences, it is difficult for others (in this case teachers) to observe the relationships that exist among curriculum paradigms. However, because Sarah was open to examine her past experiences and not willing to remain stuck in the past, she transitioned with meaning to a new journey that introduced her to constructive best practice.
Sarah attended a Catholic elementary, intermediate, and high school and was engaged in both religious and standardized material at a very young age. When asked to describe her school experience, she proclaims that her content was remote, traditional, and based on following the guidelines of a particular religion, Catholicism. Her commitment to learning about God is noticeably important to her; however, she started understanding that humans are not perfect and after our discussions, we both agreed that the doctrine of Catholicism has flaws in regards to the lifestyles of current American life. In addition, the curriculum that Sarah experienced in Catholic schools was not the same constructivist form of curriculum that she was taught in preparatory courses; however, she sees the meaning behind both paradigms.

This experience of schooling clearly stated her understanding of subject as information that is handed down, transmitted regardless of interest or relation to the student. She also seems to have an understanding that the social sphere of learning in regards to her past experiences are related to people that you “need” to work with regardless of like mindedness. She was taught to love all people during her religious training; however, she was also raised to only believe in the Catholic doctrine. Without getting into a deep religious discussion, this showed that her past experiences in education gave mixed views of socialization. She felt that the religious component to the curriculum helped guide her values and decisions to living the “good life” but also questioned the scripted religious teachings behind some particular Catholic beliefs.

Fortunately, her past experiences with undergraduate work started to open the door for alternative ways of thinking and curriculum practice. It was not until then that
Sarah realized that the success of her students is not simply based on traditional discipline (such as the way discipline was defined in her Catholic upbringing), but by discipline to discovery. Through college coursework, she realized that “children need a variety of materials to work with, they need a multitude of experiences and they need an active teacher that promotes lifelong learning” (Formal interview, 3/16/08; teacher journal, 1/28/08). In fact, Sarah remembers her study of Piaget, Dewey, and Montessori in undergraduate coursework and felt inspired by the works of all three theorists. She appreciated the introduction into child development courses and also realized the value of letting go of past environmental influences that may have dealt with curriculum in a different way. Her undergraduate schooling was modeling how to use problem based learning in the classroom, explored the notion of holistic grading, invented spelling and inquiry based science. During her student teaching, she expressed that she had a Wonderful cooperating teacher who has taught for many years and still kept up on what the new theory or new hot topic was to discuss. She guided me through many of my lessons and then with her watchful eye, I did them with the class. Also I feel that she helped me see that children are not living the life that they once were and because of this, you cannot teach the same way. (Informal conversation)

This was all fascinating and new for Sarah. She had not experienced schooling in this way prior to college and was seeing the benefits of such constructive best practice while completing her field observation hours. However, as a researcher/critical companion, I asked her if she could think back to a time in her childhood that was similar
to constructivist best practice and brought up the possibility that this paradigm may or may not be as “new” as she previously stated. After short pondering, she mentioned that she spent a lot of time at her grandparents’ house and remembered planting in the garden with her grandfather. It was also during that time of active experience that she remembers learning about many lessons in life. She was not simply listening to books, working on writing the Ten Commandments or being lectured; instead, her grandfather was allowing her some of the “freedom” that she needed to make connections, to experience in terms of real time, and to make sense of the world and her unconsciousness. Sarah enjoys referring to these childhood times and mentioned that the referrals helped her spend a lot of time with “abstract thinking” (Formal interview: Poetic, 3/25/08). This form of concretizing reminded me of Gadamer’s (2001) following words regarding abstract thinking and concrete understandings: “Thus, I would say that, ultimately, thinking consists in realizing that the abstractions one performs can also be found in what is concretely real: concretizing is ultimately the soul of abstracting” (p. 93).

This form of concretization was helping her understand what Brooks and Brooks (1993) were addressing when they discussed the importance of constructivist classrooms. Recognizably similar to the EYT’s revelation is the passage stated by the Southwest Education Development Laboratory (1995):

How do we learn? Watching a young child grow from infancy to toddlerhood, we marvel at the amount of learning that has allowed her to understand her expanding environment. Those early years provide the basis for language, physical dexterity, social understanding, and emotional development that she will use for the rest of
her life. What a vast amount of knowledge is acquired before she sets foot in school! This child taught herself by gathering information and experiencing the world around her. Such learning exemplifies constructivism—an idea that has caused much excitement and interest among educators.

Sarah’s past experiences with constructivism goes beyond her undergraduate training; however, this realization was not brought to the forefront until our conversations surfaced the relationship that her childhood had in regards to constructivist best practice and also through the shared stories that are similar to the story that Alfie Kohn (1993) described below:

> When they first get to school, they are endlessly fascinated by the world. They are filled with delight by their newfound ability to print their own names in huge, shaky letters, to count everything in sight, to decode the signs they see around them. (p. 142)

Like me, Sarah had high hopes that the world of early childhood education allowed for such spark and motivation for children to learn. Yet, this all depends on what we bring with us as educators. Are we allowing a space and place for the children to make such meaningful connections? Are we providing a place that children can feel motivated in other ways than rewards, which Kohn highlighted as decisive social lures? This may depend on what we, as teachers, bring and/or carry with us to this space and place called school.

Although Sarah had desires to bring spark and motivation to the space and place of Kindergarten, some of the things she “carried” into her first year of teaching, were also
based on her own schooling experience and similar to what Tim O’Brien described as the weight carried by soldiers in Vietnam. O’Brien (1990) stated,

The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wristwatches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military Payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. (p. 2)

How is the baggage the same? For soldiers, bringing knives, repellent, and cigarettes were considered the survival bags of sustaining life in the brisk of war, whereas, bringing grade books, behavior charts, a stern hand, a bell for ringing, and a watchful eye are considered ways that teachers can survive and sustain their time and power in the classroom. Although Sarah had other items in her survival bag, she also brought the tools that Harry and Rosemary Wong (1998) claimed all teachers need to bring or know on the first day of school. Their widely acclaimed book, How to be an effective teacher: The first days of school, helps to support the survival bags that teachers currently bring to work on their first day of school. Just as a doctor brings his scalpel, a teacher brings her bags of tricks and trades to help young children begin their acclamation to the world of standardized living. This is understandable through examining Sarah’s past; yet, if we introduced some of the alternatives earlier (in her own schooling experience or in undergraduate training), she may have been able to resist holding on to some of Wong and Wong’s suggestions. Although her past may not have been completely in flight with Kohn’s (1993) notion of guidance and instruction, her past does provide insight on why
she decided to take an alternative path and also provides understanding to why walking the talk is sometimes difficult to accomplish within a year’s time.

**Present Perceptions**

When I asked Sarah if she has developed a passion for teaching, she immediately said “Yes” and brought up the correlation between her past and the present. She mentioned that although she was passionate about her coursework in undergraduate school, she also loved the fact that she “could sleep until noon and then be done by 5:00” (Formal interview: Poetic, 3/25/08). However, now she does not see time or the traditional perks of teaching (summers off, etc.) as reasons for the passion. She mentioned that teaching is now a way of life.

> I wake up at 6:00 a.m. and can’t wait to see the children. Just fifteen minutes with the children and I love it! I love hearing the truth that they have to say and that they are always eager to find out something new—that’s why I chose early childhood. (Formal interview: Poetic, 3/25/08)

> Assuming that the quest for truth and openness are reasons that stoke her passion, I further asked her to explain what she meant by “truth.”

> They speak whatever is on their mind. Everything is more simplistic. It makes you realize why you are there and makes me grateful to look at my life and also makes me thankful for the simplest things.

From this statement, I was intrigued further. Her understanding of “truth” at the moment was very similar to what those leading the constructivist movement to claim. Many constructivists believe that the way of truth for children is speaking what is on their mind.
or the teacher not facilitating knowledge but more as the guide on the side. However, there are also many critiques of such views of constructivism because it is then that the teacher’s role is questioned. I again brought up this notion of “truth” in regards to constructivist education. I asked Sarah what she would do if a student was certain that he or she had found the “truth” to a concept without doing further studying or exploring. Would she do more than guide the student to discover their own truth making schema? Will this constructivist teacher create problems for the student to face so that the students could test theories in multiple or alternative ways? She provided me the following example that proved to me that she was, in fact, a developed constructivist teacher; however, she was still uncertain on how to move from the constructivist best practice paradigm into the curriculum wisdom paradigm. One way Sarah mentioned that she allows students to experience the search for “truth” is through journaling, centers, and literature activities. She stated

I ask critical and abstract questions and allow them to journal. Centers are also an extension on the standard that is previously taught but allows them to explore their own understandings of the content. Another way that I help students make meaning is by giving them at least one literature project each quarter for the child to take home. (Formal interview: Poetic, 3/25/08)

At this point, I was still uncertain to why she chose the literature project as a meaningful activity for students to participate in during their journey for understanding. I asked her, “Can you talk about the purpose of that project?” She said, “the purpose is for them to
enjoy reading, to learn something new and to make sure they understand the key concepts taught in class by making their own meaning” (Formal interview: Poetic, 3/25/08).

Sarah was certainly providing opportunities for students to extend their thinking beyond direct instruction. As stated above, she gave the students several opportunities to journal, work in cooperative groups, and participate in home/school exchange and she also allowed for a considerable time to be on task so that meaning could be transferred. Through my field observations, I also noticed that she often used many foregoing components of a constructivist teaching approach. She constantly used manipulatives, had multi-step projects readily available, oftentimes had several parent volunteers, and was providing a lot of small group instruction as the students were making meaning as individuals and in groups. During many of the Philosophy for Children sessions, she would take this a step further and allow the students to “think” and make their own meaning of concepts. On April 7, 2008, the following conversation took place after the teacher was reading a chapter from “The Doll Hospital” (Sharp, 2000):

Sarah: You are on your way to school, and you realize that you forgot your teddy bear. Should you ask your mother to go back and get it? Why or why not?

S1: Yes, because I don’t live that far from school so it would not make my mom late for work.

S2: I live kinda far from school but my mom doesn’t work so she can go back and get my teddy bear and I won’t have to worry.

S3: I don’t like teddy bears.
S4: We can’t bring teddy bears to school so it doesn’t matter if we go back or not.

S1: It might also be important if our bear is sick. If my teddy bear is sick, we might have to take her to the hospital and come to school late.

Sarah: Is school or a teddy bear more important?

S1: If your teddy bear is real, then it is more important. I can come late to school.

Sarah: So are all teddy bears (dolls) real?

The conversation returned to an earlier discussion on whether or not dolls are real. In this previous discussion, the students agreed that not everyone has a doll, some thought babies were dolls, some thought dolls were made of plastic, some thought they were stuffed, and some believed dolls had ages and developmental stages. This discussion on what is real and not real lasted for about 45 minutes and could have given way to a deeper discussion of the environment and our place in protecting the environment; however, the discussion was left as stated and would be continued on the following day during the next Philosophy for Children session. I mentioned to Sarah during a later conversation that this day, in particular, sparked a new direction for the conversation.

Through an email in early May, I stated,

As you were talking about the notion of dolls, teddy bears and so on (during the Philosophy for Children session) and if they were real or not real, I thought about how this conversation could further develop into a social understanding of the worlds they live in. After reading several books regarding children and outdoor
education, I became conscious of the place geography has on the concept of “real and not real.” If you have not read “Last Child in the Woods” or “The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places,” I highly suggest them. They are books that highlight the importance of the outdoors in regards to social development, understandings and civic responsibilities. Too often we think about the importance of civic responsibilities in terms of government but forget the importance of the physical world where we live. In Nabhan and Trimble’s (1994) book, *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places*, he stated,

> It is a crime of deception-convincing people that their own visceral experience of the world hardly matters, and that predigested images hold more truth and power than the simplest, time-tried oral tradition. We need to return to learning about the land by being on the land, or better, by being in the thick of it. That is the best way we can stay in touch with the fates of its creatures, its indigenous cultures, its earthbound wisdom. That is the best way we can be in touch with ourselves. (pp. 106-107)

This comment by Nabhan and Trimble could be powerful when you are discussing concepts of “real and not real” with children. Any ideas on how we can take this or other conversations further in regards to connecting them not simply with their own thoughts but with the outdoors? It may be helpful for the students to concretize these abstract concepts in relation to their connection or relationship with nature (especially today when one of the world’s most worrisome encounters is the issue of global warming, etc. When discussing this topic, Sarah was pleased
to discuss her own beliefs on this topic and appreciated that *Philosophy for Children* allowed the possibilities for such discussion and exploration.

However, unlike the several *Philosophy for Children* sessions, many of the organized and exciting activities that happened in the classroom did not include the “transformation” process. The activities allowed for students to transfer knowledge and make rough meaning; yet, Sarah was not serving as a provoking guide to help children make meaning with a sense of democratic consciousness (whether the consciousness be centered around nature or politics, etc). For instance, on one particular March visit, I was observing “center time” in which the students were actively engaged. The students were learning about the process of planting in one center and rather than just hearing a book on the process, Sarah set up a station where the children could actually walk through the process of plant development and growth by planting their own seed. However, there was not an extension or a follow-up to the lesson/activity on planting to discuss the importance of this plant in the self and social spheres of learning. The subject or content of plant growth was better understood by the use of hands on experience; yet, the meaning was left as simply a concept in science without allowing possibilities for students to see the connection between the self and social sphere of learning. I further addressed the notion of democratic awareness with Sarah and started initiating additional questions as to “why” she uses cooperative groups and “why” she provides manipulatives to students. Later, I understood that she never thought about why she chose all of these components to her curriculum other than knowing it was the “right thing to do” (Formal interview: critical, 3/25/08) for children based on knowing her students and her
undergraduate experience with constructive best practice. Campbell’s (1995) reflection of Dewey’s (1910) critique of the importance of democratic awareness in schools shed light on this situation. Campbell stated,

The educator’s duty is to guide this course toward a fulfillment as social creatures. The role that the teacher plays in the school is, for Dewey, similar to the role that the expert plays in the larger society; and, although the students are as yet only partially developed, they are learning to fulfill their later role in society as suggesters and evaluators of experts’ suggestions. (p. 222)

After sharing my ideas on why it may be beneficial to go beyond constructivist best practice and look at why we are providing authentic experiences to children, she began to reflect on why she may not be doing what needs to be done in regards to creating an environment based on subject, self, and social understanding. She was undoubtedly beginning to provide developmentally appropriate ways for students to grapple with subjects; yet, she was also discounting the concept of why students should grapple with these subjects as a means to democratic consciousness. As a critical companion, I took a different stance than what a typical mentor may have expressed after observing the constructivist centers. Instead of asking how Sarah could connect the activity to the self and social, some mentors may ask how the novice teacher would assess the knowledge gained after the students worked with such an activity. Assessment or meaning making is important; however, the topic of self and social in regards to assessment is usually ignored due to the high importance of standardized understandings that are honored in our current state of American education. Fortunately, Sarah began to look inward to see
how she could better function as a teacher that provides the ethical underpinnings to her curriculum endeavors. In a later interview, Sarah stated, “you are ultimately looking at these children being the future, you want to make sure they are intelligent. You want them to use what they know, their intelligence to make good choices, not only for themselves but for others” (Formal interview: ethical, 3/28/08).

From this point, Sarah’s understanding of the curriculum wisdom paradigm began to expand. As I was raising some of the questions that I mentioned above, she stated that this was hard and she never thought of things further. She asked me to share additional personal and/or researched insight. I decided to share my experiences as an EYT with her and also how I developed a new teaching role as I continued my years in the field of early childhood education. I introduced her to some additional work by James Henderson and Kathleen Kesson (2004) and explained how their works have helped me think beyond the constructivist best practice paradigm. For instance, as I asked Sarah how she would reflect or assess the experiences in her classroom, she replied with a distinctive constructivist answer. Yet, in an interview months later that asked a similar question, she replied with a more concentrated understanding of the 3S model. Initially, Sarah stated,

I think that is based on the kids I have. I have to differentiate and base the way I assess my materials on whether or not the objective/s come across to the students. Does it click with the students? I ask myself this to see if the materials I use are appropriate. (Formal interview: multiperspective, 3/27/08)

However, other than “clicking with the students,” it may have been interesting to understand what the quality of the experience was in addition to thinking solely about the
Barbara Arnstine (1992) helped clarify why Nel Noddings (1984) believed that it is important for teachers to try to understand the entire experience in the light of value for the students. She stated,

> What Nel wants excellence to mean has reference to the quality of experience in the classroom. Excellence can be present only when an experience is valued by those who are having it. This conception of excellence comes from an examination of experience itself. (p. 4)

Sarah continued telling her initial story in regards to participating in the constructivist paradigm.

> With my students I know that they learn best with hands-on materials. They love manipulatives. So it somewhat depends on the kind of learners that you have. I have a lot of visuals and visual learners. The reason why I use visuals is because it grasps their attention. If they see what you are doing, they will be more intrigued. So basically, the input from the children is what guides the way I assess the materials. I look for age appropriateness, the way they work with the materials, if the materials can work as individual, peer, group activities and how children respond to the materials or connect to the content/objectives with particular materials. And on top of all this, I look at how this will benefit their work together and what they will need for the future. (Formal interview: disciplinary, 3/16/08)

This last statement, in particular, was a statement that highlighted her notion to begin looking beyond what is best for the students in regards to their developmental age but also what will help bridge the relationship between educational experiences and
democracy. So as we discussed this transition from choosing appropriate materials based on child development theories, we began to collectively brainstorm ways that she could take students beyond what Dewey stated as “knowledge cooped up in a private consciousness” (p. 345). This brainstorming helped to inform some of the intentions that Sarah has in regards to moving from a constructivist best practice paradigm into the curriculum wisdom paradigm.

Interpretations

As Sarah and I were discussing paradigms and began to question traditional methodologies, Sarah stated the following in regards to how she looks at subject matter.

Initially, I looked at the subject matter sometimes and would find out what I have to teach. I found myself looking at the subject rather than the self or social first. I can start to see them together now. But subject matter first is what they teach you in college. I think that is what they always develop. Now I have a different outlook. . . . the more integration that takes place, the deeper the connections. The same is true for self and social. I always talk about self and social now, not just during religion lessons. (Formal interview: disciplinary, 3/16/08; Formal interview: ethical, 3/28/08)

I later asked her if she was willing to describe some of the lessons she had done thus far during her first year of teaching and reflect on a new way to reconceptualize the lessons to work in the curriculum wisdom paradigm. She stated,

I am trying to see how I can form a community of lifelong learners. Community is big—it sums it all up—working together. For individual, I would want them to
feel their own joy for learning and that could be different for every child. I would enhance this so that every child has an equal opportunity to share their thoughts.

(Formal interview: ethical, 3/28/08)

And as a further interpretation of how to move into the curriculum wisdom paradigm, we shared a conversation about how next year could be planned. What is important and how could a deeper understanding of the curriculum wisdom paradigm be achieved? This obviously is a very difficult question because achieving a deeper understanding of *anything* is based on *many factors* and probably most of all, it is based on self-discipline. So although I agreed to assist on an outline of a plan, I also realized that developing a deeper understanding of the 3S model and the curriculum wisdom paradigm would be similar to the stages of implementing and understanding Socratic seminars and wanted to suggest the importance of rollercoaster journeys when the journeys are worthwhile. Like Schneller (1998) stated,

> Tension in creating collaboration that would facilitate Socratic seminars was evident in the study. Issues of control interrelated with the ability or inability for the class to discuss. If students were given control, rudeness reigned, if the teacher was totally in charge, discussion suffered. Cooperation and collaboration was used in an attempt to find a suitable middle ground. (p. 11)

This statement from Schneller’s study on using Socratic seminars in a middle school class has similar impact to this study. Impressively, Sarah wanted to continue a journey of study in regards to walking outside of the two dominant paradigms in education. However, although, she has already begun the walk, it needed to remain both continuous
and disciplined. The continuous effort was already acknowledged and the disciplined journey now became a collaborative effort. There are obviously, like the Socratic seminars, going to be areas of tension or uncertainty in the journey; yet, finding the middle ground and searching for how the quality of the journey can be improved will be vital for 3S understanding to not only exist in EYT’s future classrooms but to develop a more natural and contemplated shift. However, in order to begin such an effort, I asked Sarah to once again reflect on the significance of her journey of understanding this year in regards to the curriculum wisdom paradigm. She stated the following,

I did not know anything about the paradigm before or I started the study (or even what the word paradigm was) but I did understand the other two because I had experience in both of them. I know that I fall into the others more frequently but using *Philosophy for Children*, which I see no harm in, only helps me understand it. I love to reflect. I have always been that way and I think it is part of my personality. But like I said before, I am going to start rethinking what I did this year. I have always looked at the subject matter first and found out what I had to teach. And then sometimes I looked at the students first. But I have not really put the social piece ahead or together with their learning or even thought about that in depth until this year. I can now see them together and want to continue bringing the self and social into subject matters in creative ways. I will definitely continue using *Philosophy for Children*. I think that the relationship and process (us working together and using the Philosophy materials) can go as one piece because
I didn’t just learn from *Philosophy for Children* but also you. (Teacher journal, 4/29/08; email entry 5/2/08; email entry 5/4/08)

Philosophy for Children in the Classroom: Sarah’s Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations

“Like a drug addict who knows he should quit, America is hooked.

We are a nation of standardized-testing junkies.”

~Peter Sacks, 1999, p. 6

*Experiences*

Just as Sacks’ quote stated, we know what is wrong, yet often we do nothing about it. Barnes (2005) also stated the following in regards to why we need to quit the testing addiction.

We don’t want them just to regurgitate answers from a study guide onto a test; kids need to rev up their brains and really think for themselves. We hear the buzz words all the time: critical thinking skills, higher level questioning, open-ended assignments—but how do we make thinking a consistent reality in our classrooms? (p. 1)

However, in the case of Sarah, she has opened her eyes to other possibilities to teaching and learning outside of the standardized management paradigm and desires to go beyond using only the buzz words. She realized at an early stage in her career that teaching children how to think does not mean that we cajole students to initiate our ideas or answers. She claimed that she always asks for “open ended questions. I want a community. I provide a community or place where they want to belong. I let them
explore the lesson—I don’t give them all the information right away” (Formal interview: political, 5/8/08). Although it is a rough road to actually “walk the talk” as one attempts an alternative to the dominant paradigm, it is a step ahead from what several entry year teachers are attempting during their first year of teaching. In fact, during an April teacher/student conversation on the subject of lying, it was difficult at times for Sarah to hold her own views and beliefs on lying prior to the feedback offered by the students. However, because the school is based on religious values and the teachers are required to promote Catholic values, it can, at times, be a struggle for Sarah to allow children extended opportunities to play with a “value” or “concept” that may actually be in opposition to the “value/s” held by the Catholic Diocese.

Looking into the religious component of the classroom may be insightful as to when and why a teacher can or can not “walk the talk;” however, it is also important to clarify the experiences that Sarah has in working with Philosophy for Children. Before Sarah’s first year of teaching, she did not have aforesaid experience teaching Philosophy for Children (P4C) in the classroom nor experience working in the curriculum wisdom paradigm. However, she did have experience in reading about Philosophy for Children and continued this growth from the list of readings (Appendix I) that I continually gave to Sarah. Prior to the Philosophy for Children sessions in the classroom, we had several conversations on how P4C was similar to the 3S model and had some critical discussions on the possible roles P4C could play in both a standardized curriculum and within a curriculum that withholds a strong religious component. One of the initial questions that I had prior to her beginning the P4C sessions was, “Are you open for students to challenge
your beliefs?” This question was important because I wanted to understand if she was trying the program as a new and exciting method to enhance teaching and learning or if it was something based on a belief system. She replied,

Yes, I am open. In the beginning of the year, we made up our own class rules as a class. I wanted them to feel a part of the class working together. With Philosophy for Children, I am more open to hear what they have to say before implying what I think. If you give a child an example, they could feed off of that and it could be centered around what I say and not around their own thoughts. For instance, I think about how I am going to respond to a situation because they remember everything you say. I have to remember that my mouth speaks quicker than what my mind is thinking. (Formal interview: poetic, 3/25/08)

After this moment, she continued the story by expressing her belief that attempting P4C gives her a loose structure to work with so that she can provide more possibilities for children to challenge not only her beliefs but the beliefs within literature frameworks. As she read *The Doll Hospital* (Sharp, 2000) to the students and continued deep conversations with the students, she was constantly working on keeping her own beliefs and values initially silent so that the students had time to construct their own meaning. In one particular conversation, Sarah was discussing what was “good” for us. She wanted the students to think about certain things that were good for us and wanted the students to engage in a conversation of why these items were “good.” She asked,

Sarah: Are car seats good for you? [Most all students agreed to this question with heads nodding yes and outbursts of “yes”]
Sarah: Are seat belts good for you?

S6: Yes because it is the safe thing to do.

S2: No, because the seat belt comes to my neck and it hurts me.

S23: If you are too little, it can hurt.

At this point, I introduced her to the works of Gareth Matthews, a philosopher that has written several texts on the importance and value of using philosophy with young children. In his book, *Philosophy and the Young Child*, Matthews (1980) carefully analyzed and synthesized the stories of children that are actively engaged in philosophical inquiry. Through his study, Matthews provided a compelling account of how young children can work with concrete and abstract thought in a cohesive manner. In this book, he also challenged the constructivist beliefs of psychologists such as Piaget, who may find difficulty in the process of challenging belief systems if the content or topics are developmentally disregarded. Matthews ignored Piaget’s belief that we can find the questioning to belief systems in the eyes of children as patterned and predictable.

Matthews claimed the importance on the environment that will support and foster such advanced inquiry. I brought up the examples of times that I observed Sarah allowing for students to “speak their mind” such as the “real or not real,” “good or not good,” “hating someone or liking someone,” “knowing the right thing to do” discussions and connected these examples with the works of Matthews. For instance, one day in class, Sarah asked the students to describe what “pretty” meant and asked the students to draw and write about what or who was pretty. This philosophical quest for understanding beauty was part of the mission; however, Sarah did not allow for her own conceptions or problems with
the notion of prettiness or beauty. Instead, Sarah extended the question, walked around and asked students to share their responses, but a larger group discussion regarding the notion of beauty was absent. It was at this point in time that I could not remove my “self” journey to understanding beauty from the situation. I was so impressed that she had five and six year old children contemplating over this word or concept, “beauty,” because it, like other philosophical discoveries, will be defined by society if they have not had time to play with the puzzlement (and for some, may already be defined by society). After reading and examining several of the journal entries by the students (some drawn and some written), I realized that the following poem (Geddis-Capel, 2006) was similar in regards to the way Sarah’s students were examining beauty by participating in Philosophy for Children sessions:

Is ugly
Is handsome
Is intervention
Is collaboration
Is a process
Is only a noun in dictionaries
Is corrosive
Is often diminished
Is sadly hierarchical
Is oppressive
Is accessible
This poem and others were shared amongst us as we were reviewing exchanges that were made between students in the P4C sessions. Basically, our conversations marveled at the way young children were able to verbalize such controversial topics. Together, we realized that it may be important for the students to have alternative areas of exploring the topics. The vagueness of existence can be complex and contrived; therefore, we believed that these complexities needed provoked beyond words or
pictures, like the drawings from the children or the words from the above poem. Instead, it was the job of the teacher to rouse the children to think beyond the words and pictures.

Matthews (1984) suggested that using open-ended questioning is a start; however, the teacher needs to provoke the students to think deeper by the teacher modeling his or her own reservations about a particular topic. Matthews stated,

What we adults don’t do, when we talk to children, is discuss matters we ourselves find difficult or problematic. How could a child, a mere child, make a useful contribution to thinking about something that we, with our much greater maturity and experience, find difficult or elusive?

Furthermore, Sarah and I discussed the place that wrestling with concepts has in regards to making meaning and its connection to exploring ideas while examining democratic self and social ideals. However, in order for Philosophy for Children to be considered a model of 3S understanding, the teacher’s role in Philosophy for Children is crucial. As Sarah’s role was examined through field observations and narrative recollections and reflections, it was obvious that the companion manual for the Philosophy for Children texts were integral to the teacher’s role in exploring democratic self and social understandings with young children.

Prior to initiating the Philosophy for Children sessions, Sarah read the companion manual and realized how flexible developing a community of inquiry would be for young children. She mentioned that “the materials were child-friendly, modeled the way to discuss deep issues about themselves and others and also thought it was set up in a fun and interactive way” (Email entry, 1/8/08). Likewise, the enticement for Sarah to begin
the sessions was high; yet, the unbeaten path to helping children explore different paths than the manual suggested was difficult. When children started to stray from the questions at hand, it was, at times, difficult for her to incite the discussion to a stimulating level which could continue puzzling the students and their interpretations. Yet again, this is similar to Schneller’s (1998) reflection on the tension and serendipities that arise during the trial of a sophisticated or alternative method of collaboration and discussion between teachers and students. Furthermore, the purpose of *Philosophy for Children* was not always as easy to attend to because of the elusive task of facilitating thought provoking problems and situations for the children to recognize. Moreover, this recognition and deliberation is vital to the community of inquiry so that the conversation can continue to be integrated into the curriculum.

Despite the difficulties that normally arise during a novice attempt or pilot phase of a trusting collaboration, Sarah continued to not only enact in the P4C sessions with the students but also continually reflected on how to make the sessions flow better and continue to not only sustain the children’s interests but also their thinking patterns. Sarah often asked, “how do I get them not to interrupt and to listen to everyone’s ideas before they start speaking?” Or she asked, “how do I let them negotiate without giving in to their peers ideas? Is this better in small or large groups?” (Classroom observation, 1/24/08). All of these questions and several others were asked throughout the semester while the EYT was creating a community of inquiry in her classroom. The later question was always on Sarah’s mind because she had 28 children in her classroom. She attempted various sitting patterns during the sessions, with suggestions that I had given her, and also
attempted several ways to work on control issues and establishing the importance of students’ roles when speaking or negotiating responses. Using the term, “let’s discover with each other,” was helpful in developing a community of inquiry; however, other areas of surprise (unidentified by Philosophy for Children experts, Lipman et al., 1980) surfaced and was in need of significant focus in perceptions of the P4C experiences as well as the future intentions of using P4C during the next academic year.

Perceptions

Although Sarah’s experiences with P4C this year were vast in regards to a first year teacher, there are also many areas to uncover as Sarah continues the thinking skills program in the year or years to follow. One of the main observations during the P4C sessions revolves around the process rather than the study of Philosophy for Children. This study component in regards to other ways of P4C implementation and procedures may need to surface during the upcoming years. During the 2007-2008 year, Sarah was constantly engaged in the process of implementing a thinking skills program rather than the study of how others have used or had experience participating in such a distinctive, yet, alternative paradigm. However, this was not necessarily a downfall or a fault of Sarah’s. She attempted something that few other EYT’s attempt during their first year of teaching; therefore, she was initiating an alternative form of habituation that could ultimately lead to practical applications in a transformative way for both public and private schools.

Through this work, Sarah experienced several awakening points, while beginning to realize that practicing what we preach is important. She stated that without trying
something new, like *Philosophy for Children*, she may not have truly understood the value that a child-centered process has on young children. The study could have better informed her of this process; yet, without the practical application, she would not have been able to experience the true delight and wonder of this “lost dimension” that Lipman et al. (1980) frequently referred to in his P4C texts.

Again, the process and actual implementation of P4C has been integral to the development of the program and Sarah’s journey of implementing the program. Yet, it was also perceived that there is still a need for theory in regards to strengthening the program in her particular situation and environment. For instance, when I asked Sarah if she has discussed the P4C program with other teachers in her building, she stated, “No, not yet. I do not feel comfortable discussing it with them because they are so stuck in their ways” (Email entry, 5/4/08). She also mentioned that she is unsure of the ups and downs of the program because she is still dealing with how this can best work and make sure that she understands the program through the eyes of other cultures, races, and gender. Her environment is centered around one particular grade level and similar socio-economic classes; yet, she also recognizes that the *Philosophy for Children* literature that she has read thus far does not focus on how to accommodate or differentiate for the needs of diverse learning styles. These are baby steps; however, they are important to the process of discovery and can be commended in terms of implementing such steps during the first year of teaching.

She also struggled this year with making sure that everyone had an opportunity to share. She tried several methods that could enhance the dialogue; however, she has been
so centered on the process of using P4C that she has not had enough time to engage with others that may be using this or a similar way of bringing 3S understanding to the classroom. In fact, when I was interviewing Sarah in regards to the multiperspective mode of inquiry, she gave a surprising response to how she continues to attempt solving this struggle of time and quality within student conversation. The excerpt below can highlight the dilemma of how to manage conversation.

MGC: (question taken from Henderson & Gornik, 2007): During small and large group dialogic exchanges, what evidence is apparent that people in the group are listening and that everyone has had an opportunity to share?

Sarah: I pull out Popsicle sticks and I do this for them to share. Whatever questions you ask, it could be their opinion or some type of content. By pulling out a Popsicle stick, it makes me aware of who is listening to my questions.

MGC: Is it actually the Popsicle sticks or the content of the response that helps you become aware of who is listening to your questions?

Sarah: Both.

MGC: So, it wouldn’t matter if you had a Popsicle stick or a pen as a tool? Is that what you mean?

Sarah: Yeah, I guess that is right. The Popsicle stick helps me manage but their response shows me if they understand. I would assess a response in the content of what they say because they might be clueless on what I am asking them. They might not know the choice vocabulary I am using or it
could be that they are just not listening. It is not that they have to get the answer exactly right or how I perceive it in my mind, it just needs to be, there needs to be some connection to the content I am teaching.

However, the management of conversation example is only used during conversations that happen outside of the P4C sessions. Therefore, Sarah perceives that it is difficult to manage the dialogue during a more loosely structured framework, such as the Philosophy for Children sessions.

Interpretations

Juggling between the standardized management paradigm and attempting a program aligned with the curriculum wisdom paradigm can be a deeply meaningful, yet complicated process. In fact, one of the parts during the juggling process that becomes so difficult is “exploring a philosophy of listening.” Unlike listening, which is defined in the standardized management paradigm as “hear and do,” listening in the curriculum wisdom paradigm is described more as making sense in the light of 3S understanding. This is not an easy process and as the perceptions highlighted above, this complicated paradigm can interfere with our current ways of teaching practice. However, the importance lies in the realization that the complication can lead to democratic freedoms that may not be experienced otherwise. Haynes and Murris (2007) remarked on this philosophy of listening:

We have both been preoccupied for some time with what it means for us as adults to listen and to hear the contributions that children make in philosophical enquiry . . . we continue to be concerned with some of the problems of listening that arise
from the desire to structure and shape what we hear in the struggle to make sense of it. Attention to the particular detail of an experience that is offered as an example is vital to the pursuit of practical wisdom. Our experience of enquiry with young children leads us to believe that creativity and imagination may be impeded by over direction by an adult. We feel that the direct experiences from their lives that children bring to philosophical enquiry also gives a personal significance to this learning that is developmentally appropriate. (pp. 1-2)

This lengthy yet appropriate quote by Haynes and Murris stated the importance of an adult or teacher’s role in working with dimensions of enquiry and dialogue that can help foster subject, self, and social understandings. However, the role of managing conversation in regards to Popsicle management may need to be further examined due to the informative type of conversation Haynes and Murris described. This reference depends not on the number of opportunities to speak (as the Popsicle method strives for) but the quality of the talk by the speaker and, even more importantly, the quality of the listener. If the listening component is not evident, the conversation can become a popcorn factory of people getting their chance to speak; yet, the meaning of the dialogue will lack the structure needed to enact democratic discourse. However, the problem lies in how this can best be enacted with young children. Sarah has realized this form of importance, yet, wants to identify others that have used the P4C program and dealt with similar issues. It is her intention to understand how a teacher can resist the temptation of controlling the inquiry and instead allow the children to determine the direction and path of and for the
inquiry (especially when trying to implement 3S understanding outside of a defined program).

“It was a somewhat easy process to apply the P4C program in my classroom but it is hard, at times to apply the ideals of P4C throughout the rest of the school day” (Teacher journal, 5/28/08). Time not only became an issue for Sarah but this notion of developing a curriculum allows for a serious case of what Dewey (1990) called, the child versus the curriculum. *Philosophy for Children* has helped her see the possibilities of opening up learning to children rather than providing knowledge to children. Yet, through this understanding, a struggle has developed and a problem. How can this program not only be maintained another year, but how can this program expand throughout the school day instead of only being initiated during 45-minute intervals? How can children begin to live outside of their narrowed views during the entire school day? The partnership seemed to help bring sense to the ideals of guidance and control; however, it is obvious that Sarah needs to embark on a public intellectual journey and reach out to others in the field that are experiencing similar quests and questions at this same particular time in history. She may need to consider those topics Dewey (1990) noted as polar opposites, referring to when “law is asserted here; spontaneity proclaimed there” (p. 188). This struggle can be seen as worrisome; however, from my experience in working with Sarah this year, I see this struggle as a triumph, a true and present standpoint that this first year teacher is attempting to make sense of a relentless reconstruction in the efforts of democratic education.
On the Road to 3S Understanding—Using Reflective Inquiry: An EYT’s Experiences, Perceptions, and Interpretations of the Following: Discipline, Poetic, Critical, Multiperspective, Ethical and Political Modes of Inquiry

*Experiences*

As I introduced Sarah to Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) reflective inquiry map, she was anxious, yet did not seem overwhelmed by the in-depth interviews that would be asking her to participate in reflective inquiry. Sarah previously reflected in terms of journaling but mentioned that she has not participated in this form of reflective inquiry that was designed by Henderson and Gornik. Although I shared the map prior to the formal interview sessions, the introduction of the map was brief and possibly should have been shared over the course of time prior to each interview. The answers received by Sarah were thoughtful; however, I assume that if she had more time to reflect on each particular mode of inquiry at least a week prior to the interview, the responses may have had more depth and discovery than what was initially offered. Fortunately, just by using the map, Sarah was able to embark on a deeper path of reflection than the self-narrated journals provided. For instance, the following narrative clip was part of her November journal entry. She was reflecting on the mentoring process; however, the depth of the answer was different than the responses during the reflective inquiry map interviews. Although the reflective inquiry map did not focus on mentoring, she did use more careful examination when stating an opinion or insight and was able to look at 3S understanding in a more holistic way (by examining it through many lenses—ethical, poetic, disciplinary, etc.).
Excerpt from November 14th - Entry Year Meeting Journal Entry:

I had my second meeting, which is standard for all first year teachers in the
diocese. I was not impressed by the first one and to be honest I was not impressed
by this one either. I drove along with my mentor and we talked about the weather,
students in general, and how my year is going. This is all that I hear from her. I
feel like the mentoring program could be so much more. I always say the phrase,
“I don't know what I don’t know.” What I mean by this is that it is my first year
and I am sure that there are things that I don’t think about that my mentor has
previously experienced. (Teacher journal, 11/14/07)

This journal entry shows that Sarah was reflecting on her practice and her relationship
with her district mentor; however, the reflection was not using multiple modes of inquiry
during the reflection process. This could have been due to the fact that she was not
introduced to the inquiry map at this particular time, or it could be a result of needing
repeated practice using the reflective inquiry map in daily practice. Since the self-
narrated journal entries took the same path throughout Sarah’s first year as the November
14th clip above, it seems safe to assume that as one becomes more comfortable using the
inquiry map, he or she will be able to use that form of reflection in every day practice
(during journal writing, conversations with colleagues, contemplation, etc.). Sarah had
very similar perceptions of this understanding as she later reflected on the participation
with the reflective inquiry map.
Perceptions

During Sarah’s experiences with the reflective inquiry map this present year, it became clear that the pre-formulated questions gave direction to her reflections; however, she, also, at times needed and was appreciative of my rephrasing so that she could better understand some of the questions’ constructs. For instance, she perceived the questions as helpful; yet, more helpful when I was able to help guide her to think of the questions in relation to particular areas of her practice. The following exchange is an example:

MGC (questions taken from Henderson & Gornik, 2007): How does the plethora [I mentioned large amount] of educational literature inform your content selections and instructional practices? How might you contribute to this literature?

Sarah: The literature that I choose is what they give me as part of the language arts curriculum and . . . (researcher interrupts)

MGC: Can you tell me also about your study of literature, not simply the trade books that you use in the classroom?

Sarah: Yes, of course. I am glad that you rephrased some of these questions. All of it! It all influences my practice. You practice what you learn and read about. What I learn is like my foundation. All of the things I have read in undergraduate school or refer to now, especially when I am just starting out in a building or as a teacher, it is the foundation. So as a first year teacher, you are basing many of the decisions on the literature and study. I
would hope to contribute to the literature by giving my reflection piece on it. Then, once you try it, you can form your own teaching style.

This brief part of the conversation during the disciplinary interview helped to address the advantages and disadvantages of formalized questioning. Yet, this was also the first interview in a series of many using the reflective inquiry map. It was not until the last interview that Sarah began to feel as if some of the questions complemented one another. In fact, during the last interview, Sarah mentioned that although each of the interviews had a different focus (disciplinary, poetic, political, etc.), she said they all seemed to be similar in the sense that she felt as if she sounded repetitive and that the questions all revolved around the “personal and the practice” (Formal interview: Other reflective, 5/8/08). Although these ideas were not expressed in depth, I could sense that the path of understanding was beginning to take a new turn. Instead of seeing these questions as mere ways of directing reflection, she was beginning to understand the role of multiple lenses when reflecting on experiences.

**Interpretations**

Sarah was both relaxed and nervous during the interviews. She became more comfortable as she realized how many experiences she had as a new teacher, yet remained nervous through the interviews because she was worried that she did not have enough judgment or experiences to reflect on some of the questions. At times, Sarah apologized for not giving a thorough answer. I responded by stating that our experiences and reflections “are what they are.” What is important is that we follow Nash’s (2004) advice and go outside of ourselves in order to see our “external worlds in a different way”
I also stated how I sometimes felt that way in my graduate program among professors who have conducted years and years of research. Further, I mentioned that their conceptualizations would be vastly different than mine; however, it does not necessitate a higher level of importance for deep reflection. I again tried to follow Doll’s (1978) rendition of an educational leader and remain empathetic and helpful during this constant worry of Sarah’s. I also shared the story of Ruth Beharin in Nash’s (2004) book and gave examples of other scholars that have brought forth significant change in the thick of a disturbing time in American history. These examples, I believe, helped Sarah see that she not only had valuable experiences as a first year teacher but also as a professional intellectual. This closing spirit seemed to bring forth an outpouring of desire by Sarah to not only see this year as a learning experience, but as a springboard to exciting endeavors in the future. She stated,

Thank you. Over the summer, I will definitely investigate my past, look over my lessons from the year, even my calendar and realize that I can voice my opinion. I want to always continue learning and studying. *Philosophy for Children* and other thinking methods outside of the box can only help the children. I see no harm in this. I want to have more conversations with the students. Art and music would be nice to include during the discipline and maybe in the beginning of the year, I could find out more information about their backgrounds. There is so much I want to do and reflect on. (Formal interview: other reflective, 5/8/08)
The Collaborative Partnership: Researcher

To be part of a we involves having a new identity, an additional one. This does not mean that you no longer have an individual identity or that your sole identity is a part of the we. However, the individual identity you did have will become altered. To have this new identity is to enter a certain psychological stance; and each party in the we has this stance toward the other. (Nozick, 1989, pp. 71-72)

As I began narratively analyzing my experience as both a researcher and a critical companion, I began examining my past experiences with mentoring and induction programs. As stated earlier in the dissertation, I failed to understand my lack of readiness. My experience as an EYT was largely based on the teachings of Harry and Rosemary Wong (1998). This experience sadly resonates to the words shared by Leafgren (2007). She stated,

While there are hundreds of books published for classroom teachers related to guidance, management, and/or discipline, Wong’s (1998) The First Days of School, is recognized by many (as evidenced by the number of books sold) as the preeminent book on classroom management and student achievement. (p. 153) Agreeably this book was and continues to be a widely popular book regarding teacher success. However, according to the snapshot on page 4 of Wong and Wong’s text, The First Days of School, “The teacher is ready on the first day of school” when he or she has an organized desk, a lesson plan book (filled out prior to meeting and/or knowing the student), a calendar, teacher note pads, and nostalgic teacher paraphernalia (teddy bears, teacher quotes, apple pencils, etc.); I was prepared to be successful. The return back to
the Wong and Wong book 10 years later was a much different experience than when I was gifted the book after graduating from college. Unfortunately, the *First Days of School* was the text given to all education graduates as a way to help prepare us for the days ahead. Yet, even more surprisingly, I was gifted another Wong and Wong text during my EYT training for my first teaching job. The school district was also supporting the survival tips of new teachers that Harry and Rosemary Wong claimed in their best-selling text. After receiving two of these texts within a 4-month period of time, I was beginning to realize that this book must have importance. As I returned several years later, I realized how disturbing that previous engagement was that I was holding.

During this return to Wong and Wong (1998), I also found it interesting that the initial quote in chapter 1 discussed the importance of the first day of school and its determinacy of success. Again according to Wong and Wong, the way this success is achieved is humorously portrayed in the snapshot on page 4 as having an “organized desk.” Wong and Wong’s mission of teaching for success stated, “What you do on the first days of school will determine your success or failure for the rest of the school year. You will either win or lose your class on the first day of school” (p. 3). On the same introductory page, Wong and Wong also discussed Brooks’ notion of fun and its relation to schooling. They stated, “Education should be challenging, exiting, engrossing, and thought provoking, but not fun. If you want fun, go to a party, the beach, or a movie, go shopping, or take a vacation” (p. 3).

Are these the words that my past guides and mentors wanted to use as terms of inspiration? I hoped that my guides and mentors suggested reading the book either to
truly allow me to think critically about the Wong and Wong text or I hoped that they did not actually read the book themselves so that they could claim ignorance to the many misguided ideas of success, such as the one that Wong and Wong offered in the text. Unfortunately, I was incorrect with both assumptions. To this day, the book is continually recommended at many undergraduate institutions and is marketed and gifted as one of the best EYT books within districts around the nation.

Although many mentoring systems continue to use the *First Days of School* text, I was certainly not planning to use this text while developing a collaborative study partnership during this research. Instead, I anticipated the opportunity to provide the EYT with a different experience than what the majority of other EYT's are provided during their first year of teaching. Instead of being an additional, traditional mentor to Sarah, I wanted our relationship to serve more as a partnership where the two of us could collectively collaborate, reflect, and make interpretations of Sarah’s first year experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of using a sophisticated thinking skills program in her Kindergarten classroom. Most research today that focuses on the experiences of EYT's seems to focus on the success or failures of EYT's in regards to particular strands of teaching such as classroom management, discipline knowledge, how to help students succeed, how to increase positive student behavior, how to work with standardized instruction, and how to get students to pass their tests. All of these first year pressures have been examined in the lives of EYT's; however, the experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of an EYT attempting an alternative path to “success” or working in the field of teaching are rarely explored. I wanted to explore this area and
make sure that my role as a researcher was combined with the role of being a critical companion to the first year teacher.

To be able to explore this untraveled path of study, I decided that narrative inquiry and collaborative research methods would help insure a trustworthy and less hierarchical component to understanding Sarah’s first year while at the same time allowing me to examine my role as a critical companion in this study. This notion of collaboration and companionship was integral to the research because most mentoring systems are set up with a Richard Taylor (1970) notion of “evil doing” by the school district. Although support systems should support the journey of those taking part, the support systems in districts (otherwise known as mentoring and/or induction programs) are often organized with a distinctive and organized method of training in mind. Similar to the way Lucy (on “I Love Lucy”) was trained to make wine (through a list of pre-determined steps), teachers are trained to learn how to teach instead of understanding the journey in a more disciplined and democratic process. Many mentors unknowingly embark on what Taylor stated as following the tyrant that,

Can abolish his opponents by the utterance of a command and seize as he pleases the possessions of anyone under his sway. Suppose, furthermore, that he uses his unlimited power for his own aggrandizement, impoverishing and reducing to misery those under him while, he at their expense, walks in a blaze of glory. (pp. 54-55).

Although a mentor’s consciousness may not fully recognize the “evil” in their role as a mentor, there is some considering to acknowledge on the terms of whether or not current
mentoring systems are portraying chosen mentors (usually hand selected teachers that administrators feel are serving their district well in regards to excelling in the accepted standardized management paradigm) as heroes is a concern. I wanted to make sure that the companionship between us was not as hierarchical as the current mentoring programs that exist within school districts. In fact, I quickly realized this as Sarah formed questions around some of my questions and those of the interview questions.

This questioning from Sarah was not only embraced; it also helped develop new flights of understanding for both parties and helped me realize that my role was not to serve as the hero coming to save Sarah, nor the expert that places lists of things you need to know on her desk. Instead, I hoped to provide materials and conversations that could provoke Sarah’s understandings and experiences so that she could continually make her own judgments and meaning with continual thought and contemplation. From the words of Sarah, I felt satisfied that our relationship was not hierarchical and believed that the collaboration was beneficial for both parties involved. In addition to the collaboration around 3S understanding, *Philosophy for Children*, and the experiences of a first year teacher in the K-12 realm, there were also several conversations regarding teacher education in the undergraduate level.

In fact, holding conversations like those mentioned above were helpful and insightful as I embarked as a novice educator at Mount Union College this 2007-2008 academic school year. Being a recent graduate, Sarah provided supportive responses to my questions and concerns regarding the curriculum and the development of new ideas which could shed light on how 3S understanding could be experienced at the
undergraduate level. From these conversations, coupled with the work of a Curriculum Leadership Institute network, I have further developed my leadership plan with active goals that I will continue to pursue in the following academic year.

The sharing of pedagogical strategies, meaningful collaboration, and increased professional and leadership growth was powerful; however, I do wish there was more time for each of us to connect one another with our respective personal and professional spaces and communities. Because the “public intellectual” is such an important piece to fostering 3S understanding, I believe this piece should also be considered when attempting to collaborate and participate on a life long journey of developing our critical consciousness. Unfortunately, time became an issue in this study and did not allow for this area to develop as needed. Hopefully, if these forms of relationships are forged in the future, this component can be considered an integral piece from the beginning.

Multiple motivations move people into lifelong learning. Some have to do with breaking through the limits of lived situations or, more generally speaking, achieving greater fulfillment. No teacher can condemn the effort to reach further, to become different, to surpass. At the same time, we cannot but be aware of the narrowing of the public space today, the erosion of communication, the silences in the place of dialogue. (Greene, 1995, p. 64)

The words of Maxine Greene truly exemplified Sarah’s experience in this study. Although there were several past experiences that helped Sarah walk on the path of lifelong learning, there were also several experiences and current perceptions that brought forth stopping points on the path as well as new directions. Clearly stated by Sarah,
I had a wonderful time doing this project because I had the opportunity to pick someone else’s brain. I valued the fact that you taught Kindergarten and you understood the dynamics of the classroom. I felt at ease asking you questions and hearing your feedback. I knew you before I started this project, but it has only made our relationship better on a professional and personal level. You have made my first year feel more complete and I feel as though I have learned so much that it will only make my curriculum better. (Email entry, 5/19/08)

Sarah certainly went beyond what Kliebard (2004) stated as the heart of our education system, the teacher. He stated, “It was the teacher, ill trained, harassed and underpaid, often immature, who was expected to embody the standard virtues and community values and, at the same time, to mete out stern discipline to the unruly and dull-witted” (p. 1).

Opposite of the words above, Sarah was the heart of the education system for her relationship to participating not only in reflective inquiry but also having a different stance on her role as a teacher than the role Kliebard (2004) highlighted in his historical trace of teachers and education throughout the years. Although this above highlight was important in the 1890s, it sadly remains the way many teachers not only portray their career but the way many stakeholders portray teachers. Sarah took on the role of a collaborative intellectual. She decided to go beyond a journey of self-study and beyond a journey of study with required collaboration. Instead, she graciously volunteered her limited time as a first year teacher to thinking beyond social capitalism. She was not as concerned with spending quality time during her first year of teaching typically construed by other first year teachers as important to survival. Rather than participating in Rury’s
(2002) definition of “human capital,” or other EYT’s obsessions with improving students test scores, maintaining the status quo, and working towards economic advancement by increasing their salaries, Sarah was committed to student, self, and social growth. She wanted to understand and remain open to adjusting her own values, beliefs, and judgments so that she could consciously embrace alternatives to the ways she reflects on curriculum and instruction. Participating in this partnership, as she stated, allowed her to feel “a gain that she would not have felt otherwise” (Teacher journal, 4/29/08).

Sarah was frustrated in working with colleagues on collaborative efforts and felt that without this form of partnership, she may have continued feeling discontented with the notion of working with others. For example, in a November journal, she stated the following in regards to collaboration outside of our partnership:

I collaborated with my colleagues on a lesson. We had a brief discussion after school, in the hallway, about what we could do. I assumed that when someone collaborates with another teacher it would be a more formal setting, not a five minute conversation mainly about what they had done in the past. They did not seem to be open to my ideas instead they were more stuck on what has worked or been done in the past. (Teacher journal, 11/20/07; discussed again, teacher journal 4/29/08)

This experience with collaboration was upsetting to Sarah and naturally leads most first year teachers into an isolated state. Unfortunately, what happens from this moment is that the professional relationship model becomes bent and the framework for collaboration falls on a similar spectrum for what Philip Jackson (1990) described as the “daily grind.”
Teachers become fixated on focusing on what Jackson stated as, “A place in which people sit, and listen, and wait, and raise their hands, and pass out paper, and stand in line, and sharpen pencils” (p. 94).

From Sarah’s previous experiences with collaboration, as both a student and as a first year teacher, she has lived a feeling of collaboration invisibility. As a student, she was one of the children that worked independently, raised her hand and did what she was told. Yet, from those negative experiences coupled with the positive experiences from family relationships and undergraduate studies, she attempted to begin a new form of collaboration with her colleagues, only to be shot down by their unwarrantable belief that following an autocratic management style will help best establish a democratic community.

Summary

From these findings, I learned that reflecting on one’s first year of teaching is not only time consuming but also very connected to several components of the teacher’s life outside of classroom. From Sarah’s stories, reflections, and considerations, it is essential to remember that a teacher’s habits are not only formed during the first year of a career, but connected with past encounters in both personal and schooling experiences. In fact, Sarah articulated a deeper understanding of the 3S platform simply from participating in the reflective inquiry scaffolding and the reworking of interview questions suited to her current level of understanding. She also showed how she can connect past events and experiences to current experiences and relate them to ideals of the future. However, without disciplined, reflective inquiry, it is difficult to obtain the connectivity that can
concretize the reason or reasons why teachers teach the way they do and why they either follow or ignore particular teaching paradigms. Sarah showed that the collaborative partnership and interview scaffolding for reflective inquiry have helped her to better understand why she has chosen an alternative path than other EYTs and also why she still struggles to sustain some of the 3S understanding ideals across the entire school curriculum.

In regards to *Philosophy for Children*, Sarah was able to sustain her work with P4C in the classroom and remarked on the need for connectivity between literature, study, and practice. This recognition of balance helps one understand how her experiences and perceptions have helped her to implement effectively a sophisticated thinking program, *Philosophy for Children*, into her classroom as a first year teacher. During this time, she lacked support from colleagues in the school in regards to conversations regarding P4C; however, she continually sustained the program and also learned how it was actually a model of 3S understanding.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Although a narrative study on the experiences of one EYT may have little value for making generalizations about other EYTs, the study findings can be helpful for first year teachers, mentors, and educators in several accounts. I briefly give a succinct description of how this study provides insight to entry year teachers and those involved in the field of education. The conclusion walks through the importance this study had in regards to narrative exploration, attempting “EYT missions” as well as 3S understanding practices in the first year of teaching and the impact of induction or mentoring support systems.

At the core, it seems appropriate to first recognize the importance this study had in regards to exploring narrative inquiry with a first year teacher. Regardless of good or bad experiences, a teacher’s first year can be examined narratively in ways that help educators discover the connections between their past, present, and future intentions and lead them to connections with scholarly literature in order to construct a careful analysis of their first year of teaching. Sarah was one EYT that began understanding the value of such organization and clarity to reflecting on her experiences and also the impact that a mentor or critical companion can have on the events that take place during the school year. Using a variety of self-examination tools such as teacher reflection journals, interviews, e-mail entries and responses, regarding the usage and implementation of a 3S
practical approach, helped Sarah reflect upon her first year of teaching and her understanding and implementation of using *Philosophy for Children* in the classroom.

However, not all of the reflection processes explored in the study carried the same weight, favorability, or comprehensiveness. In fact, during the EYT’s self-reflection journals, it was difficult to organize Sarah’s accounts and experiences into defined areas of past, present, and future intentions due to the lack of information provided by Sarah in the journal writings. Yet, during the interviews, conducted through Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) reflective inquiry map, it was obvious that the EYT was moving deeper through stages of reflecting and narratively examining her understanding of 3S practicality. However, the usage of narrative methodology requires breadth and depth in the multilayered process of examination and goes beyond simple self-examination or traditional forms of reflection often used during a teacher’s first year. Fortunately, Sarah was able to explore some breadth and depth during her interviews; however, her self-examination process during teacher-led journal entries was still developing and lacking elements of reflective inquiry or what Nash (2004) stated as personal and social, practical and theoretical (p. 29). Instead, Sarah seemed to focus most of her attention on the practical recollections of teaching, the day-to-day activities that took place in her classroom and her personal reactions to those events and experiences. From time to time, Sarah made connections between her practice and theory and her practice and society; however, the majority of her stories, responses, and recollections focused solely on the personal and the practical.
On the other hand, the unfolding of stories in the interview process provided evidence that Sarah was still committed to the Socratic nature of discovering and questioning during her first year of teaching as well as committed to some of Nash’s (2004) tentative SPN guidelines (p. 56). However, attention to these guidelines and to the Socratic nature of discovery does not confirm that Sarah was constantly engaged in narrative inquiry during the entirety of the study. This lack of attention toward the power of personal narratives also brought concerns with Sarah’s level of understanding in regards to 3S understanding and her implementation of a practical approach to 3S understanding, *Philosophy for Children*.

In the Editor’s Introduction for the Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Henderson and Slattery (2008) highlighted three distinct lines of flight that are essential components of developing a professional discipline when fostering a curriculum approach such as 3S understanding. However, from this study, it remains questionable to how a teacher can understand the professional discipline needed in order to sustain diversified routes of expression. Sarah was definitely beginning to understand some of the components to professional discipline, such as engaging in current topics that inform curriculum based-pedagogy and recognizing that she did not want her career to begin with what Henderson and Slattery referred to as “decomposing because it no longer has life” (p. 8). Instead, Sarah recognized that democratic ideals were suffering in the schools and wanted to at least attempt a different road to begin addressing these concerns with her students. In fact, Sarah was constantly reflecting on how she could ignore the pressures to create students into a synchronized collective by offering the students time to
think, discuss, and work out problems that were related to subject, self, and social ideals. This was part of her personal teaching mission and an aspect of her professional calling to become a teacher. She was also actively implementing a practical approach to 3S understanding, which showed her discipline to engage students in transformative methods of thinking and learning. However, Sarah was not as familiar with how to artistically and deliberatively compose a way that *Philosophy for Children* could be used in the classroom other than using the teacher’s manual to *Philosophy for Children*. She was beginning to understand how to use reflective inquiry, especially when prompted during the interviews; however, she still had difficulty with other modes that seemed necessary in attending to what Henderson and Gornik referred to as “professional discipline” (p. 1). Contemplating, deliberating, meditating, and envisioning can also be integral pieces to participating in a multidimensional journey of professional discipline; yet, in order for this to become a reality, additional studies would need to be conducted on how “professional discipline” can be introduced and enhanced during a teacher’s first year. Possibly, an additional study on developing professional discipline among first year teachers could inform both teacher education programs and mentoring/induction systems in regards to preparing teachers for this disciplined journey. Although this particular EYT is one of many first year teachers, it is certainly possibly that other EYTs are teaching due to a professional calling, while desiring to enact upon mission statements that foster ideals of democratic education, such as 3S understanding.

Another essential piece to this work is the fact that “while it is self-revealing, it also evokes self-examination from readers” (Nash, 2004, p. 29). Significantly, the design
of the study proves not to exclusively provide transformation to our partnership; instead, it allows the possibility for the reader and other EYTs to not simply be informed by facts from the study, but to be informed on the process of self-examination and reflection. This study also allowed for what Giroux (1985) stated as an un-neutral position to be exposed and examined. Giroux’s points on neutrality remind us that teachers need to participate in studies, situations, or spheres that acknowledge their difficulties of catering to the un-neutral stance or to the traditional ways of knowing and reflecting. Allowing for a partnership that was more cautious of political structures, Sarah could play with the freedom which would help her grow as a transformative educator.

I know that in my year as an EYT, I would have found it profoundly helpful to read narratives or narrative excerpts by other EYTs that were having success going against the standardized management terrain or the sites that engulfs many new teachers. According to Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996), it is highly unlikely that many school mentors will provide the support necessary for an EYT to sustain teaching for 3S understanding and often be left in a “sink or swim” orientation during their first year. Furthermore, it is helpful to create partnerships and mentoring systems that can aid in supporting EYTs that want to “walk” their mission statements. According to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), “Mentoring is by far the most common induction practice in the U.S.” (p. 26). Therefore, it is essential for EYTs to be a part of a system in which they believe as well as a system that can help them grow personally, professionally, and socially.
Although this study did not inform the reader on how an EYT grew socially, it did show her deep connections to the personal and practical components of teaching during her first year. Sarah had a mentor within her school system that helped define her practical journey; yet it was through our relationship that Sarah began to see connections with her personal past, present, and future experiences and intentions. Through her participation in active reflection, Sarah also began an understanding on the importance of connecting theory to practice as well as the connection between her practice and society. However, the focus of most conversations revolved around the personal and practical. This helped confirm that additional areas of mentoring and working as a critical companion may be needed in helping EYTs develop an understanding of the other essential components to professional discipline during their first year of teaching. Although professional discipline was not something planned to be discussed during the study, the study findings showed that in order for this work to be maintained, further consideration would be necessary. In fact, in order for first year teachers to continue their multidimensional journeys in search of sustaining their democratic missions, teacher preparation programs and mentoring/induction systems may need to create an organized structure that informs ways to support first year teachers whom desire to take the untraditional path and/or the opposite of Wong and Wong’s (1998) ideal of first year success.

Additionally, Sarah saw the experience of this study as a proactive way to engage children in democratic learning. For Sarah, the 3S orientation of such a practical program, *Philosophy for Children*, was enticing prior to implementation and continued to remain
inviting throughout the school year. However, with this enticement came a plethora of events, experiences, and perceptions that brought forth awareness that implementing such a sophisticated thinking skills program in current practice can be difficult and present several challenges to both the students and the teacher.

The pedagogy of listening and conversing was one area that presented a dilemma to Sarah while implementing P4C in her classroom. She was constantly struggling to understand whether the problem was a result of poor grouping, a large number of students, the age of the students, or the teacher control during the sessions. This struggle alone and her travels back to her own schooling experiences helped Sarah understand why this provocative dilemma is so important to stay engaged with during the years to come. However, what she realized may be helpful, I could not provide. She was yearning for additional collaboration among those that were actually enacting P4C in their classrooms during the same particular time. Although I had experience with the theory and practice of P4C, my insights were not developmentally nor chronologically aligned with the struggles that she faced in the midst of implementation; therefore, when thinking of developing a way to re-organize or structure mentoring programs, teacher study networks may be worth considering.

Fortunately during the study, Sarah and I were compelled to understand what the other was thinking. However, the partnership, in itself, did not come without flaws or struggles. Through the collaborative reflections, it is viable to see that the collaboration can be a powerful agent of transformation when there is support, empathy, synchronous and asynchronous interaction, contextualization, non-existent hierarchies, and passion on
both parts of the collaboration. This was evident in the relationship due to the constant communication among both parties as well as the negotiating of thoughts, questions, and examples in a caring and passionate quest for bettering the field of education and viewing this study as a way of life (rather than just a detached way of understanding the field). Through the study, both parties developed a better understanding of the particular problem statement as well as a way to investigate the deeper meanings that lie behind the problem statement—those personal and professional stories and experiences that only surface during deep reflective moments of inquiry.

Limitations

This study was not longitudinal and both Sarah and I agreed that the study was multilayered, yet, not as meaningful as it could have been had more time been devoted to the public intellectual piece that was profoundly missing. Although not longitudinal, it is important to look at the large amount of time that Sarah devoted to the study. Sarah spent so much of her own time working on our partnership and collaboration that it may have also eliminated additional time that could have been spent with colleagues in her district. Sarah’s transformative journey was so instrumental in contributing to the field of mentoring and visionary curriculum efforts; however, it was not as instrumental in making larger social changes in her school during the academic school year. Hopefully, in the future, her transformation and participation in the study can be shared with her colleagues so that they can possibly consider the role of becoming a transformative academic.
Implications

The first year of teaching can be what Moir (1990) stated as the roller coaster year; however, the roller coaster that one decides to ride can be of choice. This study proves that not every novice teacher needs to abide by Wong and Wong’s (1998) steps to success. Instead, this study shed light on the importance of self-examination in regards to venturing into alternative ways of being and understanding. And what positively seemed to arise from the study is that a combination of self-reflection, early habituation outside of the traditional discourse, collaboration with another passionate professional outside of the district and a structured research agenda can articulate a viable alternative to the way we push “success” on a first year teacher. This study suggests that educators think of success outside of the measurable and quantitative arena of value and instead measures success as a journey of awareness and that teachers consider looking at success in alternative ways than the well known, Wong and Wong interpretation.

In addition to the above implication, this study also suggests districts to reconsider typical forms of mentoring programs and provide alternatives and options for EYT's to creatively engage in discourse with others during their first year of teaching. If Wong and Wong (1998) were and continue to be correct in stating that up to 50% of teachers will leave the field within their first seven years of teaching, it is crucial to look at how best to retain teachers. This was fortunately addressed when many districts started to develop mentoring programs within the schools; however, what was not addressed was who we want to retain in our schools. Do we want to retain teachers that continue following the status quo or following an existing model of curriculum because they do
not have time to consider other alternatives? Do we want to keep teachers that willingly give their past experiences and perceptions away and place them in the hands of stakeholders that may not be open to curriculum approaches beyond the standardized management movement? These questions are filled with the underlying assumptions that we do not want teachers to become robotic facilitators, nor do we want teachers becoming models of uncontemplated habituation that Kekes (2005) proclaimed as “evildoing.” Overall, this research suggests educators to look into alternative possibilities of habituation during their first year of teaching for the hope of what Henderson and Gornik (2007) stated as teachers encouraging “their students to be both smart and good” (p. 11).

Because this study is only based on one single case of an EYT, it is impossible to make generalizations based on all EYTs. However, this particular EYT, Sarah, has shown that she was able to begin an articulation of 3S understanding during her first year of teaching, whereas, Wong and Wong (1998) generally claimed that EYTs need all of the mechanics (standardized management habituation) prior to participating in deep self-examination studies. Sarah also showed that narrative inquiry with a critical companion can not only be useful, but it may also be a possible alternative when thinking about the way to organize mentoring programs in the schools. However, if professional discipline is needed to sustain implementation of curriculum approaches, such as 3S understanding, it may also be necessary to examine alternative structures that can prepare EYT’s for this professionally disciplined journey.
Furthermore, it would be interesting to see how many school districts are open to reflecting upon their current mentoring programs or open to considering a university partnership that allows EYTs and curriculum leaders (Doll, 1978) to participate in a collaborative examination of the first year of teaching. Again, the motivation of this collaboration is not the same as Wong and Wong’s (1998) step by step success manual for first year teachers; instead, it is to provide an alternative possibility that can allow teachers to reflect beyond the standardized management paradigm and participate on a journey to understanding the importance of self, subject, and society in the curriculum. However, it should be dually noted that this can be an uphill task that needs further consideration on how this can best work for large districts that may be in financial crises and so forth.

Lastly, the meaning making that emerges from a relationship between a mentor and an EYT needs further consideration. Supplementary studies could be derived in multiple ways to further explore this unique form of collaboration that existed during this particular study. Although my dissertation was designed to study my close work with one person, it would be interesting to examine a pilot school that would provide EYTs the opportunity to participate beyond the schools’ traditional mentoring expectations and possibly form a collaborative group of individuals in the education field (serving as critical companions and/or Doll’s notion of educational leaders) to become mentors to the EYTs at the pilot school. This group could be studied collaboratively by participating in focus groups and group interviews to get a different interpretation of how these relationships add or subtract from Dewey’s (1934) vision of participating in particular
types of social structures. Dewey’s proclaimed social structures that can allow for creative and reflective growth and reduce the feared inventiveness, creativeness and intelligence of living and breathing democratic ideals may be worth considering (pp. 362-363). Sarah began her journey of understanding the relationship between democratic education and teacher transformation; however, it will be interesting to continue the discovery of structures needed for EYT's to continue deepening his or her journey of understanding beyond their first year of teaching. How can this notion of professional discipline be phased into a first year teacher’s reflective inquiry processes? Hopefully breadth and depth can be recognized in ways similar or deeper than what Sarah experienced through her work of both implementing a sophisticated thinking skills program in a standardized classroom and through her narrative collaboration with a critical companion.

Teacher retention continues to play an integral role in mentoring and induction programs; therefore, it is imperative that both teacher education preparatory programs and mentoring programs acknowledge efforts beyond simply retaining teachers. It seems dually necessary to help entry year teachers develop skills to sustain both their personal and district’s mission statements. In this study, Sarah’s work with the reflective inquiry scaffolding has provided her the opportunity to reflect upon her values and beliefs through connecting past and present experiences with intentions of sustaining democratic ideals in the classroom.

From this research, it is evident that Sarah was able to perform deeper connections between theory and practice, in regards to developing a balance of
integrating subject, self and social ideals in an early childhood classroom. Therefore, this data informs mentoring and induction programs that first year teachers are capable of creating their own journey of sustaining democratic ideals in the classroom when the mentor (or in this study, the critical companion) can provide help in a less idealistic arrangement. Furthermore, this study suggests that current mentoring programs revisit their goals, organization and structure to see if the alignment is conducive to the mission statements of their districts. Due to the notion that most school mission statements are democratic in nature, it is imperative that the central goal of a mentoring program helps first year teachers to reach these mission statements. Unfortunately, democratic missions can only be achieved through democratic means; therefore, it is rightfully necessary to redevelop the practices of mentoring/induction systems.

This renewal can bring great energy to fostering democratic habits in first year teachers; however, a lot of work and planning needs to develop prior to the reorganization. From this study, I suggest that teacher candidates in undergraduate programs need to be introduced to examples of reflective inquiry practices so that when they reach the entry year teacher stage, they feel more comfortable enacting in reflective inquiry practice. I also believe that colleges and universities need to continue supporting their teacher candidates as they become first year teachers by forming social and support networks that aid EYT's in their developmental processes during the first year of teaching. With these two pre-organized support systems in place, mentoring programs can possibly begin the renewal process of initiating a more critical and deliberative approach to working with first year teachers.
APPENDICES
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Past Experiences</th>
<th>Intellectual (Subject)</th>
<th>Social (Social)</th>
<th>Personal (Self)</th>
<th>Productive (Democratic Action)</th>
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<td>Present Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Intentions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

TEACHER INTERVIEW #1
Disciplinary: Interview on 3/16/2008

1. How do you go about assessing the educational materials you use to plan for instruction?

2. How are the educational materials you use representative of the student diversity in the classroom?

3. How does the plethora (large amount) of educational literature inform your content selections and instructional practices? How might you contribute to this literature?

4. What needs do you have for enhanced understanding of subject matter understanding?

5. What needs do your students have for enhanced understanding of their subject matter understanding?

6. What connections are you making that with your deep subject matter understanding to democratic self and social understandings?

7. What connections are your students making with their deep subject matter understanding to democratic self and social understandings?

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW #2

1. Do you provide/engage in meaningful learning opportunities?

2. Have you awakened a passion for teaching/learning?

3. Are you willing to discuss your values/beliefs? How do you act on these values and beliefs? Do your actions align with your values and beliefs? How is your teaching reflecting your beliefs?

4. What does it mean to be a teacher?

5. In what ways do you engage in professional dialogue with colleagues?

6. Are you willing to discuss your professional values and beliefs? If not, why not?

APPENDIX D

TEACHER INTERVIEW #3
Critical

1. Why are you not doing what needs to be done?

2. What impact do the values of community have on the classroom? The school?

3. Are questions asked without fear?

4. Is the environment a place where people can grow together?

5. In what ways are you reaching out to colleagues?

6. Who is silenced? Why?

APPENDIX E

TEACHER INTERVIEW #4
Multiperspective: Interview on 3/27/2008

1. Do you see things through the eyes of other cultures, races, genders, ages and socioeconomic classes?

2. Do you explore problems from a variety of perspectives? Do you support and accept the potential solutions of others? Do you present and accept more than one solution?

3. How do you accommodate diverse learning styles?

4. During small and large group dialogic exchanges, what evidence is apparent that people in the group are listening and that everyone has an opportunity to share?

5. Are you sensitive to everyone’s voice?

6. Do you facilitate dialogue on issues/topics?

7. Are there observable behaviors of exclusiveness? If so, how are these behaviors addressed?

APPENDIX F

TEACHER INTERVIEW #5
Ethical

1. Are you functioning as a public educator, as a public intellect?

2. Are you careful not to function primarily in the dominant paradigm?

3. Are you enhancing the quality of life or the quality of learning for the group or individual?

4. What evidence is there that demonstrates you are working in the standardized management paradigm, the constructivist best practice paradigm, and the curriculum wisdom paradigm?

5. How are you going about reconceptualizing the problem to work in the curriculum wisdom paradigm?

6. What are your biases?

APPENDIX G

TEACHER INTERVIEW #6
1. How do you negotiate with people working out of different orientations?

2. How do you involve students in curriculum decision making?

3. How do you provide an environment that encourages openness, exploration, and the freedom to ask?

4. How do you provide an atmosphere where people can grow together through collaborative problem solving?

5. In what ways do you examine why things are the way they are and how they could be?

6. In what ways have you included the voices of the stakeholders in the broader “community”?

7. Are you ready to welcome constructive criticism as a way to grow? Do you view suggestions as a threat or motivator? Do you encourage productive dissent?

Other Reflective

1. What other relevant explorations and investigations might guide your inquiry into 3S education?

2. What other relevant explorations and investigations might inform the facilitation of your student’s 3S holistic, constructivist learning?

3. What other relevant explorations and investigations might inform your designing, planning, evaluating, and organizing decisions?

4. What other relevant explorations and investigations might inform your transformative curriculum leadership work with other professionals and with local stakeholder groups?

5. What other relevant explorations and investigations might inform your emergent currere understanding and narratives?

APPENDIX I

RECOMMENDED READINGS FOR EYT

Haynes, J., & Murris, K. *Listening, juggling and traveling the philosophical space.* Retrieved April 2007 from www.dialogueworks.co.uk/dw/wr/juggle.html


APPENDIX J

DEFINITION OF TERMS
Definition of Terms

**Collaboration:** A structured, recursive process where two or more people work together toward a common goal—typically an intellectual endeavor (Collaborate, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2007).

**Dogmatic thinking:** It consists in establishing as paramount a body of doctrine which is believed to originate from a source other than the individual. The source may be tradition, or an ideology which succeeded in gaining supremacy in competition with other ideologies. In either case, it is declared as the supreme arbiter over conflicting views: those that conform are accepted; those that are in conflict, rejected. There is no need to weigh alternatives: every choice is already made. No question is left unanswered; the fearful specter of uncertainty is removed. (retrieved April 2007 from http://www.osi.hu/oss/ch2f.html)

**Entry Year Teacher (EYT):** One entering the field of teaching.

**HQT- Highly Qualified Teacher:** Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act definition that prescribes standards for educators in core academic content areas (Ohio Department of Education, 2008).

**Paradigm:** A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline. (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company).

**Teacher induction:** A Teacher Induction Program involves those practices used to help new and beginning teachers become competent and effective professionals in the
classroom. Induction programs also help develop an understanding of the local school, community and cultures (retrieved April 2007 from NWT Teacher Induction, www.newteachersnwt.ca/index.html)
APPENDIX K

DOCUMENTATION OF TEACHER/RESEARCHER COLLABORATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/08/07-9/27/07</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Informal conversations in person and via telephone regarding P4C, collaboration and yearly timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/29/07</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Email entry regarding yearly timeline</td>
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<td>10/2/07</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Informal Conversation regarding the collaboration</td>
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<td>TJ</td>
<td>Journal discussing progress reports and the need for clarification</td>
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<td>10/6/07</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Informal conversation with EYT on thoughts of feelings of mentoring</td>
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<td>10/15/07</td>
<td>TJ</td>
<td>Journal discussing parent teacher conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/15/07</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Informal conversation with EYT on mentoring and suggestions for reading</td>
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<td>10/16/07</td>
<td>TJ</td>
<td>Journal discussing using take home projects and culminating activities</td>
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<td>Journal discussing positive feedback and the need for community participation</td>
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<td>Journal discussing the spirit of a classroom</td>
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<td>Journal discussing working together as a classroom community and with the community at large-food drive</td>
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<td>Journal of entry year teachers meeting discussion</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Collaborative Planning of interviews, observations, consent, etc.</td>
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<td>Journal discussing parent communication/marketing curriculum to potential incoming parents</td>
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<td>Journal discussing inappropriate decision making</td>
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<td>Journal discussing the importance of project based learning and P4C open ended questioning</td>
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<td>Member checking revisions to dissertation</td>
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*TJ—Teacher Journal  
IC—Informal Conversation  
EE—Email entry  
CO—Classroom observation  
FI—Formal Interview  
CP—Collaborative Planning
APPENDIX L

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS
**Consent Form**

A collaborative narrative inquiry into an EYT’s experiences of integrating a sophisticated thinking skills model in a standards based, Kindergarten classroom.

I want to do research on the experiences of an EYT integrating a sophisticated thinking skills model in a standards based, Kindergarten classroom in collaboration with a critical companion. I want to do this because there is a paucity of research that highlights ways that entry year teachers can begin to implement a sophisticated thinking skills models such as Philosophy for Children. I would like you to take part in this project. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to narratively collaborate with the researcher through audio and written methods, actively participate in conversations via face to face meetings, emails, and telephone conversations, and allow me to observe your classroom during Philosophy for Children sessions.

Please remember that pseudonyms will be used in this study and the study will only be used for dissertation and educational purposes.

If you take part in this project you will greatly be adding to literature on the experiences of entry year teachers. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you do take part, you may stop at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at 440-488-1671 or Dr. Henderson at 330-672-0631. The project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call Dr. John West, Vice President of Research, Division of Research and Graduate Studies (Tel. 330-672-2704).

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Mandy Geddis-Capel

---

B. Consent Statement(s)

1. I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

<table>
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<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>

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AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE/PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT FORM

I agree to audio taping at ____________________________________________

on _____________________________________________________.

___________________________________________________________

Signature Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audio tapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to hear the tapes  ______ do not want to hear the tapes

Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tapes. If you want to hear the tapes you will be asked to sign after hearing them.

Mandy Geddis-Capel and other researchers approved by Kent State University may/may not use the tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

_____ this research project

___________________________________________________________

Signature Date
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


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