MAKING POSSIBILITIES VISIBLE: THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN AN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to investigate the development of collaboration among different institutions and disciplines to serve young children with and without special needs. The Education Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF), located in an urban area of a Midwestern city, was chosen as the research site for this dissertation because it offers comprehensive services and utilizes a progressive inclusion model (based on a 14-year history of partnership among multiple institutions).

Utilizing ethnographic methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus group interviews, data was collected over three years. The data corpus was divided into two parts: (1) historical and leadership level and (2) practical and classroom level. The second level focused on one classroom led by two Head Start and two special education teachers.

Collaboration patterns at the leadership and the practice levels represented integrated collaboration and family collaboration respectively. At the leadership level, their shared vision to provide seamless and comprehensive services for children and their families in the community sustained the long-term partnership despite the differences among organizations. When they opened the ECYCF building in 2001, the leaders also constructed the integrated curriculum to blend the different philosophies and practices of different agencies. However, at the practice level not all the teachers from different
agencies were ready to fit into the new system and norms. The interaction patterns among
teachers from different agencies can be described as the way that a family that lives
together in challenging situations might act; the teachers had to learn to adjust their ways
of teaching to the context of the ECYCF. Two spheres of cultural elements influenced
practical level collaboration: “organizational coordination” and “personal beliefs and
values.” Both of them are needed for efficient collaborative teaching team.

Therefore, the administrative level partnership needs to continuously provide
organizational conditions, such as socializing opportunities for teachers and active
sharing of the ‘vision’ and the passion that have driven the leaders of the partnership.
Further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of collaborative teaching,
specifically, teacher collaboration and children’s socializations.
Dedicated to

My parents
Yoshiko and Hiroshi Hashimoto

&

Teachers and Children in the ECYCF Partnership
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout my graduate work, I have met many people who supported me personally and professionally. It is difficult to express my appreciation in words to all of the people who taught me in so many ways.

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My committee has guided and mentored me through this dissertation process, and they have helped me grow as a young scholar and a teacher educator. I am deeply grateful to my adviser, Dr. Rebecca Kantor, for her guidance, continuous support, encouragement, and patience. I thank Dr. Diane M. Sainato for her guidance into the special education field in 2000 when I was still teaching in a preschool for Japanese children, and her encouragement throughout both my master’s and doctorate work. I am also thankful to Dr. Laurie Katz for her guidance, support, and advice in last two years.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As an early childhood educator, I have worked with children with special needs and have come to believe that inclusive practice expands the possibilities in early childhood education. Children with special needs genuinely guide teachers to rethink how we view and teach children and how we work with families, which naturally leads to improve the quality of the classroom. As a general education teacher, learning about children from the special education perspective has expanded my possibilities as a teacher and has given me the ability to teach diverse children in multiple ways. At the same time, organizational and pedagogical boundaries between the general and special education fields have provided me with the challenge to learn the discourse and culture of special education before the content. Nevertheless, both fields agree that we need to work together to provide quality education for children with and without disabilities and their families.

This unified vision of general and special education has been put into practice as a model of the Educational Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF,
pseudonym) in an urban area of Ohio. The ECYCF was established by the partnership among multiple agencies with a vision that early childhood education is a crucial period of time in which education can make a difference in later years of life, and it is possible to provide high-quality education to children with and without special needs from diverse families. Their mission statement declares their vision toward inclusive education and services as follows:

\textit{Across the early childhood education system, we strive:}

\textit{To enhance the quality of life for children, their families, and the community by providing collaborative and comprehensive services that are inclusive, affordable and accessible. (Education Center for Young Children and Families, Mission Statement, 2001)}

Using the ECYCF as a model of the inclusive practice, this dissertation describes and examines the possibilities of collaboration between the general and special education fields, while focusing on the challenges that leaders and teachers of the ECYCF have in the process of collaboration.

\textbf{Background of Inclusive Practice}

After the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142), research validated the effectiveness of inclusion, or in other words, to provide educational services for children with special needs in the least restrictive settings and in the place the child is likely to be if they would not have had disabilities (Guralnick, 2000). Inclusion is a value and practice that supports "the rights of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities" (Position statement of the Division of Early Childhood, in Sandall, McLean, & Smith, 2000, p.150). This vision
has been also endorsed by the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC), which is known as the largest early childhood organization in the United States.

Inclusion of children with special needs calls the general and special education fields to work together to provide a meaningful educational environment for children with and without special needs. Historically, different types of inclusion have been implemented. For example, a small number of children may be in the typical classroom, or typically developing peers may go to the classroom of children with special needs. In these models, the ratios of children with and without special needs are 50:50 or 20:80 and the teachers in charge of the whole group are either general or special education teachers.

In the case of the ECYCF model, the programs themselves have blended infrastructures at the building level (e.g., enrollment procedures, food and transportation services) and the typical classrooms in the ECYCF building have 50% children with special needs and 50% children without special needs. In addition, both general and special education teachers share the responsibilities for the classroom as a whole. This type of inclusion, providing equal ratios of teachers and children and blending infrastructure as much as possible, is a unique integration of two different systems. This model became possible in the social and political context in Ohio in the 1990s, which was summarized in Kantor, Fernie, Scott, and O’Brien (2000). With Governor Voinovich’s initiative to improve access and delivery of education, health, and social services to children and their families, Ohio was one of the 12 states to receive the federal funding for the state Head Start collaboration project, and this movement led to the Ohio Children
and Family First Initiative. This trend fostered early childhood educators’ engagement in the effort to increase fluidity in the overall system to serve young children and their families in Ohio.

The field of early childhood education has multiple players, including Head Start, childcare, public schools, and early childhood special education, which are operated under different regulations and legislations with their own histories and traditions. Thus, boundaries exist not only between general and special education but also among organizational sectors. In order to respond to the demands of inclusion with available resources, collaborative work is necessary. In fact, at local levels, a variety of collaborative partnerships have been formed between different players (Blank & Poersch, 2004; Kagan, Verzaro-O’Bridn, Kim, & Formica, 2000; Kagan, 1991). Further, it is necessary to examine the existing inclusive early childhood settings based on partnerships of multiple institutions and to look at collaboration on the practical level.

**A Case Study of a Unique Partnership**

The Education Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF) was established by a partnership between multiple institutions, which have a vision of a seamless service delivery and unified inclusion program. With the implementation of the inclusive practice that is appropriate for the needs of children, we assume better outcomes for children both with and without special needs (Sandall et al., 2000; Sandall & Ostrosky, 2000) In addition families typically have to contact different offices and programs to receive available medical, social, and educational services. In order to provide quality
inclusive education and other services, various early childhood institutions collaborated to create and operate this unique and complex partnership program at the ECYCF. I have been fortunate to be involved with this center as a student observer, a supervisor for teacher candidates placed in the center, as a temporary teacher at their Summer Program, and as a researcher.

The current study specifically investigates the development of collaboration within the ECYCF partnership in multilayered contexts. The layers are at the classroom, the building, and the community levels. Each classroom in the ECYCF is unique but has been embedded in the shared values established by the ECYCF partnership. Through the story of a single teaching team at the center, the study describes sociopolitical influences on daily practice and collaboration across teachers from different backgrounds. Finally, although the study focuses on inclusive practice, the result provides implications and suggestions regarding general collaborative practice in early childhood education and service delivery for diverse children and their families.

A Brief History of Inclusion

Guralnick (2001) called the year 1975 a milestone for the disability community because it was the year that individuals with disabilities began to be able to obtain a free and appropriate public education. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) was implemented under the influence of the civil rights movement. PL 94-142 led the national public school initiative to provide appropriate education to all the children with disabilities. As a result, states are able to use federal funds for services for
preschool children with disabilities and therefore, can provide free appropriate public education (FAPE). More importantly, a concept of “least restrictive environment” (LRE) was proposed, stating that children with disabilities should have access to settings where children without disabilities participate.

PL 94-142 is now known as Part B of the Individuals with Disability Act (IDEA). The 1986 amendments to IDEA (PL99-457) extended the rights protected in PL 94-142 to children ages 3 through 5. On the other hand, as Powell (2000) explains, Head Start programs had actively included children with special needs since the 1970s, supported by their own regulation that requires that 10% of children in local programs should be children with special needs. Despite their long standing practice of including children with special needs, PL99-457 served as additional guidelines of service delivery for Head Start programs as well.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA, PL 101-336) expanded civil rights and antidiscrimination protections. As Lipsky and Gartner (2001) explain, the ADA expanded the possibilities to community programs, such as childcare, recreational programs, and other similar opportunities available to children of their age. PL 105-17 reauthorizations of IDEA in 1997 required states to provide services and supports to children from birth to three and their families at risk under Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Part B of the reauthorization of IDEA requires a free appropriate public education to be available for all children with disabilities ages three to 21 under the implementation of Individual Educational Programs (IEP). Part C of IDEA emphasizes that the interventions and educational programs for children with special needs should be
implemented in a naturalistic environment, which reflects the idea of LRE in early legislations.

The conceptual and practical implication of this legislation seemed to set extraordinary goals and expectations for the field. As Guralnick (2001) suggests, "it required change in virtually every facet of the evolving system of early interventions services and support" (p. 6) because traditional early intervention services were tied into the larger educational system with a segregated model.

**Challenges in Inclusion**

Inclusive practice has required various adjustments since PL94-142 for pre-existing programs, as noted above. First, they may have needed to renovate their physical environment to provide the least restrictive environment for children with special needs. Second, teachers in community-based programs may not have had the necessary training or knowledge of education for children with special needs because education for professional development has been traditionally divided into different fields, such as general and special education. General education schools need to develop new networks and resources with different services, such as medical and therapeutic professionals. On the other hand, traditional special education teachers are not necessarily trained to teach typically developing children. The roles of early special education teachers in inclusive settings are not discussed enough at the practical level. Studies have identified boundaries between general and special education teachers in terms of their pedagogical beliefs and their understandings of inclusion, disability, and special
education (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse, & Wesley, 1998; Buysse, Skinner, & Grant, 2001).

As noted above, inclusive education became standard practice by law; however there is a need to construct shared sense of what inclusion means. Stowe and Turnbull III (2001) point out that the wording in the law is problematic because although it is carefully constructed, it can sound ambiguous to practitioners; the ambiguity arises because there was little empirical foundation when PL 94-142 was implemented. Although PL 94-142 states that children with disabilities are to be educated with typical peers to the maximum extent appropriate, defining ‘what is appropriate and satisfactory’ is a complex issue in practice (Guralnick, 2001). For example, Odom (2002) reports that different programs have different definitions of inclusion, and that teachers, families, professionals, and administrators may have different meanings of inclusion. Leiber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, and Beckman (1998) studied teachers’ beliefs and practices and found that some teachers interpreted the meaning of inclusion differently from the current literature. Although teachers believed that children with special needs would benefit from interactions with peers without disabilities, some teachers viewed inclusion as simply putting children in proximity with one another or pairing them without any ideas regarding facilitation or intervention. These studies suggest that practitioners need practical examples of inclusive education.
The ECYCF Partnership

The ECYCF is founded on an extensive partnership that combines local, county, and state education, medical, social service, and mental health agencies and institutions working together to serve local communities, children, and families more effectively. People in this partnership chose to blend their systems by partnering instead of coordinating and collaborating as separate agencies so that they would be able to provide seamless services for families and obtain better outcomes for children. This partnership unifies the various sectors of early childhood education and services.

In September of 2001, the building opened its doors to 700 children and their families; the group reflected cultural, economic, and ability diversity. Since the ECYCF building’s opening, children have continued to receive quality care and education in inclusive classrooms led by teams of educators from “County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD),” “Council Head Start,” “Metro Head Start,” “the Urban Public Schools” (UPS), and a YWCA childcare program. The partnership of the center is also supported by other community organizations such as Action for Children (Resource and Referral), “Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health,” “Foods and Health Project,” “City Health Department,” “County Board of Health,” “County Children's Services,” “County Department of Job and Family Services,” “State Department of Education - Division of Early Childhood Education,” and area universities including The Ohio State University (OSU).

This partnership is the first system in central Ohio to bring together many organizations and programs in several locations to provide care, services, and education.
for families and their children with and without disabilities. This “one-stop” comprehensive service center for families with young children reduces the burden for families who previously had to move from one referral to another. This unique collaboration makes this center a demonstration model for quality services and practices that will provide support for inclusive practice and collaborative partnerships. On the other hand, the complexities of this partnership project are reflected in the number of years of its planning stage. In addition, despite the long planning time, it took years for the people in the ECYCF partnership to see the real impact of this partnership on the practice level.

**Research Questions**

The current study seeks to investigate the process of partnership and collaboration that agency leaders and classroom teachers constructed at different levels, such as the local early childhood community, the ECYCF program, and the classrooms’ practice. It is crucial to understand the broader contexts in which the ECYCF partnership is situated before analyzing the collaboration process among teachers in the classroom.

Therefore, the first purpose of this dissertation is to analyze some of the complexities and to understand the context and document elements that affected the ECYCF collaboration. The second purpose is to live in a class and understand the collaboration process in implementation. Specifically, the research questions guiding this dissertation are:
(1) What is the nature of collaboration among leaders of the partnership among multiple institutions such as Head Start, MRDD, the public school system, and childcare?

(2) What is the nature of collaboration among members of a single teaching team that includes Head Start teachers and early childhood special education teachers?

   a. How do the teachers negotiate a common ground given their institutional and personal differences related to their pedagogy and practice?

   b. How does this collaboration change over time?

   c. What are the positive and negative impacts of this collaboration in teachers' professional lives and the outcome for children and their families?

These questions were explored largely through participant observation (Spradley, 1980) of the classroom and various meetings at the ECYCF. Individual and group interviews and document analysis were also conducted to supplement the data from observations.

**Methodological Rationale**

In this study, cultural-historical perspectives (Cole, 1998; Moll, 2000) serve as a theoretical framework to understand the complexities in the ECYCF partnership. This framework would lead the researcher to understand social and historical contexts on different levels (Moll, 2000; Rogoff, 1995). In other words, the practice in ECYCF reflects the social and historical contexts in the field. Therefore, by examining the collaboration in the center, one would find the issues general to the field, as well as the ones specific to the center. Each institution in the building has its own history and each
teacher brings in his/her own personal history and beliefs. In addition, their collaboration has multiple layers: between institutions supporting the center, between administrators and directors from different institutions working in the building, and between teachers from different institutions working in each classroom.

Given the goals to describe the practice in the ECYCF and to examine the possibilities for the future practice for both the ECYCF and the field of early childhood education, the dissertation applies ethnographic methodology to data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Erickson, 1986; Spradley, 1980). Ethnographic methodology can be called alternatively qualitative, participant observational, case study, phenomenological constructivist, or interpretive approach (Erickson, 1986). This dissertation utilizes terms such as ethnographic and interpretive interchangeably.

As Erickson (1986) discusses in the research on education, researchers always interact with participants and the research environment. Because research on education involves human interactions, it cannot be strictly separated from the context no matter what method is used. In an interpretive approach especially, researchers should carefully examine their subjectivity in the process of the study. Being in the classroom, researchers become a part of the environment, while aiming to make meaning of their experience and capture insider perspectives. At the same time, researchers cannot be complete insiders (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Spradley, 1980).

On the other hand, because the researchers will be always distant from the local point of view, they can provide valuable outsider perspectives; as Erickson (1986) metaphorically states, "the fish might indeed be the last creature to discover water" (p.
In addition, because the study is situated in the context, interpretive research can provide rich descriptions of the events occurring.

In the case of this study, I had been a participant in the ECYCF building for almost four years. I had been visiting the center one and a half years before I identified the target classroom, Room 701. I visited the classroom weekly from February 2004 to June 2005. I was considered a member of a support team for Room 701 by teachers, but was still an outsider, someone who visits often but not every day. By focusing on a single classroom, I could learn about the collaboration process as it applied to this specific classroom, and therefore, understand the collaboration process at a deeper level. Additionally, I could look at the whole building through the eyes of the four teachers, as well as through the eyes of the leaders in the ECYCF building. By visiting the classroom for an extended period of time, I examined what constituted the classroom culture and what became obstacles to the collaboration of teachers.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. In this chapter, I provide an introduction to the study with a discussion of its purposes and research questions. In Chapter 2, I present a literature review regarding inclusive practice and the needs of collaboration, the fragmented early childhood education system, and the theoretical framework for the study in order to investigate collaboration processes. Chapter 3 presents methodology including the data collection process, the analysis process, my roles as a researcher, and issues related to trustworthiness. Chapters 4 and 5 present
analyzed narratives at two of the multi-layered contexts. Chapter 4 focuses on the collaboration at the leadership or organizational level, while Chapter 5 focuses on a single classroom for an extended period of time and looks at the partnership through the perspectives of the four teachers in the target classroom. Chapter 4 provides an understanding of the context in which the target classroom is situated. In other words, Chapter 4 situates the analysis of the target classroom presented in Chapter 5 in the larger context of the ECYCF collaborative efforts. In addition, these two chapters serve to contrast two levels of collaboration in order to understand the influences of different layers. Finally, Chapter 6 presents a theoretical analysis of narratives, which summarizes the collaboration process in the ECYCF partnership presented in Chapters 4 and 5, and proposes recommendations and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I review literature relevant to my analysis of the ECYCF partnership collaboration. The first section gives an overview of definitions and variations of inclusion. Then I summarize how collaboration, especially between general and special education teachers, is involved in inclusive practice. The second section defines collaboration and discusses it from two perspectives: organizational and relational. Then the social and political context of early childhood education in general is introduced in order to situate collaboration between the general and special education fields in the broader context of early childhood education. In the third section I provide a conceptual framework in order to discuss collaboration between special and general education teachers in the inclusive setting. This third section also reviews cultural-historical perspectives as a way of examining the relationship between the context and each individual’s agency. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief summary of the theoretical perspectives for this dissertation.
Overview of Inclusive Practice

This section will illustrate how inclusion is discussed in the current literature, how the general and special education fields may face challenges and sometimes even cross boundaries between the two disciplines, and how collaborative work is crucial to implement quality inclusive programs.

Definitions of Inclusion

Inclusion became a common practice with the evolution of related legislation described in Chapter 1. In this section, I will review the influence of legislation on the practice, different types of inclusion, and the boundaries of collaboration between the general and special education fields.

Lipsky and Gartner (2001) state that “an inclusive school system” is “a place where diversity, not homogenization, is valued” (p. 41), which is applicable to other community settings. As Odom (2002) argues, the concept of inclusion extends beyond classroom settings. Children with special needs are considered to be a member of the community. They should be able to participate in a variety of activities in the community and culture, such as church services, neighborhood activities and events, and clubs. In other words, inclusion creates a space where children with special needs are accepted by other members of the community in the same way that children without disabilities are accepted. Their families, teachers, and staff members must provide the foundation for their optimal development.
In support of inclusion, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) published the recommended practice of early intervention, which is built on the foundations of quality programs for all children. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1997) also published position statements on developmentally appropriate practices and assessments (Bredekamp, & Copple, 1997; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1997). Quality inclusion is possible with high quality early childhood programs and individualized intervention services incorporated within programs. In inclusive settings, children engage in naturally occurring activities, interact with their typically developing peers and adults in the community, and learn appropriate social and adaptive behavior skills (Wolery & Wilbers, 1994). McWilliam, Wolery, and Odom (2001) strongly suggest that educators, early interventionists, therapists, and parents should work to maximize the likelihood that all of the children’s experiences will promote learning of desired skills and patterns and minimize the likelihood that children will have interactions that would impede learning of desirable skills and patterns.

**Different Types and Degrees of Inclusion**

Inclusive education deals with various factors such as kinds of disabilities, degree of disabilities, ages of children, resources available in the family and the community, the physical environment of the school, the dynamics of peers in the school, the values of teachers, and accessibility to the necessary services at the school. There are different types of inclusion without distinct standards from which educators can choose to apply to
the children they are working with, although the spirit of IDEA proposes that educators make the best efforts to include children with special needs into the typical classroom.

Guralnick (2001) classifies inclusive programs as *full inclusion, cluster model, reverse inclusion, or social inclusion*. *Full inclusion* refers to a model in which children with disabilities participate in the general environment with adaptations and accommodations for the child’s needs and goals built into the general early childhood curriculum. The *cluster model* refers to a model in which a group of children with disabilities are in the general program environment with their special services staff. Children with special needs are physically separated in a separate classroom within the larger program. *Reverse inclusion* refers to a model in which a relatively small group of typically developing children is added to the special education program. *Social inclusion* is a model that provides the least interactions between children with and without disabilities. In this model, the two groups are housed in the same building or a close location and planned contacts between the two groups generally occur during free-play and snack time, while other curricula and other program features are considerably different. *Dual enrollment* is not a type of inclusion but rather a way for the child with special needs to have an opportunity to interact with typically developing children while he/she has access to professional intervention teams. A child with special needs goes to two separate programs, a program for special education and another for general education.

Even when children are in a *full inclusion* environment, the degree of inclusion can differ depending on available resources and the extent to which general and special
education teachers collaborate. Weiss and Lloyd (2003) explain that there are two models of collaboration, collaborative consultation and co-teaching. In collaborative consultation, special education teachers provide assistance to general education teachers and indirect services to children with special needs. In co-teaching model, Vaughn, Schumm, and Arguelles (1997) further classify ways that general and special educators jointly teach, such as one lead teacher and one assisting teacher, parallel teaching, station teaching using small groups, alternative teaching using small groups, and team teaching, which is also referred as cooperative teaching (Katz, 1993). There are several studies on co-teaching models (Niles & Marcellino, 2004; Vaughn, Schumm, & Arguelle, 1997; Walsh & Jones, 2004; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003) and professional training models (Greenwood, 1998; Marks & Gersten, 1998; Richards, Hunly, Weaver, & Landers, 2003; Vaughn, Hughes, Chumm, & Klingner, 1998); however, most of the studies are conducted in grade schools, and there are not enough longitudinal studies regarding how collaboration between teachers continues to develop.

There is no rigid standard to determine what is the maximum or the minimum degree of inclusion appropriate for a child with special needs. Whether the available inclusive environment is appropriate for the child with special needs should be “individually assessed for each child and should be considered in the context of child and family goals” (Morrison & Sainato, 2001, p. 298). Under IDEA, children with special needs must be provided with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP). The team members of IEP or IFSP, which include family members, need to play significant roles in deciding which environment will best serve the
child, as well as evaluating the outcomes periodically (Stowe & Tumbull, 2001; Walsh, Rous, & Lutzer, 2000).

**Importance of Social Aspects in Inclusion**

Inclusion is not merely the physical placement of a child with special needs. Children with special needs should be socially and emotionally included with their typically developing peers (Guralnick, 2001; Odom, 2002). For all children, the social environment is an essential part of learning (Rogoff, 1990). Even when children have a limited ability to communicate with others, they are social beings who are learning from interactions with peers, adults, and physical environments. Adults should consider the quality of social interactions among children with special needs and typically developing peers as well as the children’s engagement in classroom activities. The quality of social interactions will determine the success of inclusive programs.

At the same time, research has indicated that children who have difficulties interacting with their peers or have significant behavior problems in early ages are often found to have cognitive delays, histories of child abuse and neglect, or other factors of psychopathology and developmental disorders. The current literature presents consistent findings regarding social competence; that is, “positive peer interactions are an important route” (Brown, Odom, & Conroy, 2001, p. 163) to enhance children’s development, and “peer interaction problems are a primary predictor of children’s future social competence difficulties” (Brown et al., 2001, p. 163). When children have problems interacting with their peers, it is likely that limited social interactions minimize their learning.
opportunities in peer interactions. In other words, adults’ careful intervention is necessary in order for children with special needs to have meaningful experiences in social interaction. Typical peers do not automatically get involved with children with special needs who could experience social isolation in inclusive settings (McCay & Keyes, 2001/02). Without some degree of social interaction skills, children cannot be fully engaged in inclusive settings. In this case, adults must provide the support necessary to ensure that typical peers interact with and facilitate the opportunities to practice newly acquiring skills of children with disabilities (Strain, McGee, & Kohler, 2001).

In addition to the social skills, children with special needs will benefit from being in a natural context with peers because they need to have opportunities to practice their acquired skills and apply their social skills to a variety of situations. The ability to practice acquired skills in a variety of situation is an important advantage of inclusion in comparison to a segregation, in which interventions have to consider the generalization of the target skills and then opportunities have to be arranged in order for the children to use their skills in new situations.

The literature suggests the effectiveness of interventions in naturally occurring activities and different strategies to decrease adults’ prompts as children acquire necessary skills. Odom, et al. (1999) compares three different intervention approaches to social competence for preschoolers with disabilities and suggests the need to teach typically developing peers to initiate positive interactions with children with disabilities. That strategy may include modeling by teachers.


\textit{Boundaries in Inclusive Practice between General and Special Education}

Although special education teachers are accustomed to collaborating with therapists and other professionals, co-teaching with general educators is a different challenge. One main reason is that general educators are trained more on academic content. Another reason is that general educators are trained in group-oriented instruction compared to special education teachers whose instructional orientation is often toward individualized programs.

General education teachers and service providers believe that they do not have enough knowledge about the referral procedures and terminologies that are used in the special education field (Buysse, et al., 2001; Buysse, Wesley, Keys, & Bailey, 1996). Even within early childhood education, general and special education seem to have separate cultural norms and standards (Gurnick, 2001; Richardson & Anders, 1998). The current literature suggests \textit{beliefs}, \textit{teacher training}, and \textit{resources} are major boundaries between the general and special education fields; thus, I will review selected studies regarding these issues.

\textbf{Beliefs.} Snyder, Garriot, and Aylor (2001) concluded that traditional segregated practices created different sets of beliefs and pedagogical practices between general and special education professionals. Because general and special education teachers had been educated in two separate systems, they developed different belief systems. Teachers in different institutions may have different philosophies about or definitions of inclusion, and their specific definitions affect the way inclusive programs are implemented in the
classroom (Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, & Beckman, 1998). McCormick, Nooman, and Heck (1998) propose that cohesive teacher behaviors are related to children's engagement in the inclusive environment. Therefore, effective and consistent modes of communication (Donegan, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 1996) and a shared philosophy about education and inclusion (Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, & Beckman, 1998) are keys to an effective inclusive classroom. Professional relationships create positive or negative effects across “the social ecology of preschool classrooms that undoubtedly affects the learning environment for children and the existence of the programs themselves” (Lieber et al., 1998, p. 265).

It does not necessarily mean that each discipline has to learn the other’s approach as something different; rather, they would need to understand that both disciplines already have a commonality and incorporate strengths from both approaches into the current practice. Consequently, inclusive classrooms have higher expectations and possibilities for both general and special education teachers than segregated classrooms.

**Teacher training.** Typically, teacher education programs for general and special education fields are in separate departments, and prospective teachers may not receive enough knowledge and experience from the different departments. However, in inclusive programs, both disciplines have to come together to construct a new shared practice for all the children in their classroom.

Although more students with special needs are in the general education classrooms, there has been a debate over the effectiveness and adequacy of inclusive
placements. While an inclusive placement is considered more desirable, it would be premature to place students with special needs into general education settings without adequate preparation for both general education and special education teachers (Sainato & Morriosn, 2001; Schumm & Vaughn, 2004).

Buysse, Skinner, and Grant (2001) report in their study regarding families and practitioners’ attitudes toward inclusion that the quality of inclusion has two dimensions: general early childhood practices and individualization of programs. Teachers are responsible for the group at the same time as they are responding to individual children. These two dimensions are not specific to children with special needs. Rather, any classroom with diverse students requires a subtle balance between individuals and collective learning opportunities. Generally, a teacher’s knowledge of individual children in the group structure helps a teacher respond to individual children’s needs and to plan necessary individual instruction. However, children with special needs demand teachers to have different kinds of knowledge and skills to support them. To bridge the current gap between training and reality, collaboration between general and special education teachers is necessary.

**Resources.** Inclusion requires different resources than traditional practice. Some already-existing early childhood programs may lack resources to accommodate certain characteristics of disabilities (Schwartz & Brand, 2001). Along with the physical environment and medical needs, the availability of therapists and other professionals may be limited, and teachers may not have opportunities for on-going professional
development trainings. There is no one program that can serve every child with special needs. The best placement for children with special needs is to be determined on an individual basis and with the orientation to improving the existing programs.

**Needs of Collaborative Work in Inclusion**

Inclusive practice invites professionals to construct inclusive relationships across disciplines. The Education of the Handicapped Act amendments of 1986, Part H (PL 99-457) provides both the opportunity and the responsibility to foster collaboration not simply within special education but across disciplines, governmental levels, and economic sectors (Kagan, 1991). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17) states that “a clear attempt to address the issue of continuity of services and promote a seamless system of services for young children with disabilities and their families” is necessary (Sainato & Morrison, 2001, p. 294). Sainato and Morrison (2001) propose two levels of systems change regarding structural bureaucracy: “The first is the collaboration and coordination among regulatory bodies such as state departments and administering agencies. The second is the support needed for direct service providers.” (p. 301) Special education fields need to understand the existing philosophies and practices in order to provide support, while general educators need to have more opportunities for training in the special education field as they accept children with special needs in their classrooms.

Although I do not discuss family issues in my review of inclusion, families also play significant roles in successful inclusive education. Children with special needs and
their families move through different services as the child becomes older or as systems change. There is a need to guide and support families during transitions and help families attain a certain level of expertise, so that they are empowered to advocate for their children during transitions (Sainato & Morrison, 2001). In other words, families are also contributors to inclusive practices.

The models that Guralnick (2001) explains (full-, cluster-, reverse- and social inclusion) discuss how children are physically included into the traditional environment; however, it is necessary to examine how these models are socially inclusive for teachers and professionals, as well as for children. Recent literature in the special education field investigates co-teaching models between general and special education in different grade levels. Different from higher grade levels, early childhood programs have become more flexible, providing a full-time co-teaching model or have multiple teachers in one classroom. Despite this inclination to team teaching in early childhood, preschool teachers still can face difficulties in collaborating with special education teachers. If collaboration is necessary, it is crucial to discover what obstacles remain for teachers and administrators and what better ways exist to help teachers work better together across the fields. How can educators create inclusion opportunities to provide better environments for children with and without special needs? In the next sections, I will review studies about collaboration, followed by the current trend in early childhood education including both general and special education fields.
Collaboration in the Context of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood inclusive classrooms are situated in the context of the overall early childhood education. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the context of general education field as well as the special education perspectives. In this section, I discuss general ideas of collaboration in early childhood settings that can apply to inclusive settings.

Definitions of Collaboration

Collaboration is a relationship between individuals, groups, and organizations in which they work together toward shared goals. Collaboration is an intellectual dynamic of joint efforts and themes of connection, fusion, transformation, conflict, and separation that energize joint connections (John-Steiner, 2000). Collaboration is often compared to coordination and cooperation. Kagan (1991) distinguishes collaboration from cooperation and coordination by emphasizing that collaboration requires more complex organizational and inter-organizational structures in which “resources, power, and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals” (p. 3). Collaboration does not simply mean to work together but rather to work together “to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organization independently” (Kagan, 1991, p. 3). John-Steiner (2000) similarly claims that actors of collaboration should be able to see their collaboration expand the existing possibilities in individuals and organizations. Naturally, John-Steiner (2000) asserts that one of the driving forces of creative partnership is “complementarity,” (p. 7) or mutual contribution.
Because of the collective nature of collaboration, Kraus (1980) defines collaboration in organizations as an alternative value system opposed to the Western hierarchical value system.

Collaboration is a cooperative venture based on shared power and authority. It is nonhierarchical in nature. It assumes power based on a knowledge or expertise as opposed to power based on role or role function. (Kraus, 1980, p. 19)

Kraus (1980) also uses the phrase “shared power and authority” in his definition. By sharing power and authority, the relationship between members is fluid and democratic as decisions are made collectively.

While Kagan (1991) is more focused on structures of collaboration, John-Steiner (2000) emphasizes the individual and dynamic aspects of collaboration. She characterizes collaboration as thriving on a diversity of perspectives and on constructive dialogues between individuals negotiating their differences while creating a shared voice and vision. In her view, collaboration is not static but rather a dynamic process that requires creativity to construct the new context for collaborative activities.

Organizational and Relational Aspects of Collaboration

To understand the collaborative process, I will summarize the stages of collaboration from two different perspectives: structural and organizational aspects of collaboration and relational and personal aspects of collaboration. While collaboration is a general concept in various fields and organizations, this section discusses stages of collaboration in the early childhood education context.

“Formation” is the initial stage in which potential members articulate a vision to pursue in their future collaborative work. These first members may be conceptual initiators, or they may have shared a vision from the beginning of the collaborative work. Members recruit or identify other members to participate in their collaborative project.

“Conceptualization” is the stage in which members formally adapt a policy statement and objectives; in other words, they identify a common purpose or interpretation of the future and agree on a path to achieve it (Gray, 1985; Trist, 1983). At this stage, they select a decision-making model and develop an administrative structure for future inter-agency activities.

“Development” is the stage in which members move from philosophy to practice and then proceed further to the creation of permanent structures. Member agencies usually need to accommodate partially conflicting interests to prepare for implementation of the new project. In the “implementation” stage, members of the collaborative project begin their actions, or the actual execution of the vision they had in the “formation” stage.
“Evaluation” is a continuous phase of collaboration and occurs throughout the four stages above. Brewer and deLeon (1983 cited in Kagan, 1991) discuss evaluation as incorporating four dimensions: 1) effectiveness, or the relationship between goals and actual results; 2) equity; 3) adequacy of the efforts to determine if sufficient resources were delivered; and 4) efficiency. As a result of “evaluation,” “termination” of the project may happen. This would be the end of collaboration that Kagan (1991) explains as either because the collaboration was successful and there is no more need for it or because the collaboration failed or had no more benefits.

Kuneshm and Farley (1993) explain collaboration from different perspectives in relation to school settings. They propose guidelines to facilitate overall collaborative work such as involvement of all key players, visionary leadership with a willingness to take risks and an openness to change, an established shared vision of progress and outcomes, ownership at all levels, a commitment to change at all organizational levels of member agencies, and changes in institution. They suggest that disagreement among members needs to be recognized as a part of the process in decision-making and members need to deal with conflict constructively. They also suggest that the possibility of institutionalized changes such as mandated rules and sources of funds shape the way member agencies collaborate with each other. In sum, flexibility or fluidity may be the key to creating the possibility for change. Members of the system under collaboration have to be flexible to respond to both external and internal forces and challenges because “flexibility permits participants to react to shifting boundaries among themselves and changing internal structures and role assignments” (Kagan, 1991, p. 25).
Relational and Personal Aspects. Even when collaboration may happen in the organizational levels, it is the individual members who must be flexible, ready to accept plural values (Krauss, 1980), and creative in their cooperation (John-Steiner, 2000; Krauss, 1980). Without examining individual and relational factors, the collaboration process cannot be fully understood as Kuneshm and Farley (1993) discuss:

…change begins with individuals, not institutions. Agency representatives must be allowed to take time from routine responsibilities to meet and interact with each other so that trust and respect on an individual level can be generated. It is through personal interactions that the trusting relationships across agencies that sustain the growing pains associated with systemic change are nurtured. (Kuneshm & Farley, 1993, p. 5)

In this respect, John-Steiner’s analysis on collaboration provides more critical aspects of collaboration. Through her case studies in different collaborations in a variety of areas, she sees the collaboration process as a change and learning process. In any collaboration, individuals engage in new activities with partners and “learn from the consequences of their actions and from their partners” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 188). Her study of collaboration supports the following claims:

Productive interdependence is a critical resource for expanding the self throughout the life span. It calls for reconsidering theories that limit development to a progression of stages and to biologically preprogrammed capabilities….the social sources of development, mutuality, and the generative tension between cultural-historical processes and individual functioning. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 191)

John-Steiner (2000) describes different patterns of collaboration in terms of roles, values, and working methods. The four patterns discussed in her “Creative Collaboration” are distributed collaboration, complementary collaboration, family collaboration, and integrative collaboration. These four patterns are sequential as collaboration becomes more intimate with quality relationships.
Distributed collaboration may take place in a variety of settings from casual to organized contexts; participants are linked by similar interests and may develop long-lasting partnerships. Complementary collaboration is characterized by “a division of labor based on complementary expertise, disciplinary knowledge, roles, and temperament” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 198). In this kind of collaboration, John-Steiner found mutual appropriation, or the stretching of human possibilities through the collaborative partners’ shared experiences, to sustain collaborative endeavors. Family collaboration is characterized by “a mode of interaction in which roles are flexible or may change over time” and members are more aware of their common vision and have a sense of belonging. Members are confronted by differences, which may not be resolved or sometimes facilitate them to integrate their expertise. Integrative collaboration requires “a prolonged period of committed activity.” Partnerships “thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and shared vision . . . Integrative partnerships are motivated by the desire to transform existing knowledge, thought styles, or artistic approaches into new visions” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 203). Using cultural-historical perspectives, John-Steiner (2000) provides a lens to see collaboration as occurring through individuals rather than institutions. Changes in individual members of a collaboration and relationships between individuals are essential for successful collaboration. These changes need to be investigated in the actual context in which a collaborative project is being created. I will discuss further cultural-historical perspectives in a later section.

Meanwhile, understanding context is also important to understanding the collaboration process. In the field of early childhood education, inclusion of children with
special needs is not the only driving force to collaborate. Therefore, it is critical to understand the organizational and political context when we think about collaboration in early childhood education. I devote the next section to a brief summary of the broader context of early childhood education before I discuss the more specific idea of collaboration in the context of early childhood education.

**Fragmentation of Childcare and Educational Services**

This summary includes historical background for multiple sectors serving children from birth to age five and the current trend toward building a bridge across these sectors. There are different sectors serving children from birth to age five. These institutions include childcare in both center-based and home-based centers, Head Start, public schools, private preschools, and other publicly-funded special education programs. In the 1960s, to aid childcare needs, the Social Security Amendments of 1935 and federal and state governments began to subsidize family expenses for childcare through tax credits and deductions to respond to the relatively new needs of childcare because of the increase of female labor in the market. Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the number of private early education schools for upper-middle class families. Public education sectors provided preschool education programs through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL89-10) in many states, including 34 states and the District of Columbia by the year 2000 (Gallagher, Clifford, & Maxwell, 2004).
Head Start was established as a summer program for disadvantaged children aged 3 to 4 in 1964, and later became a permanent program (Zigler, Kagan, & Hall, 1996). Sometimes regulations and guidelines for one sector divide key players. For example, even though initially public school systems had an interest in operating Head Start programs, the 1970 Guidelines for Head Start led several public school systems to withdraw because the guidelines legitimized the role of parents in hiring Head Start staff and in grant applications (Kuntz, 1998). Public schools could not accommodate these kinds of roles within their systems. As Powell (2000) reports, Head Start currently serves young children and their families as the largest federal early childhood program. In addition to these systems, children with special needs take different paths from age 0 to 6 (Morrison & Sainato, 2001).

Although they shared the same interest in enriching young children’s lives, these sectors were separated by the different emphases and different legal requirements. Today each sector in early childhood education has its own regulations, standards, and professional organizations; for example, the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for childcare and Title I institutions, the Division of Early Childhood: Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) for special education programs, and the National Head Start Association.

These sectors are the three organizational contexts for inclusive classrooms, as classified by Odom and Bailey (2001): community-based programs, Head Start programs, and public school programs. Community-based programs include private or non-profit childcare and preschool programs operating in the community. Public school programs
include programs for children at risk, Head Start sponsored by public schools, and tuition-based programs. Depending on where children with special needs live, they are likely to receive qualitatively different inclusion experiences (Odom & Bailey, 2001, p. 255). Institutions that implement special education programs vary in terms of the physical and social ecology in the classroom. However, Odom & Bailey (2001) point out that how the variation of classroom ecology across organizational contexts affects child behavior and development has not yet been thoroughly examined. We can assume that the practice of teachers would be also affected by organizational contexts as a mediating variable in child behavior and development.

A source of variation in classroom ecology is the requirements for the teachers of each sector because of the history of accommodating family needs. To provide affordable childcare for diverse families, the childcare sector has more basic requirements for their teachers. Because Head Start is a program that attempts to empower families, it hires parents and people in the community. This system prevents Head Start from raising its requirements to work for the program (Greenberg, 1998). However, lower educational requirements naturally result in differential salaries and numbers of highly qualified educators, according to Kagan, et al. (2000). This also happens between preschool and elementary school systems because highly qualified teachers tend to seek positions with higher salaries. Additionally, different teacher credentials can become obstacles to inclusive practices in which teachers in different sectors collaborate in the same classroom.
These fragmentations in early childhood services cause difficulties for families of young children and sometimes prevent access to available services. In order to find available programs, parents may make phone calls and trips to different offices around the area. In the 1970s, isolated communities throughout the nation sought to make more coherent arrangements through the development of information and referral systems (I&Rs) (Kagan, 1991). For parents, these systems served as an initial point of entry to the child-care system, and for care providers, they served as a resource by providing staff training, database, and technical assistance.

After referral systems became available, the early childhood field demanded more cohesive or seamless services for young children to provide higher quality educational programs (Guranick, 2001; Morrison & Sainato, 2001; Kantor, Fernie, Scott, & O’Brien, 2000). High quality service systems include the components that Gallagher, Clifford, and Maxwell (2004) described, such as information and support, universal screening, continuum of high-quality services, competent personnel, appropriate curriculums, constructive learning environments, and adequate financing. In response to this higher demand for high quality early childhood education, at local levels different sectors began to work together in order to allocate resources and share their expertise (Kagan, et al., 2000; Paulsell, Cohen, Stieglitz, Lurie-Hurvitz, Fenichel, & Kisker, 2002; Schilder, Kiron, & Elliot, 2003). This trend is supported by the rationale and benefits of collaboration summarized by Kagan (1991) as “alleviating scarcity of resources, expanding the narrowness of problem conceptualization, improving inadequacies inhuman service delivery, and achieving organizational reform” (p. 9). Thus, fragmentations in early care
and education demand collaboration among different sectors as the legislative drive of inclusion.

**Mediating Variables of Collaboration in Early Childhood Education**

Literature suggests mediating and possibly confounding variables that constitute collaboration after it is formed between different organizations. Members of collaboration come from different organizations; that is, they have differences that they need to identify in order to sustain their collaborative relationship.

Gallagher et al. (2004) and Gallagher and Clifford (2000) call attention to potential barriers of seamless service deliveries. They list institutional, psychological, sociological, economic, and geographical barriers, as well as pedagogical and philosophical. For example, Head Start emphasizes health issues and parental influence, the Title I programs emphasize academic elements, and people who work with children with special needs emphasize individualized programs. These differences can contribute to barriers, as Gallaher et al. (2004) noted, because teachers are accustomed to carrying out their jobs in certain ways. Without a powerful reason to change, teachers cannot overcome the resistance to change (Gallagher et al., 2004).

One of the powerful reasons for change may be goals or a shared vision (Kagan, 1991; John-Steiner, 2000). From Kagan’s (1991) study about Head Start, she suggests that the goals of collaboration need to be clear and shared among collaborators. Nonprofit and public-sector organizations such as Head Start are “subservient to a board of directors and/or governmental guidelines” (Kagan, 1991, p.19). Therefore, they are often restricted
from making new choices in terms of goals and strategies. Their partners need to understand limitations as the nature of any organization and articulate feasible goals and visions that accommodate the partners’ joint interests and passions.

Another reason to seek change may be a *scarcity of resources*. Although the *scarcity of resources* is one of the motivators for collaboration, it is also crucial to identify and reallocate existing resources (Kagan, 1991; Krauss, 1980). Collaboration is not always a means of creating new resources, rather a new means of coping with resource scarcity. Resources can be monetary, human, space, knowledge, and expertise. Kagan (1991) summarizes ways to share resources and to change the ways from informal or person-dependent spontaneous resource sharing to more structured and formalized organizational relationship, which may eventually become consolidation between organizations. Related to resource sharing, John-Steiner (2000) claims *productive interdependence* is a critical resource, using the example of Chamber groups as a metaphor. In Chamber groups “individual differences provide depth to a performing group committed to a shared purpose: they are jointly nourished by the great music written for ensembles” (p. 191). In this sense, individual differences can serve as a resource for each other and for the collaboration. This contrasts to the teacher’s resistance that Gallagher et al. (2004) discuss because differences between members of a collaboration can be both obstacles and resources. The different ways that general and special education teachers teach can be separating variables as well as mediating resources for their collaboration.
Collaborators also need to negotiate *power and authority* (Kagan, 1991; Krauss, 1980). Collaborators have to find a balance of power among them in terms of who does what, who makes what decisions, and who controls what. Usually, initial voluntary collaborators hold power because they select participants and “shape the identity of the group and choose the goals and strategies by which the collaboration will function” (Kagan, 1991, p. 21). Power may come from expertise about an issue at hand and from the previous connections and experience relating to public policy processes. Power may also come from available funding at hand.

Meanwhile, collaborative participants will hold different degrees of power. Power diffusion, not a hierarchical style of control, is ideal for a collaborative relationship (Kagan, 1991; Kraus, 1980). In this ideal situation, participants clearly take control over the activities in which they have expertise, but there will be no contribution that is better than another’s and participants have equal authority. In other words, members respect each others’ contributions and treat each other as equal partners. Leadership can be rotated or shared so that no single agency or individual will dominate the collaboration.

On the other hand, not all collaboration is based on equal power distribution. As Bartunek (2003) suggests, stakeholders’ relationships may be a key construct in collaboration dynamics.

Kagan (1991) also discusses how to achieve such power diffusion in real collaboration. She lists the division of tasks, the inclusion of people who take actions into the decision-making process, and the sharing of information. Across this list, trust is also a key component in collaborative relationships. No matter how important the roles
leaders may take are, trust between agencies and members needs to exist in a collaborative relationship. John-Steiner (2000) also suggests that a collaborative process requires “trust and confidence” or “the lowering of the boundaries of the self” (p. 190). Partners of collaboration need to learn to be vulnerable, which must be based on mutual trust that promotes confidence in working together. Trust also affects power distribution and shared authority, as well as flexibility.

*Flexibility* in partner organizations and individual members of collaboration is another mediating variable for successful collaboration. Kraus (1980) also calls this concept “fluidity” and describes it as the ability to be “adaptable and flexible.” Flexibility arises “in response to both external and internal forces, characteristics of an uncertain environment where new structures are being created and old ones are modified” (Kagan, 1991, p. 25). The collaboration process is also a process of adaptation to the newly created situation. Changes are inherent to collaboration, and may mean structural changes within agency as well as across agencies. With flexibility, participants in collaboration can “react to shifting boundaries among themselves and changing internal structures and role assignments” (Kagan, 1991, p. 25). Flexibility is also an ability to think creatively apart from the old ways members used when they worked solely within their own sector. At the same time, flexibility may be affected by other mediating variables stated above. For example, teachers in an inclusive classroom cannot be flexible if they are still negotiating power and resources without agreement.
Needs to Examine Variables Promoting Teacher Collaboration

The previous section discussed mediating and confounding variables such as goals, shared vision, resources, productive interdependence, power and authority, trust, and flexibility. It is necessary to examine how these variables affect teacher collaboration in practice, especially in the current literature of early childhood education.

Several studies have examined organizational collaborations (Kagan, 1991; Kagan, Verzaro-O’Briedn, Kim, & Formica, 2000; Paulsell, Cohen, Stieglitz, Lurie-Hurvitz, Fenichel, & Kisker, 2002). They utilized telephone interviews, focus groups, and surveys to study collaborations in administrative levels focusing on organizational features of collaboration; however, collaboration occurs between people either in administrative or practical levels, and people collaborate through small everyday events of decision-making. Especially for educational settings, the most important element is the classroom experience and its effect on the children. Therefore, it is necessary to have more study of the practical and relational issues in contrast to the organizational issues in collaboration. Additionally, the literature does not fully discuss the ways that the mediating variables I listed above affect teacher collaborations between general and special education teachers in the co-teaching model, and if there may be other variables at the practice level.
Conceptual Framework to Understand the Context of Collaboration

Cultural-Historical Perspectives and Multilayered Context

As I have previously explained, inclusive practices and classrooms are situated in social, historical, and political contexts. Cultural-historical theories originate in work by Vygotsky (1986, 1978, 1962), and provide a framework to understand socially situated activities and the learning process. Therefore, cultural-historical perspectives should provide a conceptual framework to fully understand the concept of collaboration between general and special education teachers in the practical setting in terms of both organizational and relational aspects as well as complex and contextualized processes.

By choosing this perspective, I have also made an epistemological choice, a choice of world view. The world we live in has been constructed and changes socially and historically over time, and how we live is deeply embedded in the world (Cole, 1996; Cole, 1995; Graue & Walsh, 1998; Werstch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995).

A context is a culturally and historically situated place and time, a specific here and now….. The context is the world as realized through interaction and the most immediate frame of reference of mutually engaged actors. (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 9)

A local context is intertwined within many larger nested and overlapping contexts (Graue & Walsh, 1998). The practice in educational settings is considered to be activities embedded in the context of the classroom nested in the larger social and cultural contexts, such as the buildings, the community, and the society. In addition, activities in the classroom are constructed by the members of the context based on the cultural practices that have been constructed by the previous members or generations. For example, the practice in a classroom is an activity of teachers and children with their own culture and
ontological history. To understand the activities and the agents of the activities, it is crucial to understand the relationship between different contexts.

In this section, I will discuss theories of the relationship between individuals and the context from cultural-historical perspectives, and how individuals’ agencies develop from the interactions with the context.

**Individual Development and Cultural Contexts**

Collaboration is a process of learning about partners and oneself. John-Steiner (2000) considers a long-term collaboration to be “a mirror for each partner,” or “a chance to understand one’s habits, styles, working methods, and beliefs through comparison and contrast with one’s collaboration” (p. 189). Collaboration partners learn from each other in the collaborative context that they create, and by doing so, they build trust and relationships to find a way to distribute resources and power and to create a shared vision.

In order to discuss the intertwined relationship between the individuals and the context, I will begin with individual’s development related to the context embedded in time and space.

Scholars who follow Vygotsky’s perspective emphasize the interrelated roles of the individual and the social world in microgenetic, ontogenetic, sociocultural, and phylogenetic development (Scriber, 1985; Wersch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995). These include “the individual and the environment together in successively broader time frames” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 140). Cole (1996) describes how a child experiences multiple timelines through interactions with parents and the present environment. This timeline
includes geological time, phylogeny, cultural history, ontogeny of parents, ontogeny of the child, and microgenesis. For example, parents raise the child in the present with the memory of their own past and the imagination of their own future, as the child also lives his/her own ontological timeline. Human beings live within “palpable constraints” transformed from “future structure from the past” (Cole, 1996, p. 183).

In cultural-historical perspectives, development and change are considered to be a part of a spiral and recursive process, not a linear sequence of events. Individuals learn through participation in cultural activities in which personal and interpersonal actions take place (Rogoff, 1995). When children develop and learn from social interactions, children also contribute and change the social interactions. John-Steiner (2000) rephrases this learning process in the context of collaboration: “human beings who are engaged in new, partnered activities learn from the consequences of their actions and from their partners” (p. 188).

In Corsaro’s (1997) words, children (or humans) “strive to make sense of their culture and to participate in it” and they come to “collectively produce their own peer worlds and cultures” (p. 24). This interpretive reproduction is presented as a spiral web, or the orb web model in his work. The center of the web is the family of origin, and children (humans) encounter different institutional fields such as educational, family, community, economic, religious, cultural, political, and occupational fields. He utilizes this model to describe the collective reproduction of peer cultures and how those peer cultures stay within the children and weave into later experiences. Corsaro (1997) further discusses that individual development occurs within this collective reproduction of peer
culture, which contributes to the wider adult culture: “Individual development is embedded in the collective production of a series of peer cultures which in turn contribute to reproduction and change in the wider adult society or culture” (Corsaro, 1997, p. 26).

In other words, individual development happens in the local context that mirrors the wider society or culture. Although Corsaro and Rogoff focus on children, their views can also be applied to lives of adults. And it should be noted that they support collective formation of cultural contexts. Next, I will discuss the relationship between individuals’ agencies and context, as well as the collective or social nature of the context.

**Context and Individual Agencies**

Vygotsky’s term *intersubjectivity*, or how humans come to know each other’s minds, is another key concept that helps us understand human development as a learning process. As a fundamental assumption, Bruner (1996) argues the subjectivity in ‘objective’ reality:

> …cultural psychology does not rule out ‘reality’ in any ontological sense. It argues (on epistemological grounds) that ‘external’ or ‘objective’ reality can only be known by the properties of mind and they symbol systems on which mind relies. (Bruner, 1996, p. 12)

Humans develop and learn from the environment as they perceive the external world by using internal references already possessed. When humans interact and learn from each other, such as a teacher and a child do, they have to have *intersubjectivity* or shared symbol systems so that their ‘external reality’ is shared. In relation to Vygotsky, if we consider development to be “heuristic,” it directs attention to two processes:

1. the genesis of the products (improvisations) that come from the meeting of persons,
cultural resources, and situations in practice; and (2) the appropriation of these products as heuristics for the next moment of activity. To the extent that these productions are used again and again, they can become tools of agency or self-control and change. (Holland et al., 1998, p.40, underlining mine)

In other words, each individual learns from the environment and internalizes the cultural tools for later use to actively participate in the external world.

From the other side of this dynamic, the context or the world people live in can be explained as the space humans construct through intersubjectivity or a shared understanding among individuals. Bourdieu (1990) refers to this context as the habitus, a product of history, which produces individual and collective practices that will become a part of history in accordance to the schemes generated by the history by then. The habitus is constituted in practice through manifestations of external necessity, such as division of labor between genders, household objects, modes of consumption, and parent-child relations, inclusively. In turn, the habitus determines the characters of the existing structures and becomes the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences.

Similarly, Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) emphasize the social nature of the context and propose the notion of “figured worlds,” which describes a “socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52). Figured worlds are “contrived interpretations or imaginations that mediate behavior and so” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 53). They form the perspective of heuristic development and inform norms for members. Again, members of a context collectively form a culture and participate in cultural practices.
Both *habitus* and *figured worlds* refer to a space in which members construct intersubjectivity and act according to the norms in this space. Within the *habitus* or *figured worlds*, identities are also “socially constructed and shaped by participation in the communities and cultures in which the individual lives” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 6).

Holland et al. (1998) describe “situatedness” of identity in collectively formed activities: “The ‘identities’ that concern us are ones that trace out participation, especially our agency, in socially produced, culturally constructed activities . . . what we call figured worlds…” (p. 40-41). Although there is similarity between *habitus* and *figured worlds*, I will utilize the notion of *figured worlds* to discuss the context of collaboration in this dissertation because the phrase *figured worlds* implies the local and temporal nature of the context, while *habitus* more accurately captures larger societal contexts.

When individuals move across different contexts or *figured worlds*, they face a drastic change in a short period of time. They bring their own internalized cultural norms and practice to the new context, and they encounter familiar activities with new or unfamiliar meanings. Then an individual needs to construct *intersubjectivity* with new people and new contexts; in other words, he or she needs to learn the new culture and cultural tools and situate his or her identity in the context of the moment. Ideally, new *intersubjectivity* in shared *figured worlds* would validate each one’s previous experience. This way, shared figured worlds are familiar enough for an individual to participate in and to use one’s previous experience to contribute to the new figured world for him or her.
When different educational sectors collaborate, they first act on their sector’s figured worlds and use those as cultural references to make judgment and decisions; however, in order to construct collaborative relationships, partnering sectors need to create a new space for the shared figured world with norms and cultural tools upon which partners agree. When general and special education teachers collaborate in one classroom, each one brings his or her cultural norms and practices into the new shared space of the classroom. These teachers refer to their old figured worlds to make sense of the current situation first, and this may be a source of teachers’ resistance to new norms, as noted by Galaher et al. (2004). However, once they begin to collaborate, their classroom becomes a new context in which teachers need to construct their shared culture or a shared figured world. In this shared figured world, for instance, teachers create their shared vision and goals. As they do so, individual teachers need to appropriate or adapt their identities to fit into the new context. This adaptation sustains the newly constructed figured world. Teachers need to be able to take new roles and new ways of thinking situated in the newly constructed figured world. In this sense, development of collaboration is parallel to development and change in individuals.

In turn, individual teachers’ practices reflect the wider contexts of society and the field. By looking at the inclusive practice from both general and special education teachers, this dissertation aims to examine the social and cultural environment surrounding the classroom because an activity or event echoes dynamics between “the individuals and the social and cultural environments in which each is inherently involved in the others’ definition” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 140).
Summary

The literature suggests that inclusive environments provide socially rich learning experiences to all children. Politics and legislations have been one of the guiding forces toward collaborative work in inclusive early childhood education. When different institutions or service providers come together to provide a cohesive service to children with and without special needs, collaborators encounter various challenges at different levels. Institutions and individuals partake in collaboration bringing with them their own institutions' philosophies and histories, as well as their personal experiences. When general and special education teachers teach together in the same classroom, they learn about each other’s differences and commonalities and negotiate to construct a new classroom culture that will work for all parties.

What happens in this complex process of collaboration? Members of the team may not be equal partners. How can teachers construct their own co-teaching styles in their classrooms? Collaboration does not come easily, according to the studies reviewed in this chapter. Teachers come in with their own ideas about inclusion, about the other parties, and about the other parties’ teaching styles. To provide adequate professional development training, it is critical to know the factors that create the context of collaboration on both organizational and relational levels.

For this purpose, I will apply cultural-historical perspectives to understand the context and the process of collaboration as a learning process for a change. Collaboration in the classroom is a collective activity in which members construct a classroom culture and work toward shared goals. On the other hand, members of a collaboration are
individuals with different personal histories and experience, and members have to learn and construct new ways to teach. These members’ individualities are also intertwined into the classroom culture. In essence, collaboration in the classroom consists of complex and multilayered activities.

This literature review validates the aim of this dissertation, which is to describe factors and lives of teachers in an inclusive classroom with a partnership across multiple agencies. As such, we will have a better understanding of the mediating variables for the collaboration in inclusive early childhood programs.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the methodological framework that has guided this dissertation’s data collection and analyses. I describe my overall qualitative approach framework and provide an overview of my data collection. Then, I explain the context of the research, including the research site and participants, and express the data collection process and analysis. I include an extensive section, entitled “my roles as a researcher,” to communicate the changes of my roles and relationships with participants. Finally, I discuss the issues of trustworthiness in the data or validity of the data obtained in this dissertation.

Methodological Framework

The choice of methodological framework determines my epistemology and shapes the approach I use to collect and analyze the data. Moreover, it determines how I make sense of the world of those who are studied (Hatch, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b). I chose to apply a qualitative approach because my research questions are
grounded in cultural-historical perspectives. I assume that the collaboration process in the educational setting is socially, culturally, and politically situated in the context grounded in the history of the individuals and organizations (Cole, 1996; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b). In order to understand the process of collaboration, this study utilizes an ethnographic and interpretive method of data collection and analysis that is appropriate for the goals of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Erickson, 1986; Spradley, 1980). Ethnographic methodology is also characterized as qualitative, participant observational, case study, phenomenological constructivist, or interpretive approach (Erickson, 1986). In this dissertation, I use the ethnographic approach as an umbrella term that includes participant observation, case study, and interpretive methodologies.

Research on Education and Ethnographic Approach

Ethnographic and interpretive research on classroom teaching plays a significant role because of its central concerns, as Erickson (1986) argues:

(a) the nature of classrooms as socially and culturally organized environments for learning,
(b) the nature of teaching as one, but only one, aspect of the reflective learning environment, and (c) the nature (and content) of the meaning-perspectives of teacher and learner as intrinsic to the educational process (Erickson, 1986, p. 120).

In research on education, researchers interact with the people and the environment in the field in which they conduct research. The degree and the nature of the interaction may differ depending on the goals of the study; however, any research cannot be completely separated from the field no matter what method researchers use. Especially in an interpretive approach, it is crucial to examine the researchers' subjectivity, which
shapes researchers’ interpretation of the local meaning in their social context because the research process itself is embedded in the social and cultural context of the setting. As Hymes (1982) states, “our ability to learn ethnographically is an extension of what every human must do, that is, learn the meanings, norms, patterns of a way of life” (p. 29). The researcher is a data-gathering instrument, and human capacity is necessary to make sense of what is studied (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Spradley, 1979).

On the other hand, the experience of interpretive researchers will never be one of complete insider nor outsider. Researchers’ experience is always a dual one, "always the inquirer experiencing the experience and also being a part of the experience itself" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 81). Spradley (1980) also considers researchers as "being both insider and outsider simultaneously" and/or "alternating between the insider and outsider experience" (p. 57). The aim of researchers is to understand and make meaning of experience. Researchers need to seek this aim while recognizing that their meaning-making cannot be exactly the same as the ones that are experienced by the participants, since researchers come into the field with their own knowledge and previous experience and interpret them in the field based on those.

Researchers’ inability to be complete insiders or outsiders confers distinct advantages upon the researchers. Because the researchers will always be distant from the locals’ points of view, they can provide valuable perspectives from outsider perspectives and provide rich descriptions of the occurring events. In this sense, interpretive researchers may contribute to the participants by providing different views of the
activities occurring in their classroom. These different views allow participants to perceive their daily lives differently from their own understanding.

Relationship between Researchers and Participants

In any research, the ethical relationship between researchers and participants is a concern. When researchers take qualitative approaches in the study of school settings, they may interact with the settings in different ways than those researchers who use experimental methods: “Ethnographers do not merely make observations, they also participate” (Spradley, 1980, p. 51).

Researchers’ roles vary depending on the social situations. Some activities may not allow researchers' active involvement, while other activities require researchers’ engagement. That is often the case in school contexts (Erickson, 1986). Through long-term research, relationships between participants and researchers develop and change the way they may interact and participate in the context (Spradley, 1980). The types of roles that are negotiated between researchers and participants vary according to the needs and context of the classroom. Frequently, researchers encounter “situations that hold little opportunity for participation; they must then depend on observation alone and ethnographic interviews" (Spradley, 1980, p. 51).

Whatever types of participation that researchers take, Denzin and Lincoln (2000b; 1985) propose the notion of researchers as a research tool and the need to engage in introspection to fully understand experiences that researchers have. Therefore, it is critical to keep a record of what they see and experience (Hatch, 2002; Spradley, 1980).
In other words, "reflexivity" in the research process is critical for an interpretive study. Lincoln and Guba (2000) define reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 183). Further, "it is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.183). As noted in the above, roles and dispositions of researchers will constantly change. Researchers need to include who he/she is as a researcher in relation to the participants and the social and cultural context in their field notes.

The Research Site and Participants

The Research Site

The target classroom is in the Educational Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF), located in a fast-growing Midwestern city (population approximately 1,070,000). ECYCF is next to the Metropolitan International Airport and serves a broad area of the city. The ECYCF building with 35000 square ft. was completed in August 2001 on the property of the County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) and houses 29 classrooms, which are divided into five neighborhood areas to serve approximately 700 children from birth to age eight. (See Appendix A: the ECYCF building map.)

This building is operated by a partnership among MRDD, Metro Head Start, Council Head Start, the Urban Public Schools (UPS), and YWCA childcare. This partnership is supported by other institutions such as Action for Children; County Job and
Family Services; Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health; State Department of Education; and area universities. Each institution in the partnership has its own system and service centers or schools in the area.

The ECYCF building provides comprehensive services as a one-stop location to serve the different needs of young children and their families. The building has various specialists and professionals available on the premises, including vision specialists, audiologists, psychologists, social workers, behavior management staff, a nurse, a dentist, speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, adaptive physical educators, art studio teachers, and parent support staff. These specialists and professionals provide direct services to children and families and support classroom educators in their work within classrooms. The center also provides home-base programs and prenatal care programs. Fig. 3.1 shows an overview of the partnership in terms of the partner institutions and organizations.

As of May 2005, the ECYCF building had a total enrollment of 627, which included 362 children with MRDD, 55 with YWCA Childcare, 100 with Metro Head Start, 66 with Council Head Start, and 44 with UPS. The statistics of the children’s backgrounds, ethnicity, income-range of their families, and gender was not available because MRDD does not have demographic statistics. However, given the numbers of Head Start and the area that public school serves, I assume that at least 58% children were from lower socioeconomic background, excluding MRDD children from families with low socioeconomic status.
The total number of teachers was 82, which included 50 MRDD teachers, ten with daycare, six with Metro Head Start, ten with Council Head Start, and six with the Urban Public Schools. The MRDD had a director and three assistant directors to work directly with teachers. The Metro Head Start had one on-site manager/coordinator, and the Council Head Start had a center manager and a family coordinator. The YWCA had a center administrator and her assistant on site, and the UPS had a supervisor who was
responsible for multiple buildings within the public school system.

Statistics for their educational background, ethnicity, and years of work were not available from the building because some institutions in partnership did not have these kinds of statistics; however, through my observation with directors’ confirmation, most of Head Start and YWCA teachers were ethnic minorities. Also, there was only one male teacher in the building; he was with Council Head Start. The dentist was a male and there were males among supporting staff of MRDD.

Among the 29 teachers who participated in focus group interviews, the experience of the teachers varied from beginning teacher to 25 years of experience overall. The MRDD has many assistant teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

Besides classroom teachers, there were three art teachers, two applied physical education teachers, one dentist, one nurse, therapists, as well as supporting staff, cooks, and janitors, of which exact numbers were unavailable because therapists and supporting staff also work for other programs in MRDD, and they did not have numbers specific to the ECYCF building.

**Curriculum**

The partnership’s integrated or blended system meets different guidelines and regulations under multiple legislations required of each institution involving with the system. For Head Start, curriculum planning and practice must be aligned with Head Start Performance Standards and their outcome measures. For the public schools, there are the content standards and the district course of study. Teachers and specialists of the county's MRDD must be accountable to the IEP and IFSP goals created with parents under IDEA.
For the daycare program, teachers must follow the rules and regulations of the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. All of the groups adhere to the Developmentally Appropriate Practices by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1987). The Partnership’s efforts to create a blended system include provisions of safety, food, hygiene, and transportation, as well as their curriculum.

The center utilizes the "Integrated Curriculum and Program Model" as an umbrella to include curriculum from different institutions and multiple disciplines. They consider this model to be flexible to children's developmental needs, interests, and abilities as well as to be respectful to the cultures of their families and teachers. Their teaching staff provides meaningful and relevant curriculum to all children in the community. In this model, teachers begin their planning by observing and assessing children and locating children's interests in play. Teachers plan to expand children’s interests providing a variety of activities and materials, which would provide experience for each child to grow and learn in various ways. Their model has been inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998) and the concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) (Bredekamp & Copple, 1987), a guiding philosophy in early childhood education.

**Target Classroom**

The target classroom, Room 701, was one of the several classrooms recommended by the directors for observation because they thought the classrooms were
representative of the building and the teachers had been open to research activities in their classrooms. First, the directors and I chose two classrooms to observe: one classroom with MRDD and UPS, and another with MRDD and a Council Head Start. I did not choose a childcare partnership because there was another graduate student working with them. After three months of weekly observations in each classroom, I decided to focus on only one target classroom mainly because the other classroom was expecting two teachers to take maternity leave. Once the target classroom was identified, consent forms were distributed to the teachers and parents so that I could obtain their consent.

Room 701 consisted of a maximum of 16 children and four teachers during my observations. Ten children and two teachers were affiliated to Head Start, while six children with special needs and two teachers were with MRDD. Although typically children with MRDD and Head Start have a transportation service from home to school, in this classroom parents were responsible for the transportation because it was a full-day program. Parents dropped off their children daily; therefore, the parents knew me in person.

While the Head Start program runs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. as a year-round program, MRDD runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from September to early June. Therefore, one Head Start teacher had an early shift from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and one Head Start teacher had a late shift from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The MRDD teachers worked from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., although they usually came earlier or stayed later than this time period.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 - 9:00</td>
<td>Head Start children start to arrive, Morning Activities</td>
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<td>9:00</td>
<td>MRDD children start the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:40</td>
<td>Breakfast, Brush Teeth, Books on the carpet</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:40 - 9:50</td>
<td>Meeting 1 (For Transition, Calendar, Attendance)</td>
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<td>9:50 - 10:15</td>
<td>APE</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
<td>Free Play</td>
<td>APE</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:20 - 10:35</td>
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<td>Free Play</td>
<td>(Meeting 2)</td>
<td>Free Play</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(Meeting 2)</td>
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<td>(Meeting 2)</td>
<td>Group Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:55 - 11:30</td>
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<td>Free Play</td>
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<td>Free Play</td>
<td>Free Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40 – 11:45</td>
<td>Clean-up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clean-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 - 12:00</td>
<td>Music &amp; Movement</td>
<td>Free Play</td>
<td>Art Group 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Music, Hand-washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 - 12:45</td>
<td>Transitional Quiet Play Time/Puzzles and Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:10 – 1:20</td>
<td>Drink, Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20 - 1:45</td>
<td>Potty, Story Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 – 2:00</td>
<td>Rest Time (Children typically start to sleep around 2:00 pm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Teachers’ work and meeting time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>MRDD Children dismissed (waking up, shoes on, cots away)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>Head Start Children waking up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20 - 4:40</td>
<td>Head Start Snack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:40 – 6:00</td>
<td>Free Play, Semi-structured Play, Motor Play, Library, Town Square</td>
<td>Free Play, Moving to the cots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Room Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Typical Daily/Weekly Schedule of Room 701

Table 3.1 shows their typical daily and weekly schedule. In addition to the four
teachers, other professionals involved with the children regularly. They had two applied physical education (APE) classes per week with an APE teacher, and one art class per week in the art room with an art teacher.

A speech therapist, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist provided both individual therapy sessions for children with special needs, as well as group sessions for the whole class. These sessions were implemented on a weekly basis but also varied from one to three times per week depending on the IEP for each child. A nurse visited the class daily to provide medications and any other necessary medical attention to the children with medical needs.

**Participants**

*The four teachers.* Demographic information of the four teachers and their characteristics are displayed in the Table 3.2. Amy and Trina were affiliated with Council Head Start, and Harmony and Pam were with MRDD. Their supervisors were Sue from Council Head Start and Mary Ann from MRDD. Both of these supervisors were African American women, and they visited the classroom occasionally and consulted with these four teachers as necessary.

*Children.* This is a multi-age classroom with children from ages three to five. Two children with MRDD and five children with Head Start stayed in the classroom for two years. In 2004-5, three out of five new children with Head Start were younger than three years old and were not yet potty trained when they came to the room. There were children
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Trina</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Pam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Council Head Start</td>
<td>Council Head Start</td>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>MRDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>Business administration for 12 years, Home-based daycare for 5 years, administrator of school-age program at YMCA for 7 years</td>
<td>Retail 2-3 years, Church-based volunteers</td>
<td>One year assistant and Summer Center in another center of MRDD, Substitute teacher</td>
<td>22 years full-time &amp; volunteer years with MRDD, 7 years exp. of inclusion at different sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Associate degree in pre-K</td>
<td>3+ years of college</td>
<td>M.Ed. in ECE with early intervention specialist certificate. BA in psychology</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character mentioned by herself or colleagues</td>
<td>“hard-worker”, “I’m feeling like I am a dictator or something…”</td>
<td>“librarian” “resource person”</td>
<td>“peace maker” (by directors)</td>
<td>“Organizer” “I may be a Mom figure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Mother of 3 teenage girls, military family moved around the country</td>
<td>From this area</td>
<td>From this area, from a family worked with MRDD</td>
<td>From a town/city just outside of this city, a mother of a boy with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: The four teachers in Room 701 in 2003-4, 2004-5 School Years
who had their older siblings in public school kindergarten classrooms in ECYCF, and children who had parents working for Head Start in the ECYCF building.

Table 3.3 to 3.6 shows numbers of children by gender, age, and ethnicity for MRDD and Head Start. All of children in MRDD had their IEP. Their special needs varied, and they had speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and medical attention either in the classroom or in sessions outside the classroom. Two Head Start children in 2004-05 received speech therapy outside of the classroom, although they did not have their IEP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Younger than 3</td>
<td>Age 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Number of Children in Room 701 by Gender and Age in School Year 2003-04
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year 2004-05</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Young 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Number of Children in Room 701 by Gender and Age in School Year 2004-05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year 2003-04</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th>Caucasians</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Number of Children in Room 701 by Ethnicity in School Year 2003-04
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year 2004-05</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th>Caucasians</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Latino, 1 mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6: Number of Children in Room 701 by Ethnicity in School Year 2004-05

*Members of the Partnership Meeting.* In ECYCF, decisions were made collaboratively at the monthly partnership meeting. At one of their partnership meetings, I explained the purpose of this study and obtained informed consent from the administrators in the building before entering the classroom.

Across the ECYCF partnership, Mary-Ann Lowe, the director of the Early Childhood Program in MRDD provided me access to her documents regarding the history of the partnership. Within MRDD, the other three assistant directors, Terry Mattox, Sherry Polk, and Beth Norman, were facilitators of the partnership collaboration at the practice level. In particular, Terry had worked with Mary-Ann closely for a long time as one of the original partnership founders. These four directors from MRDD participated in
focus interviews and were observed in their regular meetings and in naturally occurring incidents in the building.

Other interviewees from the partnership meeting members were Julie Woods (educational coordinator for the whole Metro Head Start), Dr. Amanda Bard (curriculum director of Council Head Start), Sue Clark (site manager at ECYCF from Council Head Start), Dr. Betty Smithies (early childhood education director of the Urban Public Schools), Rachel Kemple, and Daniel Fisher (faculty of the OSU), and Charles Keyes (professional facilitator for the partnership meeting). I will explain these people further as part of the data in Chapter 4, “Findings I.”

**Data Collection Process**

This study is a multilayered case study of an inclusive early childhood education center, which consists of at least three layers of collaboration, as shown in Fig. 3.2: leadership level, administrative level, and classroom practice level. The first layer dates back to the 1980s, and the second layer emerges from the new building in 2001, and the third layer of practice continuously develops in each classroom every year.

As the foundation of the center, the ECYCF partnership (the partnership in the community) consists of the leaders of the various community organizations. The administrative layer (the partnership in the building) is the partnership that ties together different institutions in the center. The third layer is the collaborative practice in the classroom (the partnership in the classroom) with teachers and professionals.

For each layer, I collected data from multiple sources, including documentation analysis;
participant observation of their activities, which included meetings and teaching practice; and individual and group interviews. This *triangulation* of data sources is an approach that tries to gather as close as possible the perspectives of the local participants and have robust data and interpretations of these perspectives. *Triangulation* is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) as a way to acquire multiple representations in order to gain understanding:

The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We can know a thing only through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b, p.5)
Denzin (1989) also distinguishes four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, and methodological triangulation. This dissertation triangulated data in terms of time and sources, as well as methodologically, by using multiple strategies of data collection. Stake (2000) also explains triangulation as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” and “also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen” (pp. 443-444). Throughout the data collection and analysis, collecting multiple voices and agencies has been the foundation for this study.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) also advise the consideration of sampling within the case by choosing different times and contexts. I visited the ECYCF building at different times and occasions until I found theoretical points on which I focused in the later period of my observations.

**Partnership in the Community and the Building**

**Semi-Structured Interview.** In 2002, I participated in a research group studying the history of the ECYCF partnership with two faculty members and three graduate students. We attended monthly partnership meetings in February, March, May, and June in 2002, and we conducted semi-structured interviews as a group with six key players of the partnership in May and June of 2002. These interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by one of the four graduate students. The two faculty members are also original members of the ECYCF partnership, and they were also interviewed informally.

Meetings were usually held in a conference room in the MRDD building
connected to the ECYCF. They also have a summer retreat every other year to construct their shared vision for the upcoming years, which I attended in 2004. I took field notes regarding issues discussed and the interactions of the participants. I also collected the meeting minutes and materials distributed in the meetings.

In September 2003, I returned to the building to observe their quarterly partnership meetings and their professional development workshops throughout the school year. From January to August 2004, I collected documents related to the development of the partnership since 1990. I was allowed to have access to their storage area, and I had permission to make copies of meeting minutes and letters in the process used to develop the plan for the ECYCF building.

**Partnership in the classroom**

During the course of my field work, I started with *descriptive* observations, "trying to get an overview of the social situation and what goes on there" (Spradley, 1980, p. 33). During this period, my field notes included anything that was happening in the classroom and the building. I attended as many building-wide events as I could in addition to the classroom observations. These included weekly staff meetings, Family Night, Curriculum Night, Zoo Day, horseback-riding, and professional development trainings. After recording and analyzing the initial data, I proceeded to make more *focused* observations on the practice in the target classroom and the relationships among the four teachers. Finally, after more analysis and repeated observations in the field, I conducted *selective* observations while I continued to make general descriptive
observations until the end of the study (Spradley, 1980, p. 33-34, p. 108).

The following chart (Fig. 3.3) describes the change of focus in my participant observation. First, I recorded everything that I could experience in the building and the classroom. As I identified patterns and specific classroom issues, I focused on specifics in my field notes. These included teachers’ role distributions, their movement within the classroom, how they attended children’s play and behavior issues, and their negotiations in the planning meetings. Finally, I shifted my observations to experience the building from the target teachers’ perspectives.

For the classroom observations, I recorded activities and events around Room 701 in my field notes. I also recorded informal conversations with each teacher. The topics included what I observed in the class and how the teachers viewed the same situations, personal issues, feelings at the moment, and reflections on the day.

Fig. 3.3: The Change of Focus in my Participant Observation
I was in the classroom at least once a week for 4-7 hours from February to June 2004 and from September to December 2004. During this time, I also collected planning materials they used and pictures of artifacts from play activities. As a Reggio-inspired program, the target classroom had documentation displays of on-going projects. I also recorded how teachers interpreted the children’s play.

From January to April, 2005, as my *selective observation* period (Spradley, 1980), I was in the classroom for 1-4 hours per week and I mainly observed the planning meetings. The teachers had weekly one-hour planning sessions during the children’s nap-time. They usually had two substitute teachers from MRDD, so that they could leave of the classroom. I attended 95% of the meetings throughout my observations. For the planning meetings, I only took field notes during the first five months. Beginning in September 2004, with the participants’ permission, I recorded the meetings and transcribed them. I also took field notes before and after the meeting conversations from the tape recordings, which included my informal interviews regarding the meetings on that day.

In addition, semi-structured individual interviews with the four teachers were conducted twice between May and June, 2004, and March and April, 2005. These interviews were important in order to gain the teachers’ own perspectives on the key incidents in my participant observations, i.e. member checks (Hatch, 2002). The first interview lasted one hour per person and the second was approximately 40 minutes per person. At the end of the research, I had a group interview with three teachers for 80 minutes total. Because one teacher resigned her position at the end of April, I could only
speak with the three remaining teachers together. At this interview, the teachers read about how they were introduced in my study and what pseudonyms I had given them. I also shared the summary of my findings, introduced in Chapter 5. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview questions are in Appendix C.

Following suggestions from Erickson (1986), I shared my findings at various points of my study informally and formally. Erickson states the value of dialogues between the researcher and those studied as “an opportunity to learn as well as providing those studied an opportunity to learn” (p. 156). In addition, this kind of dialogue can be a valued opportunity for the researcher. I shared my perspectives at planning meetings and in informal conversations. These conversations were recorded in my field notes or were tape recorded at the planning meetings. I also shared my findings in Chapter 4 and 5 with members of the partnerships and teachers in Room 701 for member check.

**Focus Group Interviews**

In April and May, 2005, focus group interviews were conducted with a curriculum advisor of the building for ten additional classrooms. These interviews were to obtain reference points to examine the data collected from the target classroom. Interviews were conducted in their own classrooms during their meeting time or lunch time for approximately one hour. Focus group interviews were not tape-recorded but I and the curriculum advisor took notes and we shared our notes later. The teachers were assured that the interviews would be examined and shared with others as collective data. All ten classrooms were with MRDD and one of the Head Start programs, and 29
teachers and three volunteers in total participated in focus group interviews (one teacher participated twice in different classrooms).

**Data Analysis Process**

In qualitative/interpretive research, data analysis is “not linear but rather cyclical and recursive, with findings from one analysis often leading to new questions and additional analysis” (Kantor, Miller, & Fernie, 1992, p. 188). In other words, the analysis process is never a separate stage from the data collection. The on-going analysis informs the data collection methodologically and theoretically, while collected data informs further data analysis. During the process of data collection and analysis, it is crucial to examine the relationship between the local and larger contexts. The data is recorded and constructed in and of the local context, “but those records cannot be interpreted without reference to their larger milieu” (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 10). Particularly for this study, it was an important process to find the interaction between the layers of contexts, the building and the single classroom, and to investigate this interaction as being embedded in the larger context of the current educational climate.

Therefore, data analysis in this dissertation has two distinct layers: one is the partnership history, and the other is the classroom collaboration. For each layer, the following data analysis had been conducted shown in Fig. 3.4.
Analytical Strategies

This study applies both inductive and deductive strategies. The systematic inductive analysis identifies emerging patterns in the data corpus, and deductive analysis applies emerging patterns to theorize possible explanations (Graue & Walsh, 1998), assertions (Erickson, 1986), or identification of themes.

Systematic analysis includes constant comparison between segments and codes, finding linkages, and re-reading the entire body of data. I also perceive Room 701 as “a tracer unit” of the larger system, the ECYCF partnership. A tracer unit allows researchers to both examine questions about the tracer unit itself and to illuminate the local and the
larger contexts that situate and constitute the tracer unit (Kantor, Elgas, & Fernie, 1993; Dantas, 1999; Kantor, 2005 personal communication). Dantas (1999) and Kantor (2005) explain a tracer unit with a metaphor of a medical tool, the radiographic dye: “Like the radiographic dye injected into the human body for imaging, the medical doctor can see the movement of the dye through the body and simultaneously examine the systems it passes through” (Dantas, 1999, p. 88). In other words, the target classroom is a mirror of the collaboration and the practice in the building. Events and activities happening in the target classroom are a reflection of the partnership. Therefore, the focus of analysis was on the target classroom with the analysis on its relationship to the bigger partnership within the entire building. Next, I will discuss the steps of my data analysis, although as I discussed above, this process is not linear but cyclical.

**Getting Familiar with the Data Corpus**

First, in the process of and after the data collection, I read and revisited my field notes and defined broad categories to organize the data. The data was catalogued with the computer software called N’Vivo (QSR), which is also used to record emerging patterns and themes and to organize the identified key events and activities for later references.

Identified activities include the planning meeting, assessment and documentation, projects based on the children’s interests, and assisting the children with special needs and at risk. Rogoff (1995) suggests the use of “activity” or “event” as the unit of analysis, which allows “a reformulation of the relation between the individual and the social and cultural environment in which each is inherently involved in the others’ definition”
By looking at the identified activities, my analysis seeks to find patterns in the intertwined relationship between individuals and the cultural environment.

Identification of Patterns and Major Themes across the Data

Spradley (1980) stated that “analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole. Analysis is a search for patterns” (p. 85).

Initial coding was done between June 2004 and August 2004 for the data collected before May, 2004, and I re-coded them with the later data after June, 2004. For the data that was audio-recorded at the meetings, I also examined conversational patterns regarding who talked about what and to whom, and how they reached agreement or allowed for disagreement.

Table 3.7 lists the codes and their numbers that I found in the data corpus from Room 701. Initially these codes were identified individually, and later grouped in the themes as a result of my thematic analysis. For each code, the number of appearances in the data corpus is presented in the column to right of the codes; however one appearance can have varied length and does not necessarily reflect the qualitative significance. “Project” refers to the exact themes or “thread of interests” in the ECYCF’s integrated curriculum. “Different views of children” refers to the discussions and actions of teachers that indicated their own views of children in terms of their development, needs, and personalities. “Relationship” theme relates to things affected or represented the relationship among teachers. “Feeling” refers to the emotional aspects of the relationship
among the four teachers. Because this theme had a strong influence on the discussions in the meetings, this remained as an independent theme rather than the sub-theme of relationship. “Topics discussed” is a list of issues discussed at the meetings or informal conversations between teachers. This theme reflects the interests of the teachers at the moment. “Personal beliefs” refers to the group of codes that relates to individuals’ beliefs about teaching and children. “Commitment” is a reflection of different perceptions regarding working styles, responsibilities, and ethics. “Appropriation” includes evidence that a teacher adjusted or not adjusted to the situation and factors that affected a teacher’s adjustment. The theme of “coordination” appeared most often. This includes organization and coordination between teachers as well as with other classrooms and specialists in the building. The codes in this theme represent the actual issues of coordination. “Communication patterns” contain the communication tools and the ways in which their conversations changed and ended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Codes</th>
<th>Num.</th>
<th>Name of Codes</th>
<th>Num.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Different views of children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Project</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Estefan</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s office play</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family ~ Baby</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Negative view of disability</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Views of children</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest (veggie experiment)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm ideas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 3.7: List of Codes and Number Appeared in Data Corpus of Room 701 (continues)
(Table 3.7: Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating each other as a team</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negativity about Tracey</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding partnership</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to last year together</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marginalized feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s just hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“not have [enough] time to do”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics discussed</th>
<th>Personal beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>Personal beliefs &amp; values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner Meeting</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domains</td>
<td>For children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Kindergarten readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next year (2005-6)</td>
<td>Oriented to outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House</td>
<td>Origin of personal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Peer model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIF day</td>
<td>Personal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaper/potty training</td>
<td>Reggio Emilia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in sheet</td>
<td>Student to square footage ratios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Activity</td>
<td>Anecdotal records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The letter</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone of voice/noise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late start of meetings</td>
<td>Adjustment and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being out of the room</td>
<td>Closed or turned-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Degree of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I didn’t know (lack of knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I want vs. giving up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination (classroom &amp; building)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Agreement/Shared view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily schedule</td>
<td>Discourse and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start thing</td>
<td>Idea Basket (communication tool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting time</td>
<td>Mismatch of conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving lunch time</td>
<td>Insisting own ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the room</td>
<td>Talking about children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase order</td>
<td>Unfinished business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role distribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules in the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79
Among these initial themes, I analyzed the overlap between codes and themes and looked for the relationship between initial themes in order to identify the broader themes across the data corpus, following the suggestions by Spradley (1980) and Hatch (2002). Identified themes are displayed and described in Chapters 4 and 5.

**Triangulation in Data Analysis**

As noted above in the data collection section, triangulation with multiple data sources was an ongoing process throughout my data collection and analysis. Erickson (1986) suggests that this process serves to compare and relate what happens at different places and times in order to identify stable features and patterned regularities across the data and to find confirming and disconfirming evidences.

Classroom observations and topics at different meetings were always compared and contrasted in the analysis to relate to the discussions at the meeting to the actual practice. Formal and informal interviews were done for key events to obtain “emic” (Pelto & Pelto, 1978), or insider perspectives. This process is also considered to be member check. In addition, data corpus at the leadership and administrative level were included in the data analysis of the practice level to compare and contrast the themes and patterns in different layers and contexts within the building.

Along with this process, I had peer debriefing once or twice a month with other graduate students or a faculty member. This peer debriefing helped me to analyze my position within the context, which is summarized in the next section, “My Roles as a Researcher.”
My Roles as a Researcher

As I conducted my research with a methodological framework of interpretive approaches, I needed to be conscious of my perspectives as a researcher in my data collection and analysis. In addition, I needed to be specific about where the data came from, what supports my interpretations, and how the participants respond to my interpretation of the events that I observed.

In this dissertation, I attempt to interpret the voices of practitioners, who make inclusion possible in practice, and my goal is to interpret them as authentically as possible. However, as is the nature of the ethnographic approach, the interpretations from the data will be the ones based on my experience and knowledge in contrast to the experiences and knowledge of classroom teachers. In this section, I describe how my participation in the context developed and changed over the period of time of this study and which issues need to be considered as a participant observer specific to the context in this study.

Entry to the site

Before this study, I began to visit to the building in 2001 as a part of a class I was taking. I had several opportunities to observe a few classrooms as a part of the class assignment. I began to visit the building in 2001 as a student, and I conducted interviews and observations at the leadership levels in 2002 and 2003 before I started my participant observation in Room 701.
Between 2002 and 2003, I joined a larger project to record and investigate the whole history of the partnership of the ECYCF building starting in 1990. In addition, OSU offered graduate courses in the building in 2003 so that teachers in the field could take those courses easily. Meanwhile, our project team began interviewing the leaders of the partner institutions of the ECYCF partnership.

In addition, three of the partnership buildings are field placements for the teacher candidates in our M.Ed. program. I visited these buildings periodically as a supervisor in 2003-2005. From September, 2003, I supervised M.Ed. student teachers placed in the building. I worked with two classrooms in 2003-2004, and three in 2004-2005. This building offers field placements to different teacher education programs in the area, and the M.Ed. program of our college usually placed 6-8 of our student teachers in the buildings under this partnership. In 2003-2004, I worked with three other student teachers in two other buildings under the partnership. This official supervisor role provided me with a smooth entry to the building, getting to know the system through advising student teachers before I began my data collection at the practice level.

In 2004-5, I had three student teachers in this building and one was placed in Room 701. I communicated the purposes of this study with the student teacher. The student teacher gave me consent to participate in the study and provided perspectives as the third person. I tried to communicate clearly to Room 701 teachers whether I was there for my research observations or supervision in advance. I also presented myself differently by wearing different clothes, for example, I wore professional clothing and carried thick paper files for supervision, whereas I wore jeans and sneakers with a small
notebook and a pen for my observations.

My experience as a teacher for 14 years always affected my decisions in the classroom and interpretations of the data. I am from Japan and moved to the U.S. six and a half years ago. My ethnic and cultural background also affects how I situate myself in the context. I believe that I was more reserved than U.S. researchers. In the partnership meetings, I have never been an active participant in their conversations. I chose the chair outside of the round-table usually until I found everyone had a seat at the round-table. I was an observer rather than a participant.

The following diagram (Table 3.8) describes my role as a researcher and my participation in Room 701. First, I positioned myself close to the teachers but was not intrusive to their practice. When I began to be in the classroom in February, 2004, a lead teacher asked me how I preferred to be introduced, and we chose to introduce me to children as “Ms. Chiharu.” At the moment, the teachers positioned me in relation to the children as a helping adult in the classroom. The building itself is used to having visitors and observers due to strong community involvement, and the children are also used to having extra adults such as student teachers and volunteers. I was there to observe the events and activities going on, and I followed the children and teachers wherever they went in the building.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle Time</td>
<td>Sit on carpet area with legs crossed or feet straight out Sometimes will sit on a teacher’s lap</td>
<td>One teacher leads the group from a chair.</td>
<td>Sit on carpet area if children need support. If not, I sit on the chair outside of the carpet with notebook in my hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lining Up</td>
<td>Line up behind each other. If he/she is in trouble, he/she is asked to hold a teacher’s hand.</td>
<td>The teachers split up into the two different sections of the line. Usually one at the front and end.</td>
<td>I line up toward the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>They eat Head Start lunch from the kitchen together. Children have jobs for the day to prepare tables. Seats are assigned.</td>
<td>The teachers split up between the two tables. They eat the same things with the children. A teacher leads the song before lunch.</td>
<td>I eat the same thing with them. My seat is assigned by a lead teacher depending on the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Children play in activities they chose. They have a face picture to assign themselves to the play area. Each area has maximum numbers of children who can play at the same time.</td>
<td>Teachers monitor their play, provide materials, facilitate problem-solving, and/or work on paperwork or other teacher duties.</td>
<td>I observe the children’s play and participate when invited by the children. I facilitate problem-solving, organize materials such as construction papers, and paint if teachers cannot. I usually interact with children more than other teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Teacher Roles</td>
<td>Not applicable Children know that I cannot make important decisions such as which motor space they are going and to take out the new toys for them.</td>
<td>Monitoring time for plans children make with other children for toys Suggesting play ideas. Facilitating the engagement of children with special needs. Potty training Providing snack refills, going to the kitchen Preparing small group activities Providing general discipline and redirection Nap-time: calm them down</td>
<td>I generally do not do this. After teachers announce time, I would remind them how much time is left to play. I usually listen to and ask about children’s ideas and record them. I offer help when children asked me. I do not prepare any activities. I provide discipline or redirection when I am the closest adult at the scene. I lie down next to their cots and pat them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: Becoming Part of the Classroom Community
I began my observation in February 2004. Room 701 had different student teachers from OSU and other colleges. I avoided being in the classroom when they had other student teachers, so that I was only one additional adult to the teachers and specialists working in Room 701, rather than one of many additional adults.

From February to May 2004, before I deciding to focus on one classroom I had another classroom recommended by the directors of the ECYCF. It was interesting to observe different interaction patterns between teachers and children in another classroom. I rarely was involved with the children in the classroom because the children were more independent and they seemed to have enough help from adults. On the other hand, in Room 701 it was almost impossible not to interact with children because they approached me so often and they needed adults’ support more. Room 701 had a younger group of children. It did not seem right to me when a child is pushing another child not to intervene as an adult in the classroom. So I tried to learn the rules and discipline implemented by the teachers and attempted to be consistent with the teachers in the classroom. I constantly asked each teacher if my response to the child was okay after I dealt with discipline issues.

At their planning meeting, I took notes, asked questions about the system they follow, and occasionally shared my observations about children’s play. Because I was taking a field notes about the job distributions and interactions among teachers, I tried not to be intrusive and positioned myself as a quiet observer and the last person to leave the room.
At that time, my biggest fear was that my perspective was possibly biased by Japanese culture, my teaching experience, and my role as a supervisor placed in the building. I wrote my questions in my journal such as “They seemed not to have enough time for children to play. But maybe I feel this way because of the standard practice in Japanese preschool” (Feb. 13, 2004) and “Why haven’t they checked who made which craft ahead of time so that they did not have to let children wait so much?” (May 28, 2004). I was using my style of teaching as a reference for my evaluation, but I tried to learn to separate those ideas from how I act in the room.

The majority of the children are African American or another ethnic minority and ten belonged to Head Start program. One teacher is African American and the three others are Caucasians. Even though I had experience working in urban schools as a supervisor in teacher education program, I feared my possible prejudice toward the children and teachers. Sometime I found myself about to make judgment with my personal values, and needed to talk about my emotions with my peer debriefer, a fellow graduate student. Discussions with her often helped me to articulate my perspectives and go back to the classroom more open-minded.

**Shifting Positions**

When an observer of interpretive approach comes into a classroom, the participant observer brings two purposes: "(1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation" (Spradley, 1980,
I usually had my note-pad in my hand, and sometimes my digital recorder in my pocket, wherever I went in the building. The appropriateness of my participation changed over the period of time of my research: my role changed from a neutral observer to more active participant in the events. For example, initially I was in the building as a visitor to observe, later I was more like a volunteer who would assist children and put away toys at building-wide music activities, and building staff would ask me to deliver messages to the target classroom and carry things to the nearby classrooms.

I found my Asian identity and working class family background helped me to fit in the middle of the four teachers in Room 701. I had commonalities with each teacher including the way I grew up, my identity as a preschool teacher, my interests in inclusion and the Reggio Emilia approach (Edward et al., 1998), and my hope to make this approach work for children. The following diagram (Table 3.9) describes my shifting position over time in terms of my role in participant observation, the view of my role by the teachers, my role in play with the children, and my role in the building.

By late March, 2004, the teachers began to trust me to interact with the children and asked for my thoughts about what was happening in the classroom. In March, people were counting on my existence as an extra pair of hands in the classroom. I tried to learn the classroom routines and discipline rules; however, I found some inconsistency among teachers that made it difficult for me to follow their ways. As the teachers became more consistent about the way they planned and taught, I had an easier time dealing with the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Participant Observation</th>
<th>View of Researcher Role by Teachers</th>
<th>Role in Play or Relationship with children</th>
<th>Role in the building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry (Feb. 04 to March, 04)</td>
<td>Observation in different activities with children, observation in planning meetings</td>
<td>Generally unsure, decide what my roles will be</td>
<td>Children invited me in their dramatic play and games</td>
<td>Interviewer for the partnership leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late March, 04 through May, 04</td>
<td>Combination of observation, and volunteering for field trips and special events Interviewers for individual teachers</td>
<td>Seeing me as someone who can take a part of teachers’ role Someone here to learn how to be a teacher for children with special needs</td>
<td>Children see me as someone who can ask help anytime. Some was testing me to see if I let them get away with disobeying classroom rules</td>
<td>Their supervisor counted me as an “adult” for the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Center June, 04 – August, 04</td>
<td>Informal visits occasionally to “Head Start”</td>
<td>Teachers began to see me more like one of them, someone who know what it’s like</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Summer Center teacher of my own class in the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 04 - December, 04</td>
<td>Observation in professional development, classroom, and planning meetings</td>
<td>Teacher asked me to be a mediator I began to talk at the meetings</td>
<td>No appointments made to visit I was less interactive in play but helped them with eating, changing, and potty training</td>
<td>M.Ed. supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 05 to present</td>
<td>Observation in professional development, classroom, and planning meetings</td>
<td>The role as a mediator was not working, but my opinions as a third person was valued</td>
<td>As data collection is focused on teachers, I became more like an observer than play-mate.</td>
<td>M.Ed. supervisor + interviewers for other teaching groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.9: Shift in Positioning from February 2004 to June 2005
children’s behaviors. In May, we shared the feeling of success of one long-term project in the classroom in the meeting after the field trip to downtown.

During summer of 2004, I worked as a Summer Center teacher in the building. This gave me some insights into what it would be like to work in this size and type of building, and other teachers saw me with children. The two MRDD teachers did not work during summer, but the Head Start teachers were there during summer as a full-day program. I visited them after my work once in a while. Toward the end of the Summer Center, I was chatting with two experienced assistant teachers in other classrooms. One of them told me, “Now you know what it’s like to work here with those kids [with special needs]. Many teachers would be willing to talk to you more” (Christina, MRDD assistant teacher, informal conversations, August 2004). Her comments somewhat represent how teachers may feel about the researchers or university people coming from outside.

Sharing the experience or lives in ECYCF in this format brought me further “inside.”

At the beginning of September, 2004, the teachers of the target classroom asked me to be a mediator at their planning meeting. I felt honored but confused because I was not sure how it would go with my role as a researcher. I was not sure how to document my active participation in the meeting and analyze it. I discussed this issue with a fellow graduate student repeatedly, and realized that I was already a participant no matter how actively or passively engaged in the activities in the classroom. However, to be a mediator, I had to feel the need to take action, and the teachers needed to value my words.
A teacher commented several times, “Chiharu, when you are here, things seem to go smoother” (10/04/2004). Another teacher also mentioned, “When you are here, for some reason, our meeting is more productive. Just having the third person seems to work for us” (12/07/2004). I was not sure if that was a good thing for my research.

I began to share my thoughts a little more actively from September 2005. I became more like a member of the teaching team. The excerpt below represents how they perceived me.

Harmony: This is the thing about the Big Ten. (She distributed copies of her instant survey about dates.) I went up to the front desk, because I put your name on it. I asked if Chiharu has a box or anything here because I want to leave this here. Then they went like, "probably she should." I was like "Yeah, she should." (Jan. 28, 2005, 4-teacher Planning meeting)

Although I became more active in the planning meetings, I found myself being a complete observer in the classroom more than the first year. Part of the reason was the degree of demands from children. In the second year, the types of disabilities in the classroom were different and the mix of children was different.

Teachers sometimes teased me by calling “Hey, you are being a quiet mouse hiding there!” (March, 2005) or “You are so good at finding a spot to observe” (November, 2004). I was still responding to children’s needs, while I was positioning myself at the border of the classroom practice for teachers. I moved between being inside and outside of the activities, while “physically” I was “in” the classroom. I sometimes took notes for teachers and took pictures for their documentation of children’s play activities.
Ethical dilemmas

My experience as a teacher for 14 years always affected my decisions in the classroom and interpretations of the data. I am from Japan, and I taught in an alternative school for children from age 2 to 12 for 10 years. The school was affected by constructivist philosophies. Later, I was a teacher/administrator at a Japanese preschool in a Midwestern city for 4 years. The school had a few children with special needs, which motivated me to attend graduate school and to learn more about special education. It is important for me as a researcher to record how my experience affected my feelings and decision-making in the classroom.

Because I was in the educational context with my experience as a preschool teacher, I have certain values and consciously and unconsciously use them as a reference point to observe classroom activities. I wrote my questions in my journal such as “They seemed not to have enough time for children to play. But maybe I feel this way because of the standard practice in Japanese preschool” (Feb. 13, 2004). I was using my practice as a reference for my evaluation, but tried to learn to separate those from how I acted in the room.

The power of the researcher. Despite the types of roles researchers may take in the field, researchers will write about the findings. Even when a researcher establishes an equal relationship with the teachers and openly discusses what s/he writes about, researchers possess certain kinds of power over participants. Therefore, it is critical for researchers to be aware of the nature of the relationship with the participants and the
change that the study may cause (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b). The change that the research might create should positively affect the well-being of students and teachers in the settings.

In my case, in addition to the fact that I was writing about them, I could share my observations with their supervisors because I had a relationship with them as well. I did not share specifics with the supervisors and avoided naming anyone so as not to cause harm. It did not seem to have affected my relationship with teachers because the teachers had close relationships with their supervisors. I often found that directors openly shared my comments with teachers and vice versa.

**Being too inside.** One day in May, 2005, I was talking to two supervisors in the building.

I felt offended by the comment from some directors there. They think that the classroom has enough time for planning, but what they need is not just time for planning. They need to get to know each other first of all. It is not that they are not using the time effectively. (Reflective journal: May, 2005)

At the moment, I could see that I had some sympathy for the teachers, and I felt that the supervisors did not understand how they (we) are working in the classroom. Here is another excerpt from my field notes.

After one of the four teachers resigned, another teacher came on board as a permanent substitute teacher. That teacher knew the children and the classroom already by substituting in the classrooms for her agency.

Chiharu: (To a new teacher) “It’s kind of cool to hear your perspective about this classroom. I feel like I can get a new perspective from you, how you see the classroom and children.”

Harmony: “Chiharu, you may be too inside with us….I am wondering how you can be objective after these hours you spent here.” (May 6, 2005)
Harmony’s comment made me think how I should interpret my observations now. On the process of data analysis, I need to include my shifting positions from outsider toward an insider. Although I have been conducting member check by interviewing the participants both formally and informally, I shared the best interest with the participants; supporting the children’s development and the collaboration in the target classroom.

**Researcher Subjectivity.** Because I participated in the classroom close to teachers, I sometimes found conflicting emotions between my pedagogical beliefs and what was occurring in the classroom. There were also the situations where ethically I felt I should intervene. In my field notes, I included where I was and what I did. Because I am in the educational context with my experience as a preschool teacher, I have certain values within me and apply them consciously and unconsciously. In my field notes and research journals, I made clear as much as possible what I was thinking at the moment, and I recorded my questions and asked the teachers and my peer debriefer about their perspectives.

This recursive examination of my roles as a researcher at the research site is one of the tactics I used to increase validity of my study. The next section will discuss further the validity or trustworthiness of the interpretive study.

**Issues of Validity or Trustworthiness**

As in any study, this study considers validity to be a crucial element in research. In qualitative research, trustworthiness and authenticity are discussed as alternatives to
internal and external validity in the positivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a). As I already discussed, triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Erikson, 1986) is a way to increase the trustworthiness of the data. Hatch (2002) suggests that “researchers must carefully describe their data and data sources so that readers can make their own judgments about the trustworthiness of the accounts in the study” (p. 121). In order to follow Hatch’s suggestion, researchers’ reflexivity or “the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000b, p. 183) as qualitative research paradigm considers researchers to be tools of the research (Hatch, 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Therefore, in the previous section I described my roles as a researcher so that this study and the context will be understood by the reader to be as authentic as possible. This process is also devoted to increasing the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

In addition, by conducting this study over the period of time and getting to know the context gradually, I obtained enough knowledge of and experience in the research site so that I could make inferences with more confidence. With the relationship that the participants and I constructed over time, I gained access to the authentic information regarding what is happening in the classroom.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) added ethical relationship to the criteria of trustworthiness. As I also discussed in the section of “My Roles as a Researcher,” the researcher’s relationship with participants is critical, especially for a qualitative study. I went into the site as a learner who wanted to understand the ECYCF partnership and the daily lives of the teachers and children. I shared my observations with teachers as much
as possible and interacted with the children to support their learning environment. Ethical relationship considerations go beyond data collection; researchers need to be careful in ways that they represent voices of the participants in order for them to be as authentic as possible, and the findings should be able to contribute to lives of the participants. In this dissertation’s case, I hope that my findings provided a new and detailed understanding of the partnership collaboration to the participants.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) also discussed poststructural transgression (p. 180-181), referring to Richardson’s (1994) metaphoric explanation of “crystallization”:

I propose that the central image for 'validity' for postmodernist texts is not the triangle—a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central image is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous…….Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. (Richardson, 2000, p. 934; Richardson, 1994)

Multiple data sources at different times and situations crystallize the meaning in the center. Meaning-making process is “crystallization” and researchers attempt to examine the relationship between data sources and meanings in the center. As researchers collect more data and interpretations, the meaning in the center becomes more credible and is better able to reflect the data surrounding it. This process increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. In terms of this study, I collected multiple perspectives--from teachers individually, as well as from their supervisors’ perspectives. The multilayered design of this dissertation and the time spent in the research site helped me to crystallize the data to reflect multiple aspects and to reflect my interpretations of the insider perspectives more authentically.
With these issues in consideration, in the next two chapters I describe my findings from multiple data sources, and interpret them from my experience in the field, so that my inferences are as authentic as they can be and so that my inferences can be generalized to non-local audiences. Chapters 4 and 5 present analyzed narratives, which is a way of representing the experiences of participants with key themes and patterns in the findings.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS I

MULTIPLE LEVELS OF CONTEXTS WHICH FRAME THE CLASSROOM COLLABORATION IN THE ECYCF PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

The target classroom in this dissertation represents a partnership between Head Start and MRDD that blends the teachers’ responsibilities, children, and agencies equally. This unique partnership must be understood in the contexts that support the classroom. Because this partnership involves multiple agencies and systems of early childhood education, the contexts in which the classroom is situated are complex and intertwined. Therefore, in order to look at the partnership process at the classroom level, it is crucial to understand the larger levels of context as well. The partnership project was initiated and conceptualized by the leadership of the participating agencies (with teacher input) and then implemented by teaching teams in classrooms.

Grounded in a sociocultural tradition, this chapter presents an interpreted description of the historical context in the wider professional community at the time the
partnership was conceived. This historical context provides the fertile ground within which the “Partners” or leaders and decision makers across the partnering agencies constructed their collaborative relationships. Both of these historical contexts and institutional contexts are presented in this chapter as analyzed narratives. Data sources include documents from 1996 to 2005, interviews with key members of the partnership from 1990 to 2001, observations of the daily practice in ECYCF building, the monthly partnership meetings, and weekly leadership meetings from 2003 to 2005. I attended those meetings strategically when important events were occurring in the building and fiscal summaries were being discussed.

I describe and interpret the multi-layered historical context of the ECYCF partnership through key themes that emerged from the corpus of data. Building the partnership has both contextual and time aspects. Thus, my presentation of these larger contexts (the professional community and the leadership of the partnering agencies) is also across time in four phases such as Phase I: Pre-history; Phase II: Planning before groundbreaking, Phase III: Preparation after groundbreaking, and Phase IV: After the opening.

Fig. 4.1 represents the timeline in regard to how ECYCF developed. The line in the center shows years when key events happened. The line above shows active members in the ECYCF partnership during the period indicated. Leaders before 1996 refer to directors and decision makers at the highest administrative level across multiple area agencies. Leaders after 1996 include both the initial key decision makers and their representatives to the partnership meetings. After the building opened in 2001, site
managers also participated in administrative leadership. The line below the year and key events shows the four phases between key events. This chapter is organized chronologically following this time line and presents themes appeared in each of these phases.

**who**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaders (decision-makers) from multiple agencies</th>
<th>Leaders (directors of agencies and their representatives), Teacher representatives, architect, university researchers</th>
<th>Leaders, teachers, architect, professional facilitator, university researchers</th>
<th>Leaders, site managers, a professional facilitator, university researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and Family First Initiative by the Governor</td>
<td>MRDD received a 1.386 million matching grant from State Board</td>
<td>Ground-breaking and relocation</td>
<td>Summer 2001 Opening Ceremony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding a common direction for the curriculum, learning from early collaboration projects</td>
<td>Physical environment represent their vision, Communicating respective needs among agencies, Sharing the vision within a respective home agency, Negotiating space and resources</td>
<td>Building commitment, Negotiation between home agency and the partnership, Making commitment for the greater good</td>
<td>Sharing the vision with teachers, Valuing communication and relationships, Dealing with coordination challenges, Supporting the teaching staff over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase I**
- Finding a common direction for the curriculum.
- Learning from early collaboration projects.
- Building common vision & trust.

**Phase II**
- Physical environment represents their vision.
- Communicating respective needs among agencies.
- Sharing the vision within a respective home agency.
- Negotiating space and resources.

**Phase III**
- Building commitment.
- Negotiation between home agency and the partnership.
- Making commitment for the greater good.

**Phase IV**
- Sharing the vision with teachers.
- Valuing communication and relationships.
- Dealing with coordination challenges.
- Supporting the teaching staff over time.

Fig. 4.1: Timeline of the ECYCF Partnership Development
The notion of a multi-layered organization is represented in Figure 4.2 using concentric circles. This figure is my conceptual representation of the relationship among agencies in the partnership. I am assigning the general community to the first circle from the outside, the area early childhood community to the second circle, and finally the ECYCF partnership in the central circle. I placed both educational and regulatory agencies in between these three circles. The bold letters show five agencies that are directly involved in the classroom, while other agencies listed are involved with referral, family services, professional development, and medical services. The square outside represents the society in general.
Between the two universities that were initial supporters, Ohio State University (OSU) became the more active higher education partner from the planning phase. Two early childhood faculty members, Rachel and Daniel, attended the regular monthly partner meetings and played an important consultative role in curriculum and program planning, provided professional development for the teachers on staff as well as new hires, planned for the involvement of their pre-service student teachers and involved doctoral students in their research program conducted at the site. In addition, a Dental Clinic is operated through OSU, and students from allied health and nursing departments participate.

Many of the partners/leaders in the ECYCF project are educators who have been working enthusiastically for many years in order to deliver quality early childhood programs in the state, first as educators or specialists, later as administrators, directors, teacher trainers, or professors. These experienced professionals have relationships with each other that have been built over decades of their work. Through the interviews, I heard reference to these relationships such as: “I knew Mary Ann since the ‘70s” or “We have experienced working together in a project before.” Therefore, I included a layer called “the local Early Childhood Education Professional Network” as shown in Fig. 4-2. For the same reason, I will begin with the history of relationships before the ECYCF project actually began.
A History of Partnering

Phase I: Pre-history (1991 – 1996)—Understanding as Sociopolitical Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Leaders (decision-makers) from multiple agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Phase IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding a common direction for the curriculum, learning from early collaboration projects</td>
<td>Building common vision &amp; trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3: Timeline of the ECYCF Partnership, Phase I

The opportunities for the ECYCF partnership were strongly linked to the political activity in the state of Ohio in the 1990s. In this decade, local political activities and legislation focused on early childhood education with the governor’s initiative. Kantor, Fernie, Scott, and O’Brien (2000) reported that “a confluence of critical events, pivotal decisions, and the emergence of several additional, important stakeholder groups in the state created an infrastructure for change across state agencies and professional associations” (p. 165) in this period. For example, in 1990 Ohio was chosen one of the 12 states to receive a grant
from the federal government for the Head Start State Collaboration Demonstration project (Kloth & Love, 2005). This project brought the project director close to the Office of the Governor, and later the project leadership position was renamed from Head Start Collaboration Project Director to Early Childhood Director. This shift led to another bridge to the wider early childhood community (Kantor, et al., 2000).

Meanwhile, the Governor created the Ohio Families and Children First Initiative, aimed to improve access to and delivery of education, health, and social services to children and their families. In order to achieve this goal, the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council was formed by the Superintendent of public instruction, the Directors of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Budget and Management, Health, Human Services, Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and Youth Services (Kloth & Love, 2005; Kantor, et al. 2000).

In 1993, the Governor created the Head Start Task Force and as a result of this task force, the Early Childhood Coordination Committee was formed. It was chaired by the Head Start collaboration Project Director was placed within the Ohio Family and Children First Initiative. This merger created “dual and blended roles and a pivotal decision that positioned Head Start at the center of future planning for early care and education in Ohio and created even more momentum toward a unified early childhood voice in Ohio” (Kantor, et al., 2000). Under this initiative, early childhood educators in Ohio were actively engaged in the work to increase fluidity in the system to provide quality education.
Assembling the Partners. The ECYCF partnership is grounded in a history of pre-existing relationships among leaders of multiple early childhood agencies in the area. Dr. Betty Smithers, Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE) of the Urban Public schools (UPS), knew Laura Edwards, Director of Metro Head Start (Metro H.S.); Michaela Johnson, President of Council Head Start (Council H.S.); and Dr. Amanda Bard, Vice President and Professional Development Coordinator of Council H.S., for a long time, according to interviewees, and worked with them to house Head Start programs within the public schools before the creation of the ECYCF partnership.

Mary Ann Lowe, Director of the County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability Early Childhood Education (MRDD/ECE), described the drive toward collaboration in the 1990s:

In 1991, public schools were required responsibility for children age 3-5. MRDD was facing reductions. States (State Boards of MRDD) sent out a call for proposals for renovations and collaborative types of services. Smaller counties came together to build a sort of “one-stop shop” kind of service. We had an opportunity, so we will go from there, and called other people (in the area). (Mary Ann from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

Another piece of the pre-history to this project was an earlier attempt to find grant money to collaborate; Mary Ann sent invitations to many local institutions involved in early childhood education to collaborate on a grant proposal to the State Board of MRDD, but they were unsuccessful at that time.

At the same time during the 1990s, MRDD/ECE started “peer programs” to include “typical” peers from the community in their special education preschool programs, to bring their children with special needs, along with their teachers, to the
general education programs. These classrooms became their first collaboration satellites with YWCA Childcare, the Urban Public Schools, and Head Start programs, and provided critical experience with collaboration for the eventual project at ECYCF. These satellites were located in spaces such as available rooms in public schools, already existing classrooms in area Head Start programs, and an old house purchased by MRDD. The Urban Public School and the two Head Start programs had been writing grant proposals together for different projects.

Over the decade of the 90s, these leaders of the ECYCF partnership invited each other to collaborate whenever they found opportunities in federal and state funding programs and available space in their buildings. Thus, these leaders had long-lasting professional as well as personal relationships across their agencies. As years passed, these same people had greater responsibilities for their agencies, and more and more visible leadership within the local early childhood education professional community. Despite the increasing demands on their time and the escalating pressures in their roles, they continued to prioritize their relationships within and their commitments to the partnership. Their commitments were motivated by “the greater good,” which is mentioned by each and every leader in their interviews:

I (became) involved with Head Start because UPS cannot provide all the preschool services--not enough funds, not enough space sometime. Head Start did not have space, either, primarily UPS did not have the funds. UPS had some Head Start in their building. We have huge problem with space, so whenever UPS needed space, they asked Head Start to leave. I hate that because Head Start is the partner. Michaela (Council H.S.) and I are trying to find a way to become involved with the district. We serve the same children, we serve the same families. (Betty from UPS, interviewed on May 20, 2002) I believe collaboration is only way to go. It’s ridiculous to compete for the same resources. . . Laura always wanted to be a part of the things that makes good sense. She
has been a loyal advocate of collaboration, and she and Mary Ann (MRDD) has been friends for a long time….. It’s resource gain for the family and children, but this is for greater good. (Amanda from Council H.S., interviewed on May 6, 2002)

The shift in the special education field toward inclusion also changed the organization inside of MRDD. They were losing school-age children, but this kind of change opened a door to other possibilities. Terry, assistant director of MRDD/ECE, told the story around the time they faced organizational changes in her interviews:

We went into Mulberry (Center) because we were losing school-age children. I got this job in 1991, and they said you can do anything you want. I said, “Honest?” My first exposure to Reggio\(^4\) was the 1990 exhibit in Dayton with Silvia\(^2\). That brought in the concept of Reggio to Mulberry. We set up the building, who are the people, who are going to be the key people, teachers, support, specialists, secretary, maintenance, and we started there with county teachers 4 classes of county (48 children). I met Rachelle then. She wanted to do something like this, and she had 8 children. They just built framework for the work there… community program by Action for Children. She invited Mary Ann to the meeting [of that project]. [That’s when] she met Betty (UPS). She was interested in MRDD. Betty had a vision, too. She lobbied the Head Start community. (Terry from MRDD/ECE, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

Mary Ann and Terry looked for different ways to bring their children into the community and invite peers in the community to the county program. Within MRDD, she was given a building of her own and was told she could do anything. Therefore, they began their experiment to use the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), an educational philosophy that they learned around that time.

\(^4\) Reggio refers “Reggio Emilia Approach.” This approach is introduced in the next section.

\(^2\) Silvia is currently working as State Department of Early Childhood Education Director. She used to work in MRDD as one of the first teachers who worked in inclusive classrooms and community-base programs in MRDD/ECE.
**Theme: Finding a common direction for the curriculum with the Reggio Emilia Approach.** The partners previously had very different frameworks in their curriculums, as shown in Table 4.1. Each agency was based on different legislations, as well as different regulations and requirements, which often changed over time. For example, Council Head Start utilized the Galileo Assessment System when the ECYCF was built and later their administration decided to shift their curriculum to Creative Curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRDD</td>
<td>guided by IEP</td>
<td>Various developmental assessments by specialists and teachers depending on the child’s needs State required assessment: (Get it, Got it, Go)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Head Start</td>
<td>High-Scope</td>
<td>Galileo Assessment System The Denver developmental assessment Get it, Got it, Go Growth and measurement National Reporting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Head Start</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum Net The Denver developmental assessment Get it, Got it, Go National Reporting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Public Schools</td>
<td>Course of Study</td>
<td>Get-It, Got-It, Go District Assessments related to course of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA Daycare</td>
<td>Project approach</td>
<td>The Denver developmental assessment (Developmentally Appropriate Practice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Different Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Each Partner Agency
Although their curriculum framework seemed to be different, underneath the differences the leaders of partners found common ground in the Reggio Emilia Approach from Italy, which was newly introduced to the U.S. in the early 1990s; Ohio was one of the most enthusiastic states to learn from this approach.

According to the interviews, all the leaders in the ECYCF partnership had exposure to the philosophy of the Reggio Emilia Approach and were excited to bring it into their practice within their programs. This approach from the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy had reached Ohio through early study tours in Italy, publications and the traveling international exhibit of the Italian philosophy and curriculum. The OSU professors Rachel, Daniel, and Silvia were one of the first visitors from U.S. to Reggio Emilia, Italy in 1990.

This is the same period of time when the professional literature and NAEYC, the largest early childhood education professional organization in the world advocated for American educators to understand and to begin incorporating the Reggio Emilia Approach into their schools (Cadwell, 1997; Fu, Stremmel, & Hill, 2002; Hendrick, 1997). “The vision of excellence in teaching and learning has inspired many teachers to want to learn more and to revisit their own practices” (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2000, p. 2). It should be noted that it is “not a method that can be transferred; it is ‘a way of thinking about children, schools, education, and life. You may learn more about Reggio, and also learn more yourself and your experiences’” (Rinaldi, Presentation in Reggio, May, 1997, cited in Fraser & Getwicki, 2000, p. 6). This approach provided guidance in terms of ways to view children, families, and classrooms, as the Italians suggested; however, it
proved to be pivotal in finding curricular common ground for the ECYCF Partnership. The pedagogy of Reggio Emilia seemed to have provided a common inspiration that might have focused the partners on a new common ground instead of their institutional differences.

The Reggio Emilia Approach shaped the core beliefs across the partnership agencies and guided their development of curriculum later on. In addition, because of the statewide efforts to bring it into the practice, different organizations sponsored study groups and workshops (informal conversation with Rachel, July 2005), which also allowed for people from different agencies to meet and develop relationships outside of ECYCF.

Leaders began experimenting by bringing the Reggio Emilia Approach to their classrooms in existing sites. Satellite sites or branch programs of MRDD/ECE provided experience in “miniature projects” to be used later in the big project, and the Reggio Emilia Approach became a common vision for the curriculum in the ECYCF partnership.

**Theme: Learning from early collaboration projects - Experiencing the “Rubber Band Effect.”** As mentioned above, MRDD developed six satellite sites in a variety of formats: in a public school building, in a public school with Head Start, two with YWCA Childcare (one is Deer Creek), in a Head Start building, and in their own building (Mulberry) with a local childcare and a Head Start (although eventually the childcare left the building). These satellite sites provided important insights into possibilities of collaboration and wisdom for working through inevitable conflicts in productive ways. It
does not mean that the leaders considered these satellites as miniature versions of the ECYCF. Rather, the six satellites worked positively to bring partners to the ECYCF partnership project and added ideas to prepare themselves for the prospective program. One of the challenges that the leaders became aware of was a dilemma between old and new ways of teaching.

There are two particular satellite sites (Deer Creek and Mulberry) that MRDD directors kept bringing up in their interviews in terms in which they learned what to expect when they collaborate with other agencies. Both of these sites are still intact. They are operated under the umbrella of ECYCF collaboration. I had the opportunity to observe at Deer Creek and Mulberry as a university supervisor of student teachers half a day per week, bi-weekly from September 2003 to March, 2004. As a supervisor, I was able to gain insight into how the two satellites served as a miniature experience for the MRDD directors for the big project later on. I will describe what experience Deer Creek provided for the MRDD directors as an example of these satellites.

In 1994, MRDD developed Deer Creek, and brought their infant programs outside of their own building for the first time. MRDD and YWCA Childcare created an intimate environment with open space and access to an outdoor area surrounded by trees, a design for the environment that was inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach. In 2003, teachers from YWCA and MRDD were working together with great success. Therapists from the ECYCF visit there, and children visited the ECYCF building to have various kinds of motor activities in winter. On the other hand, Deer Creek had its own swimming pool.
next door, operated by the YWCA. The point to make is the level of commitment, investment, and administrative support that each satellite received. Terry (Assistant Director of MRDD) recalled the Deer Creek project as below:

It is a neighborhood concept, so families can start there to preschool as a full-inclusion program. Team teaching at preschool level, that was unique settings, we get to know the families, consistent group of therapists, then again inclusion with preschool was challenging. Team teaching, we had several teams, Childcare had several teachers, again, it is about finding the right match……looking at the environment, totally configured the environment two classrooms out of one big building. (Terry from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

The continuity provided by the partnership as described by Terry above was a vision for the leadership, that is, to provide programs from birth through age five (in this case) to promote relationships with families. These notions of *seamless service delivery* and *continuity* are core ideas with the ECYCF building as well. The excerpt above shows another key issue that Terry recognized, which is a match or combination between teachers from different agencies.

You need to be there to support teachers. When to be there…And I learned to pull back to see the relationship evolves. Some of those teachers just didn’t work, wouldn’t work. We added a lot of support to, but sometimes we need to sit back. (Terry from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

When teachers’ personalities did not fit to work as a team, Terry found too much intervention was unhelpful. She expressed her view that there could be a limit on how much administrators can help teachers work together and the challenge to find the right balance between giving support and waiting for the relationship to grow. Mary Ann described this challenge:

I thought it would be nice if we had a house, an old house with loft, and small building with 20-20 kids. There was a club house someone wanted to sell. Childcare was okay for us to do pretty much what we wanted……First design model, we created a
space……County paid for the materials, community Care-day helped, partner did work. But the group of people who designed it left. They (childcare) got turn over so the concept got lost, more structured way of thinking from teachers, so we had open shared space, it was blocked because kids were running and whatever. Again, dealing with personalities, dealing with their organized ways of thinking, what we find so typical in individuals in general is comfort levels are difficult to make adjustments. Comfort level is based on experience. What’s worked over time and success. Come out with strong professional development, so you get that rubber band. It always comes back where it was. If you find resistance, people are not prepared for change, uncomfortable…..

Administrative level support is sort of being there, opportunities for discussion, time...allowing for that… (Mary Ann from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

In this excerpt, Mary Ann emphasized two important issues related to collaboration between MRDD and YWCA Childcare: the frequent turnover experienced in the childcare field and finding a comfort level for staff, which addresses their resistance to change. The common issue of teacher turnover in childcare made their work more challenging because they had to communicate their vision and the reason behind the environment over and over. She characterized the search for comfort with change, as a tendency to “go back” to where a person started, that is to experiences that were successful. Through the metaphor of a rubber band, Mary Ann described the individuals’ tendency to go back the place where they felt comfortable. The rubber band stretches and then rebounds to its original shape. There is no question that having these experiences in satellite sites prepared them for what would occur later in the bigger project.

*Theme: The Beginning of the Collaboration--Building a Common Vision and Trust.* The conversations at monthly meetings in the early phase were not about budget, space, or any nitty-gritty details but about the vision of the project for children and their families. “Vision” is the single word most used by leaders and administrative level
personnel in every interview. They believed that they shared the same vision and they had confidence in the good leadership of Mary Ann. These leaders are connected to each other through their collective vision and their vision attracted other people in the community to the project.

In fact, the articulation of their visions in the interviews were not worded exactly the same; however, they never contradicted each other either. Betty (UPS) believes that it is critical to empower families and have quality childhood experience for the later success of children. Laura (Metro H.S.) works hard to empower families and provide accessible educational opportunities.

We had a relationship and we had trust……
Betty is a pioneer to say, “It is the right things. Trust me. It’s going to work.” (Mary Ann from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

In her interview, Betty stated:

Our dream was a full-shop, one-stop Early Childhood center…Whoever gets the money first would start it. We thought Head Start money first, but they got run out because they had so many things to do, and then Mary Ann got the money, and UPS and Head Start wanted to be involved. (Betty of UPS, interviewed on May 20, 2002)

Amanda (Council H.S.) shared similar thoughts on behalf of Michaela, her superior and someone who got involved with the partnership. They have seen their dreams in the project, to provide a one-stop shop to provide quality care for young children and their families.

Personally it’s been a dream. There is a place in this city where state of the arts exists, what we learned in the school, what we dreamed of, that is there. They still have problems. MRDD is perfect? No. But we have that building. Teachers working together. UPS teachers don’t talk each other, they are isolated, that kind of facilitative lens together. (Betty from UPS, interviewed on May 20, 2002)
These leaders saw strength in other partners, which would make them stronger as the whole. Because Betty and Amanda are in charge of professional development in their own agencies, they were excited about the opportunities to learn from each other and they were sure their staff would benefit from it.

Probably this shared vision has been shaped by their collaboration itself; however, it is also true that their initial visions were similar and enthusiasm was there from the beginning. When Mary Ann informed this area early childhood community that MRDD was going to apply for another grant, they wrote supporting letters.

…The community certainly could rally around this effort to offer accessible and comprehensive services to families who have children with and without special needs from birth through 8 years old in one location. Research, education, family support and quality child care in a central location that is affordable and accessible to families in this community, would be a welcomed addition to compliment service needs available to families. I wish the County Board of MRDD my best, and I look forward to this partnership. (supporting letter from a university faculty dated on August 22, 1996)

The turning point for the partners was the reception of a grant in 1996 from the State Board of MRDD to renovate their existing building for the community-based program. People were excited to join the project. This excitement continued as they move in to the preparation phase.

…. We had dreamed together for many years before the renovation grant came through. We had several false starts, for example when Urban Public Schools gave us a building but without renovation money. But we were patient. We knew that timing is everything and that when the opportunity showed itself, we would be ready to grab it. We would have our relationships to count on. (Rachel, OSU professor, July 2005)
Phase II: Planning before the Groundbreaking (1996 – 1999 Summer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>who</th>
<th>Leaders (directors of agencies and their representatives), Teacher representatives, architect, university researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical environment represent their vision, Communicating respective needs among agencies, Sharing the vision within a respective home agency, Negotiating over space and resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Timeline of the ECYCF Partnership: Phase II

This planning phase begins with the grant approval from the State Board of MRDD for a new facility, a Family Center, and ends with the ground breaking for construction in the summer, 1999. Gradually the ECYCF partnership held their meetings more frequently; eventually, they became monthly. It is during this phase that the details and logistics emerged and were discussed as they planned the physical facilities with an
architect, John. This phase is also the time when partners understood each other in terms of agency needs and the possibilities of the partnership.

**Theme: the physical environment to represent their vision.** John, an architect hired from a local firm to design the new building, approached the project as a true partner within the group. John became deeply committed to the partnership project. He even traveled to Italy to see the Reggio Emilia schools in his own eyes and continued to reshape his career after this project by engaging various early childhood education projects in the area. He interviewed people including teachers from every part of the partnership. He interviewed different stakeholders within MRDD, families, as well as people from the partnership. He encouraged people to share what they envisioned in the new center. Interviewees referenced this process several times as John’s role was more than an architect but rather a facilitator who brought people’s thoughts together through the design of physical environment.

He listened, he built it out in his plan, and he carved out what we did not see. It was emotional to have him. He heard them so well, and he sort of became meshed and understood, and … interesting part of it was he went to Italy (Reggio Emilia) with us, paid by himself. … the Italy trip validated their plan. (Mary Ann from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

He presented his initial design on September 2, 1998, to the ECYCF partnership, which included the idea of having five neighborhoods with a community area in the center with open spaces and big windows. (See Appendix D) Three neighborhoods were to include 6 classrooms for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; one was to include 6 classrooms, 3 for preschool and 3 for public-school-age children; one was to include 6
classrooms dedicated to childcare for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. While this was going to be a 35,000-square-ft. building, John’s design aimed to create a community atmosphere. His first design is in Appendix D. Along with his planning of the design, MRDD directors were working to share the leadership vision and common goals with staff and teachers who would be working in the prospective center.

**Theme: Communicating respective needs among agencies.** In the initial stage of planning, documents from MRDD illustrate the enormous amount of communication that occurred among different educational and regulatory agencies such as departments of welfare, social services, and prevention. In 1997, MRDD conducted a community “needs survey” regarding areas of Health, Education, Family Services, Social Services, Research, Student Placement, and Staff Development. They collected data regarding how children from ages 0 to 5 are served by community agencies such as public health, children’s hospital, mental health services, welfare, Head Start, MRDD, County Community Services, and others. The result is shown in Fig. 4.5. Out of 768 children in survey, they found 167 children who were involved with “2 or more” agencies, 142 with “3 or more,” which clearly supported the view that the community needed one-stop-shop to receive comprehensive services with continuity as their children grow up.
Data Compiled on: February 5, 1997
Total Children in Survey: 768
Age Range of Children in Survey: 0-6 Years Old

Number of Children in Survey: 768
Age Range of Children in Survey: 0-6 Years Old

Number of Children Involved with the Following Agencies:
(based upon information provided/ and on file)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCCS</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD Case Management</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Hospital</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Services</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCMH</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Children/Families Involved with multiple Agencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of agencies involved</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
<th>Percentage in total children in survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 or More</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or More</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>18.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or More</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or More</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.5: Early Childhood Education Children/Family Involvement with Community Agencies Survey (reformatted from the document provided by MRDD)

Theme: *Sharing the vision within a respective home agency.* While partners met around the table each month, they were also aware of the need to communicate within their home agencies to maintain support for this involvement. At the beginning of 1997, MRDD formed a task force in order to summarize the needs inside of MRDD. Directors and their staff gathered input from teachers continuously and had teachers who were
willing to be on committees to serve the project in addition to their regular responsibilities.

As a part of the effort to configure a model and develop their image for their new building, MRDD directors and some teachers visited the Valeska-Hinton Center (Peoria, Illinois), and the Carousel Center (Scioto County, Ohio) and H.E.A.R.T.S. Center (Lawrence County Ohio), in the spring of 1997. These visits confirmed their vision, and Mary Ann and Terry described those visits as beneficial experiences, talking to the people in those centers to find how they deliver their services as well as looking at the designs of these buildings. Around this phase, MRDD directors invited teachers to participate in these visits and to attend meetings to plan the new center. Their approach helped teachers to have ownership of the project.

When John, the architect, submitted his proposal of the building design to MRDD in the fall of 1998, they had meetings with all the teachers to gather their input. His proposal was shared with other agencies as well; however, there is no record available if other partner agencies had this kind of meetings. According to the memo and notes provided by Marry Ann, she asked teaching staff to identify “what you would like to do in the spaces/what you need to put in the spaces to support your teaching abilities, individually and as a group, and how you would like to use the spaces” (Memo on 10-21-98 from Mary Ann to all the teachers and the project staff within MRDD).

Following her memo, toddler room teachers were concerned with infant-toddlers’ needs to have a motor play area close to or attached to the room and stated that the gym
room for Applied Physical Education was too big for infants and toddlers. These teachers sent a letter together to Mary Ann to express their concerns. They were hoping to have more space per child. Many seemed to have a resistance to having open classrooms. In response to reactions to her staff, Mary Ann sent out hand-written memo to her staff in early November.

Must look beyond the formation of the classroom.
The classroom is a learning space. We must see this center as the learning place!
Don’t get hung up for the trees – Look to the Forest.
Know that the Center is bigger size and conceptually than what we have here!
*This is not just an EC (Early Childhood) Center. This is a partnership with our community.
As you meet- don’t try to solve what you don’t know. Just list thoughts and ideas. We want your voices, not demands. (Mary Ann’s notes to her staff on 11/4/98)

These notes provide us with an idea about how teachers became resistant to the “unknown” center and constrained by small details. It seemed that teachers could not see the potential to have shared spaces and use other parts of the building as an extended part of their classroom. Mary Ann had a vision to see “the forests” beyond the trees nearby, her program and her organization, and now she needed to ask the same of her staff.

Teachers needed to begin looking at the building and community beyond their own classroom. Mary Ann needed to share the vision of the leaders in the ECYCF partnership with her staff so that teachers could “own” the center with their partners. This resistance and negotiations regarding space continued to exist by opening year.

**Theme: Negotiating over space and resources.** As large as the ECYCF building is (70,000 sq feet), discussions began to focus on not having enough space. The OT/PT
staff was asking for more space for their sensory room. Courtyard space was important for many. The consistent theme was that everyone wanted to have more space. Their idea was to maximize spaces for multiple uses and for learning. According to the meeting minutes of MRDD meeting on December 4, 1998, Mary Ann asked to have “open your minds, resources, and heart to change. Space must be viewed different than we know it now.” The architect, John was feeling “handcuffed because [there are] only so many dollars” and requested MRDD teachers and directors to make certain that they would make compromises that they could live with. Financial challenge became a big issue in the end of 1998.

Original 3 millions changed to 5.2 millions. With reconfiguration, my agency Superintendent Acting [superintendent] came to me, and “how do we get here, maybe we need to rethink this and go back to the same idea,” and that was our last levy… It has to be fall of 1998 because the cost was escalating. I didn’t see that as an option to go back. That was not formal way to say it. We were not thinking the same way we did. He said, “I don’t know how we are going to do that.” Then I said, “I’ll tell you. If we can’t do this way, you have to find another leader.” I remember what I wore and the exact day because I was about to die. I think he was thinking, oh she thinks she can get a job somewhere. So then I said, “Bear with me. We have a big partner’s meeting coming up.” He never comes to one. I said, “We will present this to the partners and ask if they want to go back to the original plan.” John was very prepared…This was the second biggest one. It was either go or no go. (Marry Ann from MRDD, interviewed on May 8, 2002)

At the meeting on January 22, 1999, they discussed the long term operating costs, and what partners can offer, and funding plan possibilities. This meeting was evidence of the strong commitment from the three Head Start programs, the Urban Public Schools, and YWCA Childcare, as well as other regulatory organizations such as Action for Children (R&R) and Job and Family Services. They were determined to work toward the new center, and shared responsibilities to write additional grant applications.
### Phase III: Toward Opening (1999 Fall – 2001 Summer)

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<td>who</td>
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<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Phase IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Building commitment, Negotiation between home agency and the partnership, Making commitment for the greater good</td>
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| Leaders, teachers, architect, professional facilitator, university researchers |

Table 4.6: Timeline of the ECYCF Partnership: Phase III

MRDD relocated between 1999 and 2001 for the renovation. It was a stressful period for teachers to pack everything in the existing building and relocate to a temporary space for two years. In this period and the first year of the opening, MRDD lost quite a few experienced staff.

In 1999 partners began to meet monthly with a professional facilitator, Charles, who is recognized as critical to the partnership meetings. He entered into the process at a critical time when visioning turned to implementation planning and has been working...
with the ECYCF partnership ever since. As the planning phase progressed, Mary Ann “wanted to hire a facilitator because I wanted to be a contributor” (May 8, 2002 interview). She managed to find a way to pay for a facilitator through professional development funds, and began to have Charles as a meeting facilitator from May 1999. According to Charles (June 24, 2002), his task was to find and add the structure to move on, while trying not to undermine the energy and values behind ideas. His role was to see the core values behind the collaboration and to identify the differences. He helped the partners to sort out their ideas. He and Mary Ann have known each other since 1991, and Charles had experience working with Head Start programs before; therefore, when he came into the partnership meeting, he already had a relationship with the partners (Kloth & Love, 2005). Over time he became a partner with commitment.

**Theme: Building commitment.** The ECYCF partnership meeting was held monthly, and included more people from each agency as the tasks to accomplish increased. Coming to monthly meetings and other committee meetings in between was a huge commitment to anyone in a leadership position because it was another responsibility added to the regular ones. Chris described the atmosphere:

> Being at the table to protect your interests is how you are being a part of……That’s the nature of the risk for high quality collaboration. What’s legitimate real attendance here? [It’s about] allowing me to take the risk to share resources in the way I am not familiar with… (Charles, facilitator, interviewed on June 24, 2002)

Being at the table was very important to each agency. In addition to the monthly meetings, they had committee meetings for specific areas such as professional development,
curriculum, health, transportation, and family services. Some committees were meeting weekly in this period. Julie, Professional Development Coordinator of Metro H.S., described how busy they were responding to the interview question, “What sustained your commitment to the partnership?”:

Committee meetings, we actually saw something was happening. We could have the opportunity to talk with architect. And the building actually happened. Hearing other committees, it’s in the process and going on. Something actually going to happen, so you can’t help to commit it. There were long hours. Those two days a week were blocked off. And I needed to let a supervisor know what is going on. But that’s really worth it…… We better meet and make decisions for the greater whole picture. “I will skip this.” It wasn’t the way. We have to come from our agency, and we (representatives from Metro H.S.) would remind each other. “You have MRDD meeting, don’t put anything in there.” We are all excited about it. (Julie from Metro H.S., interviewed on May, 2002)

In order to attend meetings twice a week outside of their own agency, they had to negotiate a great deal with their agencies, even when their agencies intended to support them. Julie’s excerpts illustrate that her agency representatives on different committees kept each other informed. Members of the partnership, like Julie, had to communicate on both ends, at the partnership meeting table and at their home agency.

Theme: Negotiating between Home Agency and the Partnership. As the planning talks began to take shape, the leaders had more pressure to negotiate with their home agencies. Head Start is a highly regulated institution with firm performance standards to be met, and their own ways of reaching those goals. MRDD is generally more flexible both in terms of its traditions and its capacity to think fluidly. Kagan, et al. (2000) in their Head Start – Child Care partnership study also found that “in some cases, the need for control at some Head Start program was so strong that would limit the type
of partnership opportunities available to the program” (p. 7). This was similar to in the case of the Head Start programs in this dissertation. They are under pressure to follow mandates which appear as a need to have control over operational issues.

We are under the federal system. It’s not always we have to do these things in that way, but we can do things differently and still meet those goals. People have to come together and problem solve. It’s a long process for both sides. They have to understand Head Start has those regulations. And Head Start teachers have to know MRDD teachers are not used to that. (Julie from Metro H.S., interviewed on May, 2002)

Julie states how it can be difficult for people to see alternative ways outside of what they used to do. She also mentioned that how it is important to know about other agencies.

On the other hand, because partners were creating new ways of operating within the ECYCF partnership, they also needed to carefully inform their colleagues and supervisors back in their home agencies. Because ECYCF is a one-stop place, typical routes for providing special services had to be altered. Julie described what she had to constantly do within her agency:

We did have to explain why we do differently. We had to answer their questions, and they are invited openings, and they can actually see what we were talking about at the meetings. Head Start is to provide services. I had to set up communications, and set flow process. The special education service person from Metro Head Start would not be at the table but they need to be informed as well. (Julie from Metro H.S., interviewed on May, 2002)

Our boards do not understand what is going on really. (Amanda from Council H.S., interviewed on May, 2002)

For the partner agencies, ECYCF was just another building that they were opening within their large systems. Communication within each separate agency became also important. Mary Ann faced a similar challenge with her staff regarding how to share a vision different from one they were used to.
Charles described the difficulty of the process in which partners go back and forth between the partnership table and their home agency. He said in his interview that “there were many miniature moments” of success, and these small moments of success became a drive to the next success. When the majority agreed on something, one person would go out and put a lot of effort into it for the sake of the group and then come back to the table with the results.

In this period, the topics discussed in the monthly partnership meetings included how to incorporate different regulations in one center, requirements for the physical environment, child-adult ratios, who serves lunch, transportation, numbers of full-day and half-day programs, what time they start their program, differences between compensations for staff, credentials of teachers, intake procedures, referral processes, how many classrooms each agency could afford, what each agency would pay, choice of furniture, arrangement of staff offices, and professional development for teachers and staff. I summarized issues that they had to coordinate in Fig. 4.7.

The Partners held a Summer Retreat meeting for two days in 2000. The degree of complexity was high, and some professional competition surfaced.

I start 7:30am and you start 7:00 am….this is how we had done it… This half hour difference... The levels of power were required for that half hour increments was totally unmanageable.  (Charles, facilitator, interviewed in July, 2002)

A breakthrough occurred when someone began to act on behalf of the partnership, not individual agencies. Charles believed in his interview that the turning point was when partners began to see from kids’ eyes and consider the project as the service for the
community. The project was reaching another level that required a deeper level of collaboration.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Fig. 4.7: Coordinating Issues Affecting the ECYCF Partnership**

_The Summer Retreat, A critical event for a deeper commitment to the partnership._ Even though partners expressed their commitment earlier in 1998-1999, this project required deeper commitment as it evolved with high-quality collaboration.

Partners have been asked to step outside of the original ways of thinking in their own agency, in many ways, but especially at the Summer Retreat.
People remembered a couple of incidents at the Summer Retreat. Head Start, YWCA childcare, and MRDD had different standard procedures in relation to hygiene issues. They discussed it for a while, then a person from YWCA went out of the room with her cell-phone in her hand, came back, and said, “We can do it.” Chris called this event a marking point and “an example that someone got up on behalf of the group, offering a person or money to do something for the whole group” (in his interview on June, 2002) in order to move on.

People saw Michaela (Council H.S.) and Betty (UPS) as influential voices and they did not agree on one issue. Charles invited them to his dinner table, and had informal conversations about dreams, which Charles did not explain in detail.

Next morning, she came up to me, and started to talk. “I came up with an idea…” and it broke the ice and people started to say, “Yeah, we can do it” and “We can do in that way.” (Charles, facilitator, interviewed on June 24, 2002)

When one person accepted a change, and become open to other possibilities, other members responded positively and that opened the door. Still, the retreat was tense with so many high stakes logistics and decisions that had to be made.

**Theme: Making commitment for the Greater Good.** Because the ECYCF partnership is a long-time project, each agency has had unavoidable changes and crises that threatened partnering. Betty (UPS) mentioned how difficult it was to keep her collaborative relationship with others when the Superintendent of Public Schools changed. That was also a time when the Public Schools experienced a significant budget cut and the district was trying to reduce the classrooms.
I had to try to convince Dr. H (the superintendent). They were planning for the budget for the next year, and I told them that this is commitment that we made with MRDD so we should move forward. Budget was tight in Public Schools. (Betty, interviewed on May 20, 2002)

In each fiscal year, the budget plan in each agency changes. Public schools could fill only two out of three classrooms in the first year, and later it was exciting to see a person from UPS reported that they will have another classroom next year at a partnership meeting in May, 2002.

When she was asked what kept her going, Amanda from Council H.S., said:

The same reason I started. Seeds in a garden. I have a new garden, and I selected bulbs, but didn’t plant them. A lot of seeds, and excited to see surprises and how they grow……waiting to see what blooms and what doesn’t……. I selected bulbs but I couldn’t plant, but I had nice people who planted them for me. (Amanda from Council H.S., interviewed on May 6, 2002)

For her, now that the school has opened, the real work was left to the teachers at ECYCF.

In fact, two Head Start programs, the Urban Public Schools, and YWCA assigned site managers or directors to operate the part of their collaborating classrooms in the center.

As the center opened, one more layer within the Partnership was added, “ECYCF Building” administration. Fig. 4.8 shows the new layer with names (pseudonyms) and active partners at the opening.

Rachel, one of the OSU professors involved in the partnership described this period of conceptualization and planning as:

I have never been involved in a ten-year process before, which ultimately resulted in meeting the original goal – that is we set out to create an innovative and unique enterprise for early childhood and although it took 10 years to build it, we did it! Through countless meeting to resolve countless issues of partnerships, we forged an amazing strong sense of purpose. Personally, I came each month because of the quality of the people around the table, and the quality of their thinking, and their ability to collaborate. It was very exciting and we have shared this feeling of excitement. (Rachel, OSU professor, July 2005)
The shared excitement Rachel described continued through the present, after the opening and each one of interviewees showed the similar excitement and passion in their interviews.

Fig. 4.8: The ECYCF Partnership after Opening
Phase IV: Building a Shared Experience (2001 Summer – present)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>who</th>
<th>Leaders, site managers, a professional facilitator, university researchers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing the vision with teachers, Valuing communication and relationships, Dealing with coordination challenges, Supporting the teaching staff over time</td>
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Figure 4.9: Timeline of the ECYCF Partnership: Phase IV

In this section, data sources include observation in addition to document analysis and interviews. I organized this section with themes identified across the data: shared vision, communication, coordination challenges, supporting staff, and sustainability.

As in any new project, the first year was about constant problem solving with lots of excitement. Unfortunately, not every agency could join all together. A third Head Start program had to withdraw right before the opening ceremony. This caused three MRDD
classrooms to have fewer peers. The Urban Public schools opened their classrooms 2 months after the opening.

**Theme: Sharing the Vision with Teachers.** The leaders worked on professional development trainings to help teachers understand the vision of the leaders and to build seamless systems in the building. The first Summer Institute was an event planned for the staff (by the OSU professors and the leadership team) to launch the building with excitement and commitment and to foster a sense of community among the staff. Since then, each year a Summer Institute has been held with a special focus. Teachers and specialists have worked on creating cohesion across agencies: Answering questions such as who they are and what environment they would like to provide (2001); revising the mission statement and drafting a handbook of their curriculum (2002); integrating assessment and curriculum (2003); and sharing each other’s curriculum and learning from each other (2004). As I attended the last two institutes, I can see that teachers are more used to their integrated curriculum in inclusive settings and have a more positive attitude toward what is discussed at Summer Institute than the original teachers, who were resistant to integration.

In 2003, I heard teachers saying “But that is different from my classroom” or “they do not know how we are doing actually.” Responding to summer institute in 2004, I observed that teachers were more engaged in sharing thoughts each other, and planning for the coming year. This may also reflect that several teachers from MRDD left because they did not agree with the philosophy and could not adjust their ways to the new ways of
teaching. Or this may be the result that Leadership level listened to teachers and provided what they needed at the moment. Sue (Council Head Start) said, in her interview on June 17, 2004, “You have to buy into it to be here. If you can’t, you can’t work here.” In other words, the staff needs to understand and value the vision of the ECYCF in order to work in ECYCF building. In order to have shared vision, directors and staff need to communicate well, and by having a shared vision, they can have an easier time communicating with each other and forming good relationships.

**Theme: Valuing communication and relationships.** Tremendous effort has been made to developing seamless administration. Site managers and directors from each agency have weekly “leadership meetings” at the building administration level to communicate the current issues in ECYCF. Over the years, this meeting became the place for them “to be honest with each other” (informal conversation at the meeting in March, 2005) and a way to accomplish their tasks. They feel safe discussing issues within this group, which means issues across agencies.

We can talk about these issues. Probably in the mid-year, I don’t remember which meeting it was, but we were very direct and joke about it, and laugh about it … talk about our staff. If we did not have that kind of support, it would not work… (Sherry and Beth, interviewed in May, 2002)

They can talk about which team has challenges, how to support, which staff did what, what pressure they are getting from the home agency and work out solutions together. This meeting is serving as a place to know about each other’s agencies, and to develop both professional and personal relationships. Even the assistant director from MRDD,
who had participated in the Partnership Meeting in the planning phase, felt she did not have good idea of what it would be like to be a supervisor of the classroom with two agencies.

It was an eye opener. I was supervising those classrooms. And she (the Head Start site manager) is supervising the same classroom. So we are co-supervising, but we never talked......so when she and I, finally were able to talk about it, it took a couple of months, we had different styles, I had my style. She was reserving her way, and I was reserving my way......my blinders came off. I was able to start talking to her again. It’s talking about what is going on. This is what I heard. Once Head Start supervisor said, “You’ve hearing this? No wonder you hate me.” The team has misinformed us. But we couldn’t track it because we were not talking. It’s hard to tell somebody that I’ve been told you are bitch. That is hard, but you need to hear what was happening what was heard. And it worked. More honest communication. (Sherry from MRDD, interviewed on May, 2002)

Sherry’s quote may sound simple: after they developed a relationship, communication was easier. However, this is a typical process when new people come into the partnership context. They would begin to do their job in the way they used to do, and find themselves confused because those ways are not the best ways to do things anymore, even for the experienced administrative personnel.

For staff, every Monday they have a “Town Meeting” to update each other, from directors as well as from staff. This meeting sometimes had less attendance because of different priorities in staff such as agency trainings and urgent preparation or meeting. They also have 5-day full-day classrooms whose teacher cannot attend Town Meeting. Relationship development across the building is still an on-going challenge, given the variety of schedules and organizations of the classrooms.
**Theme: Dealing with coordination challenges.** Despite everyone’s efforts, there are organizational obstacles beyond the control of the ECYCF partnership. For example, because childcare is a private sector and full-year program, it has been a challenge for them to participate in yearly training sessions, such as Summer Institute and Professional Development Day in the spring. Childcare has to give up some revenue on the days they close, which requires a lot of commitment from their headquarter office. Each agency follows a different calendar, such as Public School calendar, two versions of the Head Start calendar, and the MRDD calendar. In those calendars, they have different holidays and professional development days when they do not have children, and their school years start and end at different times.

**Theme: Supporting the teaching staff over time.** Leaders considered carefully who they chose to be in this building, and matched them, hoping that they would work well together. Still, when new people work together, there are always challenges. Mary Ann and Terry consider the experience in the satellite sites to have helped them know how they can help the teachers.

We learned from satellites, what makes it work, what did not work, so much about partnering, let it go, listening, compromise, sense of ownership, everyone needs to own, everyone should have certain levels of control, so much of it is based on orientations, lives they are raised and what they were taught, what their belief system is. (Mary Ann, interview on May 8, 2002)

You need to be there to support teachers. When to be there…And I learned to pull back to see the relationship evolves. Some of those teachers just didn’t work, wouldn’t work. We added a lot of support to, but sometimes we need to sit back. (Terry, interview on May 8, 2002)
They realize that for teachers from other agencies it is difficult to have ownership of a building that is owned by MRDD and has a strong MRDD identity. The MRDD staff is large compared to the other partners, and ECYCF constantly has many visitors from the community.

**Theme: Focusing on sustainability.** After the first year, issues discussed in leadership meetings and partnership meetings changed from operational issues to how to maintain their philosophies and have strong funding sources. Except MRDD, the partners continue to have staff turn-over, which is one current issue in the early childhood field, and the same issue they have experienced in their satellite sites. The first leaders in the ECYCF partnership will retire eventually. Building solid foundation philosophically and financially has been discussed as the next step since March 2003.

As I read their minutes from the partnership meetings, there are various issues including parking, safety, research to communicate with society, student placements from universities, community involvement project, family services delivery, communication efficiency, and family events. In the school year 2003-2004, the dental clinic was losing its initial funding, which created a big crisis (they found a funding source in May 2004).

Other crises emerged for individual partners. For example, at the end of school year 2004-2005, Metro Head Start lost much of their state funds and their delegate agency went into bankruptcy. However, teachers and staff from Metro Head Start are committed to staying in the building and continuing to work together. I observed the partnership meeting when they announced the bankruptcy to other partners. It was sad;
however, looking at the expressions of members at the table, I felt the trust they have in each other will help them overcome this challenge, and that confidence must have come from their previous success in their collaboration.

**Conclusion**

This collaboration project began with a voluntary commitment by the leaders, who already had deep relationships with each other and a history of collaboration. In addition, the political situation in the 1990s provided the context for the leaders to seek such collaborative projects. In order to promptly provide educational services children with special needs in the area, MRDD needed space and typical peers. In order to have seamless services system despite the multiple early childhood systems existing in the area, County Board of MRDD, Heard Start programs, the Urban Public Schools, and YWCA Childcare determined to build a new center to provide a one-stop-shop for comprehensive services for children with and without disabilities and their families.

What made those five agencies come together in the same building was a core vision—one that was shared by key leaders from each agency. Fig. 4.5 shows the image of the leaders as an advocate for each agency. Over time, even though the top of an organization changes, because of the relationship, they can sustain their collaboration with this partnership.

As the partners began to discuss practical issues such as division of labor, space, and system of administration, their collaboration developed to deeper levels, which required commitment, and continuous communication with both their own agency and
the other partners. Leaders learned to act for the greater good beyond their own agency and to be creative to solve challenging situations. These small moments of successful experiences created the solid relationship with trust and honesty. As they go through their planning phase, their core vision has been shaped into a more concrete shared-vision situated in the ECYCF building, which I have presented using the visual representations in Fig. 4.10 and Fig. 4.11.

Fig. 4.10: Beginning: Vision in the center of partners’ relationships
In Fig. 4.10, I represented the core vision in the center, and UPS, Council H.S., Metro H.S., MRDD, and YWCA surround the core vision directly with the strong connection of their leaders in smaller shadowed circles. These 11 circles are in the bigger circle with supporting entities such as the facilitator, Action for Children and OSU. All of these entities have also attended the monthly partnership meetings and have helped construct the shared vision, which is presented in Fig. 4.11.
Kagan (1991) reports that “interagency agreements generally focus on two major components: defining roles and responsibilities and identifying funding/resources” (p. 24). In their planning phase, the ECYCF partnership has been focusing on these two components that Kagan (1991) described. However, as the partnership developed more strongly, the way they decide these two components became qualitatively different especially after the opening. They knew each other’s limitations as agencies, and they knew each other’s personal differences. This kind of knowledge helped their negotiations progress more smoothly.

After the opening in 2001, however, the issues that came up in the meetings became more practice oriented such as professional development, re-defining curriculum in response to the political climates, and the changes in the individual agencies. Building level partnership became more cohesive and partners were creating their shared culture situated in the new building differently than the previous program for MRDD or than other buildings for other partner agencies.

Four years after the opening, the nature of challenges for the ECYCF partnership is changing to a focus on sustaining their strong partnerships. They showed their commitment already when they were about to lose the Dental Clinic and when Metro Head Start had financial problems. They will need to make their commitment a part of the culture of the partnership.

With multiple agencies under different regulations and legislations, curriculum alignment and development is an ongoing project in the building. With staff turnovers, it
has been a concern among leaders how to bring new people on board because they cannot recreate the original institute that set up the common ground.

On July 24 and 25, 2005, I was sitting at the table in the Summer Retreat of the partnership. Members at the table have changed since the opening of the building, as original members or key decision-makers declined to attend the table in these two years by sending their trusting staff, decision-making has begun to take more time than before when they needed to coordinate with home agency offices. Mary Ann proposed to have quarterly higher level partnership meetings to maintain their strong connections among the ECYCF partnership and pass their vision on to the next generation of leaders.

Sustainability and continuity became a theme in this Summer Retreat. They discussed familiar issues such as changes in federal and state grants and fiscal goals, as well as creating shared an understanding of the Integrated Curriculum Model and its relation to partner agencies. Leaders are shifting their attention to support classroom level collaboration, which I report in Chapter 5 through the case of the target classroom.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS II: CLASSROOM COLLABORATION IN THE ECYCF PARTNERSHIP

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I present analyzed narratives of the teachers’ experience in collaboration at the classroom/practice level. These narratives are situated within the leaders’ collaboration process, which constructed the partnership among different agencies. The findings at the leadership level suggest that the leaders came together for the greater good of young children and their families in order to provide seamless service. The process of collaboration involved the accumulation of successful small experiences from which to learn and on which to build stronger relationships based on collaboration. Toward the opening day of the building, the leaders shared with the teachers their vision and their mission for the ECYCF partnership. The target classroom, Room 701, is situated in this partnership as a newly constructed teaching team.

As a participant observer in Room 701 every week, I attended a variety of activities including teachers’ weekly planning meetings, monthly “team meetings” for
IEP development and monitoring for children enrolled through MRDD, the “Big Ten meeting” for the whole classroom and supporting staff across agencies, and events for the building such as Curriculum Night, Family Night, and regular Professional Development trainings. I also conducted interviews formally and informally with each teacher. In order to describe their collaboration process, I situate Room 701 within the context of the ECYCF partnership and describe both the building-wide curriculum and the different meetings for each classroom. Then, I introduce the four teachers of Room 701, and explain the specific details of the classroom. The five phases of the teachers’ collaboration identified throughout the 16 months of observations are presented in this chapter. These phases are based on coded data which I present in table 5.7 in Chapter 3. I chose to present the raw data analysis in Chapter 3 rather than here, so that I can describe the key events that occurred during these phases and critical elements of collaboration as themes within the analyzed narratives. Finally, I conduct a meta-analysis of the themes and summarize them as patterns found throughout the data corpus, which forms the basis for my interpretation.

**Room 701 within the Context of the ECYCF Partnership**

*The Context*

Room 701 is located in “Neighborhood 5” opposite the public entrance area (See Appendix A, Building map). Neighborhood 5 contains two UPS classrooms, one UPS/MRDD partnering classroom, and three MRDD/Head Start partnering classrooms. Within these six classrooms, one UPS and one MRDD/Head Start classrooms are
five-days-a-week, full-day classrooms. Room 701 is the one full-day classroom with a MRDD/Head Start partnership. Ten children in the classroom are enrolled in Head Start, while six children with special needs are enrolled in MRDD. Because the classroom teachers preferred to call children belong to MRDD as “County Kids” (as in County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmentally Disabled) in contrast to Head Start kids, I use “County children” to discuss the children enrolled in MRDD in this chapter. The teachers preferred not to use “mental retardation and developmental disabilities” as adjective for children. This is parallel to the recent trend in the field to use “children with disabilities” and “children with special needs” rather than disabled children or special needs children.

Teachers are expected to follow the guidelines and regulations from MRDD and Council Head Start. For example, they have inspections from Ohio Job and Family Services to fulfill childcare provider requirements, and both agencies are to follow Early Learning Content Standards mandated by the Ohio Department of Education. Council Head Start is mandated to follow assessment requirements to satisfy federal accountability requirements for the agency. Two Head Start teachers are required to periodically input anecdotal records and assessment results about each child on-line. MRDD teachers have to organize an IEP (Individual Educational Plans) team with OT/PT (Occupational and physical therapist), ST (Speech Therapist), art and Applied Physical Education (APE) teachers, and parents. They also have to keep records on the progress of County children, hold monthly team meetings, and write the end-of-the-year IEP reports.
Fig. 5.1 shows my representation of Room 701 as embedded in the context of the ECYCF partnership. Within the ECYCF building, there are 28 other classrooms which share an APE room, three “Motor Parks,” and a Town Square in the center of the building, where a nurse station and dental clinic is attached and many gathering and seasonal events and activities are held. Because each neighborhood has one art studio, the target
classroom shared the studio with five other classrooms (see Appendix A for the Building layout).

**Introducing the Four Teachers**

The Room 701 teaching team was comprised of the four teachers: two teachers from Council Head Start and two teachers from MRDD. These four teachers have different backgrounds, experience, and different reasons for working there. Although the Table 3.2 in Chapter 3 includes a section about the teachers, here I describe them according to their pedagogical beliefs. In addition to the influence of the ECYCF building context, these four teachers bring values and beliefs that they have constructed based on their past experiences into Room 701. In other words, the teachers form another layer that affects the context of the classroom and has a direct influence on the quality of experience that the children have within the classroom.

**Harmony (Lead, MRDD).** Harmony is a young Caucasian woman who started to work for ECYCF in September 2002 after she graduated from college with a master’s degree in early childhood education with an early intervention specialist certificate. She is 28 years old as of June 2005. Her parents worked for MRDD for a long time, and in Harmony’s words:

…both of my parents are in this field with MRDD, being with people with special needs has been a part of my life. All my life. I used to come to this school before it was renovated with my Dad, and play in the gym and stuff. Hang out on the playground, and ah, that was just normal to me. My mom works with adults. Well, she works with all ages but she had this group of adults that lived behind her office. That were part of her agency
or whatever, and she did like her families, and they would come to our house for Thanksgiving and Christmas. And we would go there to visit them to just relate, I mean, that’s always been a part of my life. People with special needs. (Interview on June 10, 2004)

It was thus natural for Harmony as an undergraduate to plan to be an occupational therapist and major in psychology; however, after she worked as an assistant teacher with Kathy at Mulberry for a year, she changed her focus to be a classroom teacher because “I can work with kids for longer time and holistically” (interview on June 16, 2004). Kathy was also her “role model” as “Kathy is a life long learner and always has something new for her students’ interests even in the last month of the school year” (Harmony, Interview on June 10, 2004). Kathy believed in the Reggio Emilia Approach, and working with her was Harmony’s first exposure to the practice inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach. In my observations and from MRDD and Head Start directors’ comments about her, Harmony seems fair minded and is able to appreciate multiple perspectives. Her practice seems to be a combination of behaviorism and constructivism.

_Pam (Assistant, MRDD)._ Pam is a Caucasian woman, age 52, who has worked for MRDD for 22 years since her son attended the MRDD programs. She grew up in a rural area close to this Midwestern city. In her words, she “was raised on a farm and … was poor” and “barely made high school.” She often says, “I am an underdog.” On the contrary, from my perspective, she is a caring, experienced assistant teacher. Other teachers consider her to be a “mom” figure or someone who provides “old wisdom.” Because her son has disabilities, she became involved with MRDD first as a mother and a
volunteer. Silvia, her son’s teacher, is a strong advocate of the Reggio Emilia Approach and currently Early Childhood Director at the State Department of Education. Silvia invited Pam to become her assistant teacher, and they worked together for years, including when Silvia was a teacher in one of the first inclusion programs, the Olson Avenue School in the UPS building. They taught as a team for 13 years until UPS closed that classroom. She developed her understanding of urban culture there. Consequently, her practice and her beliefs as a teacher come from Silvia, and the way she sees and interacts with children and displays their work reminds me of the Reggio Emilia Approach, even though Pam never formally studied the approach or any other integrated curriculum. She also worked in a classroom with Head Start for four years before she was worked in the ECYCF building. Her experience in these years gave her a perspective on what it would be like to be a Head Start teacher in a partnership classroom. In the second year of my observations, she explicitly shared her experience with us more frequently.

She strongly believes in MRDD programs as a parent and a teacher. I heard the following in her interview on May 24, 2004: “Chiharu, I believe in this program. I really do.” She believes in inclusion as a mother of a child with disabilities and as a teacher.

Pam has been guided by a vision constructed with Silvia and Mary Ann, and she cares about attending to children’s growth. Her experiences gave her some wisdom to be open to different possibilities, not to be afraid of changes, and to take time to work it out as a team. She often shared her thoughts with her colleagues, using phrases such as “Work smarter, not harder,” “Let’s use common sense,” and “I am a simple person, so I like it simple.” However, even for her, these two years were tough and she told Mary Ann
several times in different Big Ten meetings: “I never worked this hard, and it’s getting more difficult.”

*Amy (Lead, Council Head Start).* Amy is a tall African-American woman, age 46, with a strong will. She characterizes herself as “a hard worker,” a character trait that all the team members agreed with, and “someone who has to write down everything on the schedule and check them as I’m done” (4-Meeting in February 2004). She is a mother of three teenage daughters, which meant in addition to her working from 7:00 am, she would bring her daughters to basketball practice after work, and go home around 10:00 pm. She is from a military family and her husband is in the military, which shapes her way of thinking, according to Amy. She rarely talked about her own childhood but always talked about her “babies.”

She began her career in a business. Her family moved around as her husband was placed in different bases. When they were in California, she got a home-daycare license and became a stay-home mom for her third daughter. She did home-base daycare for 3 years in California and 2 years in North Carolina. Through her home-base daycare experience, Amy found working with children rewarding, and parents encouraged her to become a teacher. After they moved to Ohio, her daughter was in school already and Amy worked for the YMCA as an administrator for a youth program for 7 years. She went to college during that period and received her associate degree in early childhood education. Then she joined Council Head Start in January 2003. She was assigned to Room 701.
Amy had been in the position of the decision maker as a home-base daycare, an administrator in YMCA, and a summer center lead with other directors. She told me that she did not have much experience with children with disabilities before, and she was learning as she was teaching. From my observation, her interview, and informal conversations, Amy has a tendency to be easily overwhelmed by the amount of tasks ahead of her. She expressed her beliefs in “developmentally appropriate practice” at meetings, and she thought that the strategies offered by MRDD, such as IEP, are not developmental approaches.

On the other hand, Amy’s enthusiasm for the partnership was strong, and she was an only Head Start teacher who presented on behalf of her team at a whole center professional development institute in the summer of 2004. This reflected her social positioning on the team and her previous experience in YMCA as an administrator leading more than a hundred teens at a time. Amy was confident in public and has a leader mentality.

Amy does not have a good opinion of schools from her own experience and one of her daughter’s experiences. In her interviews, she shared how her daughter’s early experience as a struggling learner in school negatively affected her later schooling. This experience is one of her motivations to help Head Start children be ready for school and her focus on early academic skills.

**Trina (Assistant, Council Head Start).** Trina is a 28-year-old Caucasian woman. She began her work with Council Head Start at the ECYCF in 2002. Amy is the second
lead teacher she has assisted in the same classroom. She majored in education until her sophomore year of college, but she did not graduate. She worked in retail for about three years before joining Head Start. She often talks about her church and her involvement with church-based volunteering programs, such as international friendship and youth programs.

Trina has a good memory and likes to collect “trivia” information (group interview on June 10, 2005), which sometimes helped her to connect to children’s interests. Her personality trait becomes a strength when she documents children’s activities in records and displays. She said, “I feel I am like a librarian” who sorts out information (February, 2004 in informal conversation) and “I am so fascinated by different things.” She is intrigued by the Reggio Emilia Approach and participated in a study group in the building.

Despite her post-secondary education, Trina did not feel prepared to work with the preschool setting. She likes young children; however, she has been struggling to learn how to interact with them, and how to work with other people in the same building. She did not have experience baby-sitting before, and she analyzes:

I am not used to hugging each other. I don’t remember my mom and dad hugging me after I became big until when I came back for a break from my apartment…. I didn’t know when I should be hugging and I had to try to hug. (June 10, 2005, Group interview)

Intimacy is something she was trying to learn. She explained that her physical distance from children may come from her childhood. She has to think if a child needs physical contact and reminds herself to do it. Harmony and Pam commented about Trina: “She grew so much in the last three years” and Trina responded to them “and I have so much
more to go.” (June 10, 2005, Group interview) Probably because of her growth, Trina is described differently at different points of time in my analyzed narratives.

These four unique teachers were characterized as “strong women” by directors in the buildings many times in informal conversations. They are strong in different ways, and throughout my observation period, they have worked hard to try to solve this complex puzzle of placing themselves within the context of Room 701 and the ECYCF building.

**Curriculum**

Teachers are to follow the *Integrated Curriculum Model* configured by the ECYCF partnership leaders. This model is broad enough to meet and blend different requirements and ways of teaching, and it is supported by a philosophy and values inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach. Teachers learned this model in Summer Institutes and other professional development opportunities. This model is the core concept to enables teachers to work in the same classroom despite their differences.

Fig. 5.2 presents the “PTWEBB Cycle” of Integrated Curriculum Model in the ECYCF partnership. This is a cycle to plan, do, observe, interpret, evaluate, and plan. “P” stands for Planning: plan activities and the environment based on each agency’s curriculum framework, previous observation of children, teachers’ interests, and goals and skills for the children. “T” stands for Thread of Interests: discovering what children are interested in and understanding where their skills and developmental levels lie.
through careful observation and documentation. “WEB” stands for Webbing: a part of planning and evaluation process, connecting children’s interests with the existing and possible activities and environment. “B” stands for Backmapping: an evaluation process that asks them to evaluate whether their curriculum meets state standards and requirements as a program.

Fig. 5.2: PT-WEBB A Curriculum Planning Tool in the ECYCF Partnership (cited from Integrated Curriculum Model published by the ECYCF in 2003)
The four teachers worked to follow this model in their planning meeting; however, at the same time, each teacher tried to find a way to adjust her old way or her agency’s way to this model. The four teachers continuously worked toward using the PT-WEBB system as they learned about the Integrated Curriculum Model by doing it in daily practice. The four teachers discussed “thread of interests” and “webbing” in their meetings, although they did not always document them in visible format.

“Backmapping,” the evaluation aspect of the model, seemed to be a challenge as they were busy planning and preparing for the next week.

Fig. 5.3 shows an example of a “thread of interests” chart from the target classroom and Fig. 5.4 shows an example of weekly planning when they did a “City Project” in April and May of 2004. This classroom uses Creative Curriculum weekly planning sheets in Fig. 5.4 for their planning tool. As Room 701 is a Council Head Start and MRDD classroom, they use the forms from Creative Curriculum, which is mandated to all of the Council Head Start classrooms. MRDD agreed to use it for everyone because Creative Curriculum is compatible with the Integrated Curriculum Model. On this sheet, only the two Head Start teachers’ names are listed. Head Start teachers are required to submit these sheets weekly, but the MRDD teachers are not. I observed Amy (the Head Start Lead) take responsibility for filling in each of the boxes after others filled in or shared their ideas during the planning meeting.
Fig. 5.3. An Example of Threads of Interests from Room 701
### Fig. 5.4. Example of weekly planning from Webbing (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Dramatic Play</th>
<th>Toys and Games</th>
<th>&quot;To Do&quot; List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add more photos of buildings</td>
<td>Keep the same.</td>
<td>Play games in Physical Education</td>
<td>Field Trip Prep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative art and small tiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Type up letter to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Do Handhelds&quot; Prepare for &quot;Big Yellow&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep City books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start working on 2nd picture of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add &quot;Child&quot; readers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water sensory table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingerplays where is the fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding bikes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various computer games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteers for &quot;City&quot; field-trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Planning Changes to the Environment**

Week of 5/10 - 5/14(10)

Teacher:

Study/Project:

Assistant:
(Fig. 5.4. continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Planning Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Time (songs, stories, games, discussions, etc.)</td>
<td>Field Trip Preparation</td>
<td>What was the best part of the trip?</td>
<td>More reflection about the visit trip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytime</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Library Lady &quot;Pets&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Activities (visit trips, special events, etc.)</td>
<td>City Field Trip</td>
<td>Pettin Zoo</td>
<td>pumpkin carving</td>
<td>Group Clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes (reminders, changes, children to observe)
Meetings

Every Friday for one hour during naptime, the teachers in Room 701 had a regular planning meeting called “4-Meeting.” They usually brought in two substitute teachers from other MRDD classrooms whose planning days are Fridays and who can be flexible because they do not have children on Fridays. This substitute system shows Mary Ann’s (the MRDD director) values and her respect for the teachers and curriculum planning. In addition, they have a whole team meeting called “the Big Ten,” which includes the MRDD director, Mary Ann; Council Head Start site manager, Sue; the OT/PT; the speech therapist; the art teacher; the APE teacher; and the four teachers. In the second year of the observation, the art teacher and APE teacher did not attend their Big Ten.

Even though their class is open on Mondays, one of the team members is supposed to attend the “Town Meeting” for all the teachers every Monday between 11:50 and 12:30 a.m. However, the four teachers rarely could attend because they are down to three during that time and it overlaps with the children’s lunch time when the teachers were needed in the classroom. On Mondays, Council Head Start usually has agency training once every two weeks either on site or at their headquarter building. If one of the Head Start teachers needed to attend, a teacher from Council Head Start would come to substitute most of the time.
Multiple Perspectives in One Classroom

In order to understand the context of collaboration over time, it became clear that I had to first understand the personal and professional attributes that each teacher brought to the team. Through my analysis, it became evident that the four teachers worked with their own beliefs and values and negotiated their differences, which are analyzed in the narrative of their time together over the course of 16 months. In this section, I summarize the different identities, beliefs, and values of each teacher, as well as the changes in the negotiation process over the period of time.

Different Discourses and Different Identities

Some of the puzzle pieces that teachers were trying to fit together were their identities and their values and beliefs which were grounded in their agencies’ values and beliefs, as well as their own previous experiences. The teachers were aware of their differences from the beginning, although they sometimes could not articulate the differences. Here, I introduce the differences that were apparent from the beginning, then return to these later in this chapter.

When the teachers tried to communicate with each other, they were challenged to understand each other because they sometimes lacked shared meanings about certain terms. For example, I found that the common words in the early childhood field, such as “developmental,” “developmentally appropriate practice,” and “child-centered,” can have different meanings. My understanding of developmentally appropriate practice includes the practice of responding to the needs of children with disabilities. However, I heard
Amy repeatedly distinguished between Head Start and MRDD by saying that MRDD “does not follow a developmental approach.” At the same time, it was hard to understand her perspective about what “developmental” is because of her understanding that academic skills are imposed by adults rather than arising from children’s interests. She considers Head Start goals strictly academic and yet sees their assessment as more developmental than MRDD’s assessment. It seems that special education to her was a more medical and behavioral approach. Trina also thought MRDD teachers’ approach was “teacher-directed” because “Estefan and Leon pretty much had a teacher sit behind each of them to get something done. And so they (those activities) were very teacher-directed” (6/8/2004, Trina & Sue Interview).

On the other hand, Harmony and Pam believe that their intervention takes place through naturally occurring activities such as play and routine activities and their planning is based on the children’s developmental levels and what support they need to have successful and meaningful experiences. They think their perspectives and the specialists’ support would benefit Head Start children as well.

In terms of identities, all four of the teachers feel their responsibilities are to their respective agencies before the collective partnership. The Head Start teachers especially expressed their obligations to follow their curriculum and assessment requirements. MRDD teachers had less conflict between the partnership and their responsibilities than the Head Start teachers; however, they feel that it is their responsibility to look after County children, and the partnership can hinder educational opportunities for county children if they do not carefully plan. This perspective is
different than the leaders’ perspectives reported in Chapter 4. Although leaders
coordinated the integrated curriculum model to fulfill the requirements for all the
agencies, not all of the teachers understand how the model works for Head Start.

Harmony: We are looking through different lenses, you know, she (Amy) has a very
particular lens, and she is filtering out interactions there, and then I’m looking at it
through the IEP lens of the child and I’m filtering out when I need for that. They’re
different because Creative Curriculum requires formal observations, specific assessment
tools.

Amy: For Council Head Start, we have to do an assessment on each and every one of our
children, which is very different for MRDD, and how they reach their goals. (informal
conversations in May 2004)

Although Harmony and Amy related their differences to IEP and Council Head Start
goals, some aspects of their differences are in fact due more to personal beliefs than to
institutional differences.

They also differed in their view of the roles of adults in the classroom.
Expectations for relationships between lead and assistant teachers were different between
the MRDD and the Council Head Start organizational cultures. In MRDD, assistant
teachers are more empowered and considered equal contributors to the program, while
Amy preferred more hierarchical relationship between lead and assistant and applied her
view to understand the relationship between Pam and Harmony.

These differences were always in the classroom; however, the way they dealt with
these differences changed over the period of time. These changes are summarized in four
phases.
A Timeline: Five Phases to Describe the Evolution of the Teachers’ Collaboration

From January 2004 to June 2005, the four teachers changed their ways of communicating, discussing, and interacting with each other and children. I summarized the process of the change in five phases, as shown in Fig. 5.5. These phases are not a linear development moving to smoother collaboration but rather they are characterized by different challenges during these periods.

I named the first phase from January to March in 2004 “negotiating roles and organizations of the classroom.” Even though they had been working together for 10-12 months, they were still negotiating the organization of the classroom and role distributions. They rarely reached full agreement on almost any topic.

![Fig. 5.5: Five Phases in the Four Teachers’ Collaboration](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan. – Mar., 04</th>
<th>Mar. – June, 04</th>
<th>Sep. – Dec. 04</th>
<th>Jan. – Mar. 05</th>
<th>April – June, 05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(From talking about teachers to thinking about children)</td>
<td>(Having shared plans, creating a space that all of them can belong to)</td>
<td>(Readjusting from Head Start-only class to partnership classroom, Facing organizational challenges)</td>
<td>(Changes in calendar time and rotation to set up play areas that triggered a major crisis)</td>
<td>(A teacher’s resignation, looking at challenges and their differences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiating roles and organizations of the classroom</strong></td>
<td><strong>Finding common ground and successful experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Getting to know each other, and challenging the institutional limits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collapsing relationship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection and preparation for the future</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change that signaled the beginning of the second phase began in late March and continued into April as they seemed to find a common ground that they were all there to help the children. That led the team to have successful experiences in finding children’s interests and facilitating an engaging project for the children. During this phase, the teachers had plans that all of them agreed on and everyone had a way to contribute and respect each other’s ideas. Unfortunately, this phase ended as MRDD finished their school year in early June.

As the third phase started in September, the Head Start teachers, mindful of last year’s experience, were more conscious that they needed to make a careful transition from being a Head Start-only classroom to a partnership classroom. They voluntarily used every available minute in the Summer Institute to get to know each other. During this phase, I heard more personal exchanges at the meetings, and they seemed to maintain the interaction patterns from the previous spring. In contrast to the positive relationships within the team, the teachers became aware of challenges coming from outside of the building, such as time restrictions that prevented them from being able to attend regular activities as half-day classrooms and trainings that would conflict with their meeting time.

MRDD has a longer winter break than full-day Head Start, which only has a week. After the break in the fourth phase between January and March 2005, things started to fall apart. Amy had been worried about differentiating their teaching for 3 to 5 year olds and brought up this issue relating to their calendar time (i.e. morning meeting time). That discussion turned into three weeks of discussions that involved their supervisors.
Amy was missing their Friday meetings 40% of the time in this period. Harmony was frustrated by the fact that they could not communicate, so that they could solve the problem. One day in February, the other three teachers had to make decisions without Amy, which triggered Amy’s resentful reaction. This became a major crisis. Still the four teachers could not create the time to talk together, not because they were not willing, but other urgent agendas from outside interfered and professional trainings fell on Fridays.

The fifth phase began in April 2005 when Amy decided to resign her position to work in another private daycare center close to her house. She had to attend to her and her daughter’s health issues. It came as a surprise since Amy was committed to helping Head Start children. In fact, in a June 2004 interview, Amy said that she was going to work with Council Head Start for a long time. Other teachers and supervisors thought that Amy’s departure was good time to reflect and prepare themselves for the new teaching team in the following year, and in the mean time, they used a temporary substitute. Given these five phases, I elaborate and further analyze stories of the four teachers’ collaboration focusing on key issues and events.

A Story of the Four Teachers: Key Events and Different Perspectives

Table 5.1 below displays what was happening in the target classroom in terms of team issues and classroom practice. I used months as chronological indicators, while things did not happen month by month. The bold letters in “Classroom” boxes indicate project themes that emerged from the on-going activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>when</th>
<th>Team issues (teachers)</th>
<th>Classroom (Children's interests)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P h a s e 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Jan. 04 | Classroom change during MRDD break  
Letter exchange between Amy and Harmony    |                                                                                                  |
| Feb. 04 | Finding effective mode of communication  
( notes, idea basket)  
parallel communication  
Still exploring what is the best organization for this class  
Trying to share feelings | Classroom Observation started  
short free time for a full-day room, long transitions  
**Doctor’s Play**                                                                                          |
| Mar. 04 | Changes in the environment worked well  
Anecdotal records for Head Start, dues are coming  
Communicating about each other’s agency  
Inequality in teachers’ break time  
3/31 Big Ten meeting | Feeling hectic, MRDD teachers’ frustration not be able to attend to  
County children’s needs  
**Doctor’s Play**  
Richness in children’s play with more time for free play                                                                 |
| Apr. 04 | Talking about children’s interests  
What project can emerge  
Sharing ideas for what children can do  
Pam’s neck injury | MRDD Spring Break (not Head Start)  
Soil  
Plant  
faded out  
Map  
**City Project**  
Interests in construction play, heights,  
County Children left in outdoor play                                                                 |
| May 2, 04 | 5/7 Big Ten meeting  
Purpose of documentation display  
Focusing on City Project with children’s interests  
Plans agreed by 4 teachers | **City Project**  
Field trip to downtown 5/11  
Eric Carl day for “Reading Is Fun” Day  
**Art in Books by Eric Carl**                                                                                          |
| Summer | How to end the year?  
Needs to meet in summer and talk about children proposed  
no meeting happened | MRDD Zoo day  
MRDD school year ends  
Head Start operates without specials  
Head Start Zoo day  
Head Start new children                                                                                          |

Table 5.1: Happenings in the classroom from January 2004 to May 2005
(continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Table 5.1: Continued)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P 04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2-day Summer Institute (Council Head Start training over-wrapped)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to be flexible, thinking what is really important and what can be let go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDD Children Starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about children, assessment, parent meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct.-Nov. 04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How effectively they can document children’s activities and use them as anecdotal records for Head Start Assessment and County IEP.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit discussion about each agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Patrol and break time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn interest coming from Town Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11/16 Family Night (No Council Head Start, Y, UPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Head start Parents conferences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building vs. Classroom (Agency/building trainings on Fridays, Conflict with Library day and Team meeting, People popping up to intervene in Planning meeting)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baby Play themes from Family Play</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers hands were scarce because one teacher was out of the room pretty often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P 05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaningful activities for all the children → thinking the way we do calendar time → it became a conflicting issue (collapsing relationship)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors began to attend planning meeting once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baby Play</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feb. 05</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hard to have 4-teacher meetings</strong></td>
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<td>OSU Student teacher full time teaching</td>
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<td>Rotation change decided in the meeting without Amy, and Amy brought this up to directors</td>
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<td><strong>2/17 Big Ten meeting</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Talking about individual children’s needs</strong></td>
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<td>Teachers do not communicate each other, and small group time was longer and in other areas in the building</td>
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<td>Head Start teachers attending paperwork and cannot observe children’s play much</td>
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<td>Discussion how they can do better with next team member, 4/21 Big Ten meeting</td>
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<td>Some children had family issues and the number of children went down to 13</td>
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Phase 1: Negotiating Roles and Organizations of the Classroom

Theme: Issues of control. In January, before I started my observations, Room 701 had a critical conflict. Over the MRDD winter break, Amy started a new system to take attendance at the meeting and she communicated it by writing a letter instead of talking to Harmony:

She (Amy) could talk to me, but she probably needed something concrete, writing. She could talk to me, but she chose to write a letter to me. The letter was something like Dear Ms. Harmony, we decided to change the classroom and use the name chart because I thought that would benefit my children blah, blah, blah. (interview with Harmony, 5/14/04)

The word, “my children” implies that Amy’s focus on Head Start children not for all of the children in the classroom. Amy often referred to her responsibility as helping her children “to get ready for kindergarten.” In my research journal, I was feeling offended because I heard her saying that county children would never be ready and could not pursue the same goals. In my view, county children were also preparing to go into the kindergarten context. During this period, I did not express my feelings; on the other hand, I shared my feeling in the next school year.

Harmony and Pam said “our children” as well, and in their case, two MRDD teachers together look after county children, while Amy felt she alone was responsible for Head Start children. Harmony felt that Amy was controlling the classroom more than she could tolerate. Pam suggested to Harmony that they have additional planning meetings on Tuesdays or Thursdays during naptime so that they could communicate more.

When Amy came in as a new teacher, she might have had traditional image of inclusion: children with special needs are included in general education, which is a main
body of the classroom. In contrast, the other three teachers had a cooperative co-teaching image as the ECYCF partnership, which considers two entities as equal partners.

**Theme: Feeling separated.** On February 4, 2004, I joined their regular Friday planning meeting for the first time. Two substitute teachers from a classroom that does not have children on Fridays came to the room around 2:00 pm, and the teachers moved to the small conference room in the office area. Pam was absent on that day. Following Mary Ann’s previous suggestion to the team, they had time to share honest feelings in the meeting. All of them were feeling somewhat isolated and overwhelmed with the responsibilities.

I feel attacked some times. I am probably the only one who is different… I have a military background……………… I feel like I am a detective…..I have a list of responsibilities and those are the things that I feel obligated [to do]. I’m worn out if I feel I am behind for the list….we have Galileo, Assessment, and portfolio, and I feel that we have to get it done and doing the things we have to do, otherwise, we might be caught up. (Amy, 4-teachers meeting, 2/6/2004)

We have so much to do. You know, we had gym, story, music, small group (activities coordinated with children's ongoing interests) and they (kids) had a little time to play. (Amy, 4-teachers meeting, 2/13/2004)

Amy seemed to feel that she is not fitting in the room, and she is caught up in the paperwork and assessment for Head Start. She always had her schedule book with a To-Do List and wanted to get it done by the time she planned. That was her working style, which was not the same as other teachers in the room.

Another Head Start teacher, Trina was obviously less experienced both as a teacher and in the general workforce. Trina had to be told what she should be doing, so
they created a “Job Chart,” explaining which job is whose responsibility in detail.

I often feel envious about Harmony for her calm personality, Harmony, I really think you are the calmest person in our team…..and Amy, you are the most organized person, and I wish I had your organization. I don’t feel like I am doing right….I can do nothing right here… (Trina, in 4-teachers meeting, 2/6/2004)

Trina and Harmony are the same age, and Trina had mixed feelings when she was compared with Harmony. Probably in reaction to this feeling, she often created documentation displays by herself, and would try to make contributions to the discussion with sometimes excessive force. Harmony shared my observation, and she told Trina once, “You are always fighting, trying to prove something. You need to have a rest” (May 2004 in informal conversation).

Their supervisors, Mary Ann (MRDD) and Sue (Head Start), characterized Harmony as a peace-maker and laid-back. I also perceived her as a discussion facilitator who makes bridges between teachers.

I feel like we are always having trouble and talking about problems….we talk a lot….but we do not complement each other. (Harmony, 4-teachers meeting, 2/6/2004)

I never thought it would be so difficult like this. I had no idea how it could be difficult in this way. This is very different from what I could imagine from university. (Harmony, in informal conversation, 2/6/2004)

In college, she learned early intervention and the concept of inclusion; however, she did not expect team teaching could be this complex and require so much work. Harmony and Pam had said in a Big Ten Meeting (January 2004) that they do not want to come to work in the morning. She did not expect to have the continuous negotiations and conflicts that they had, and she felt her education did not prepare her for the situation.
Pam described what may be a source of the challenge in the team in an informal conversation after a 4-teacher meeting.

You know….we, Harmony and I, believe that children learn in play, that is how MRDD has been, but she (Amy) has different philosophy and beliefs. I do not care what they do as long as it works for the children. I don’t care about this meeting, I am just an assistant. (Pam, 02/13/2004)

It seemed that Pam was trying to separate her job from what she disagrees about in the classroom and felt that this separation was acceptable as long as it did not intervene with the children’s needs, in this case, necessary interventions and environmental support for children with special needs.

Theme: A place of intense activity. I noticed from my observation that the classroom is a place of intense activity most of the time. The schedule did not allow children much play time in which they could freely choose what they want to do. “The full-day class is supposed to have more flexibility and time for children to develop their own interests. Why are they so busy?” (my research journal, 2/13, 2004). Teachers were busy all the time, and I found myself taking the part of a “helping adult role” rather than an observer role.

Among six children with special needs, there were three boys who needed constant attention from adults. Jim, a Caucasian boy with cerebral palsy, was five years old. He could not move his body well, so he was in a wheelchair most of the time. Estefan, a 4-year-old Latino-American boy, had delays in language, social behaviors, self-help skills, and motor skills. Leon was a 4-year-old Caucasian boy with delays in
language, social behaviors, gross motor controls, and self-help skills. These boys needed diaper changes, and feeding/eating was an important activity for them. Estefan and Leon were very impulsive and needed constant reminder from adults to attend to an activity. Pam and Harmony were the main teachers to interact with these three boys, Trina and Amy took less active roles in helping these children.

Of course, other children had needs that required support from adults as well. Therefore, teachers were stretched thin to respond to different needs and to expand children’s experience in play in meaningful ways.

**Theme: Negotiation without Conclusions.** Teachers’ discussions at meetings were focused on classroom organization such as how they could minimize children's waiting time before breakfast and lunch, how long their meeting time should be, and when they should have gross motor activities and music time. During that phase, teachers often talked about time limitations. They seemed to feel that they do not have enough time for the children or themselves.

Although on the surface the points of discussions were time management and scheduling, teachers were negotiating based on their own beliefs about how the classroom should be operated. They discussed how strictly teachers should have control over children's behaviors, and how closely teachers should monitor children's lives in the classroom on a concrete level.

Their discussions at meetings did not have conclusions and similar issues were discussed every week. For example, in late February, they talked about rearranging the
classroom. They put their ideas on the table and listed the things that they could do. But they could not reach a concrete agreement. Rearrangement was accomplished in a patchwork manner with each person bringing her piece to contribute. They talked a lot at meetings; however, they merely listed ideas, often without responding to each other’s ideas.

They decided to use an “Idea Basket” and a “Notebook system” as communication tools to include everyone’s ideas. The Idea Basket was to collect notes of ideas from everyone and discuss them on Friday meetings. The Notebook system was to send daily messages to each other such as someone’s mother coming to pick him/her up early and any changes in the schedule of the day. Amy and Trina did not have downtime in their work hours, meaning that when they report to work they have children. It was also to serve as a concrete record of their communication.

**Theme: Institutional differences versus personal differences.** Amy and Trina were feeling the demands of Head Start accountability procedures with standard goals for preschoolers and documentation requirements for each child. Amy especially considered her responsibility to Head Start children to be preparing them for kindergarten. Amy rigidly aligned her curriculum with the standards, but sometimes she chose to adapt and modify the guidelines from the agency so that it would make sense for her classroom. In fact, Sue, the site manager of Council Head Start, encouraged them to modify the guidelines from the Agency into more meaningful activities for children in their classroom. However, Amy tended to use a more straightforward, didactic approach,
teaching target skills in small groups and whole group meeting time. For her, literacy is books and letters; while, for Pam writing skills include the foundations before actual writing such as fine motor development, shape recognition, and sound recognition.

**Theme: “Head Start thing.”** They also found that the way they were guided in the professional development session from their agency could not be applied directly to their classroom. Trina had training as an assistant teacher to implement a health and hygiene curriculum back in her classroom. She brought it up to the class and was going to implement as she was taught in the training; however, because ECYCF has a comprehensive program already with a gym teacher and an OT/PT, MRDD teachers did not see the need for Trina to bring in additional activities. They talked to Sue, the site manager for Council Head Start. Sue right away explained how other sites would not have the motor activities that are available in the ECYCF, unless teachers consciously implemented them, and how it was not necessary to do new things but Trina needed to document related activities already happening in the classroom. This kind of alteration was sometimes difficult for Trina and Amy without Sue’s suggestions.

Anecdotal records for the Creative Curriculum (CC) assessment required by Council Head Start were Amy and Trina’s responsibility. Amy thought Head Start teachers had to observe the target behaviors of children to input CC assessment over the internet connecting to the Council of Head Start data base directly, although Trina thought they could ask MRDD teachers to write anecdotal records as well.
Phase 2: Finding a Common Ground and Successful Experience

Theme: “It’s about children.” In March, Amy repeatedly used the phrase, "It's about children." That phrase worked for her to connect to other teachers. In her mind, all of them were there to work for the young children's wellness, no matter what kind of differences they might have. She still did not have a clear vision to be shared with other teachers; however, this thought reminded her that she was not there for Head Start but also for the greater good, for children. In fact, she began to respond positively to others’ ideas at meetings.

Pam: I think our kids are getting bored very easily this week.
Trina: Yeah, at Group Time, Day said, “I’m bored,” and he kept on and on and on. Just after 5 or 10 minutes, they did not want to make trees, so I had to find a green string to put the leaves on for a variety of the activity.
Amy: I think so too. I think we are getting a message from children. They say, “We want to make choices.” Teachers are stopping what they are doing all the time now.
Harmony: That is a good point. They need to have a meaningful time for them. (3/12/04 4-teacher meeting)

They talked about their observations and found similarity. The “Doctor’s Play” theme in the children’s play was fading away, and everyone saw the need to find another thread of interest. Teachers began their meeting talking about how children played and what they said, then concluding their meetings with decisions that everyone could agree upon.

Around this time, I found Pam became more active in their discussions to provide ideas and suggestions. She is resourceful because of her rich experience in her career and her six years’ experience with Head Start partnership classrooms.

Theme: Adult issues: “I hate to come to work.” When they had the Big Ten meeting on March 31, 2004, with their supervisors, specialists, and the art teacher, the
teachers were still focused on adult issues. When Mary Ann asked “how the transition is going,” the teachers responded by talking about how they were dealing with it. Mary Ann needed to remind them she is asking if the transition is working “for children.”

Mary Ann asked the four teachers how they feel about working in the classroom in the Big Ten Meeting:

Mary Ann: Do you still feel in the same way? Do you hate coming to your class?
Pam: Yes. It is still hard to be honest with you.
Harmony: Yes, I don’t hate coming, but every morning it is still hard.
Amy: It is hard for me, too. (inaudible words)….but I feel good once I am in the classroom with our friends (children).
Harmony: I am okay with children. Just……
Sue: It’s Adults!!! Adults!! (jokingly)
Pam: That is true. We still have tedious things that we have to talk about all the time.
(Big Ten Meeting on 3/31/2004)

The teachers’ answers were contradictory. Amy answered that she was feeling better about being there. Trina did not answer. Harmony and Pam said that they felt it was still hard to be there facing challenges. This difference appeared in different moments. For example, when Amy said, “We are here for children,” Harmony was doubtful if Amy included County children in her thoughts and asked Amy what she meant by that. A relationship based on trust was not yet established.

**Theme: City Project - Coordinating Downtown Field Trip.** After the Doctor’s Play project, teachers could not find or facilitate long-lasting interests in children’s play for two to three weeks. In early April, Amy brought a map of our city to the classroom. Children were all over on the map and they talked about where they live and how they can visit other friends. During MRDD’s spring break, Head Start children build a
structure with blocks. When MRDD children came back from their break, Harmony wanted to revisit the same activity with County kids, and this deepened the interests of the Head Start children. The teachers picked up the children’s interests in construction, buildings, and skyscrapers. This happened when I was out of town for a conference. But when I went back to the room, three children came up to me before I entered the room and showed me the map on the wall, and explained that the dots show where their houses are and they wanted to have a dot for my house as well. They wanted to know if I lived close to them.

Reflecting children’s excitement, their planning meetings were full of exchanges about children, such as how Estefan named blocks, “house,” and how children manipulated different materials. They had Water Day and Reading Is Fun (RIF) day as building events in May as well. Amy also wanted to include literacy activities relating to RIF day in addition to the City Project. They planned small group activities with both literacy related and City Project. Then Amy brought up a field trip idea to go downtown, and everyone else also liked the idea and began their planning. In the planning, Pam’s experience with different kinds of field trips helped them to sort out the factors they needed to consider: Ordering sack lunches, finding out which organization’s bus they should be using, where to eat lunch, asking parent volunteers, and safety precautions in addition to planning the field trip as part of the curriculum.

The field trip was a joyful event with parent volunteers. I later interviewed each teacher separately about the city project. Sue, the Council Head Start site manager, requested that she be able to accompany her teachers, Amy and Trina, at their interview.
Amy and Sue reflected on the event in their June 9, 2004, interview, as follows:

Chiharu: What did you like most about the project?
Amy: What I liked most about the whole project was the children really affirmed us as a team that we were listening to them. I mean, they did it for me.
Sue: You were listening to them and they were listening to you.
Amy: Then, then, they were listening to us. It wasn’t, it wasn’t a dictation, it was a dialogue.

[omission]…my whole thing was how are we going to do this wheelchair thing? How are we going to do this? Ms. Trina was like, “I got a connection and they will meet us at the door.” And when we got there, no one met us at the door. [Sue: Oh, no.] And then I thought, “Okay, well.” She says, “There is an elevator over there.” We go to the elevators, just walking together as a team, and just bring them all together. I think that was what I got out of it.

Amy: I mean, just the idea you know we are here for the children. We are not, our background is different, so we really cannot sweat for ideas to be the same. But we have to find a common ground. We have to compromise, we have to communicate, we have to give, we have to let some things go…so that it can be a good room for the kids. That’s the bottom line.

Sue: So the trip was the first real good example of that.
Amy: It was a good example of “Wow, we are able to sit down and make this thing happen.” So, that was, that was the best thing I got out of it.

In Harmony’s interview on June 16, 2004, Harmony listed things she liked about the project, including that they could learn more about kids and how their different perspectives helped them see the environment, and how they could use different materials:

… I was just thinking about…what element of the whole project…if it was…I also liked introducing so many materials. I think that was good on our part, That was a good thing on our part as teachers to be able to let the kids explore so many different materials. I think that even could have been expanded more, too. But … I think that kind of let us know that we were the fact that we could introduce so many materials and talk about how can we make this bigger for the kids was good reflection on us as a team. I think that’s when, when we started brainstorming like that, in that way, how can we make this better for the kids, then we started jelling more as a team. So that was like an indicator. I mean that was a favorite part because that was an indicator for our productivity. But in terms of the kids, a fair part of the kids, I liked the perspective things. I think that’s good learning for they can carry through out, they can generalize on to other themes and other topics and other concepts.
Pam Interview on 5/24/2004:

Pam: Finally comes together. Finally comes together, doesn’t it? And that’s the way it should be. You know, ah, yeah, like I said, I can’t even recall who did what and what, but that’s the way it should be. You know, you just if four of us get together and throw out these ideas… and then sit down and decide which one is better ideas and you know which one to throw out and whatever, which one to keep, not to take offense, if it was you idea or not your idea. That’s when things started working.

Chiharu: Right…So what part did you most like the project?

Pam: You know…what…I’ll tell you what I remember…the part I liked probably most part of the project, is the part I dreaded most. The downtown thing…I think the kids got more out of that the actual…especially ah, I won’t say especially because I think all kids benefit from the actual doing of things, you know? I mean, more tangible, more concrete as opposed to talking about it or something.

Trina & Sue interview on June 8, 2004:

Chiharu: So, what part did you most like about the project?

Trina: Seeing the excitement in their faces when they were interested in it… (omitted)… And…it would be really neat to see them like when we did on the field trip, they did notice all the stuff that we did point out before we went. And it was for me it was I love seeing their excitement and I love getting excited when they are excited. So that means I know that they were getting somewhere. … [omission] …I think my favorite part was watching them build the city during the spring break (of MRDD). And because it was, then it was child-directed. We just told them what we were going to do as far as “hey we are going to build the city” and it happened and it worked. They had so much fun and they even started some dramatic play with it, with some of the pieces of stuff. Then other children came back, and I felt that was pretty teacher-directed. Then we constantly had to redirect children and show them how to do it, and it just wasn’t as fun as when we first did it.

The children's discussion extended to “what is in the city?” and different kinds of buildings. All of the four teachers jumped on their interests, and "the project of the city" emerged and I observed more dialoguing at planning meetings. Everyone valued children's interests even though their reasons why they thought those words and behaviors were important might have been different. The project was concrete enough for them to discuss their pedagogical beliefs and to construct shared plans. The project lasted for more than a month. Through “the project of the city,” the teachers began to construct
a common ground. The teachers seemed to identify ways to communicate beyond their cultural and pedagogical differences and between general and special education fields.

Their experiences in the City Project worked as moments of success that provided positive views about their relationship and gave them affirmation for being a team. I observed that Amy was beginning to see the county children as capable beings and to take more responsibilities to attend to Jim, Estefan, and Leon.

**Theme: Reflecting the year – “We learned a lot.”** One of the changes in the meetings in this phase was efforts to communicate about what they did not know. Amy and Trina were asking about terminologies in early intervention and ideas from specialists. Pam and Harmony were asking more about Head Start regulations and attempting to distinguish between what comes from Head Start regulations and what comes from individual teachers. From informal conversations and interviews with each teacher, I found teachers are aware of the growth and changes in other teachers as well as themselves. In her interview, Harmony expressed her surprise regarding the change in Amy and Trina, and the recent change of Pam, who was taking more active roles. Their communication became more constructive than just exchanging the information. They were not using communication tools proposed by Mary Ann in February 2004. In the Idea Basket to keep their notes of ideas, instead, there are:

Estefan's marble, Leon's bracelet, beads, something lost and found. We don't use it anymore because we talk. I've never thought about it in that way by the time I said it loud. Hmmm, interesting! That basket was a tool to start conversation and we don't need it. (Harmony, June 16, 2004 interview)
On May 12, 2004, 6:00 – 8:00 pm, they had another Big Ten Meeting with specialists and site managers. Harmony and Pam prepared a list of things that they found worthy of discussion at the Big Ten meeting.

- take time to know each other
- Our children are integrated but not parents. Is there a way that both MRDD and Head Start teachers can do parent conference with all the parents.
- Importance of specialists and how they can work with our classroom better
- Need meetings to talk about children. They have that kind of meeting separately but Head Start teachers need to know IEP goals and MRDD teachers need to know Head Start children.
- Need to think about coordination between Small Group and specials (APE, Art, Town Center specials etc.)

When Pam and Harmony listed these things, Pam invited the team “don’t to stick to one way if it’s not working.” Harmony said, “The first initial year is over. It was a difficult year, but I'm not ready to give up though. There was a time I did not want to come but I was guilty as much as you are.” She proposed to discuss issues as their own problems not given by others. Mary Ann and Sue asked them if they want to work in this classroom again. Amy answered:

I like where we are now. I feel much more comfortable working as a team. I would like to know more about how you do for your children (children with special needs). Those terms (that specialists were using at the meeting), I don’t know, but I want to learn from you. (Amy, May 12, 2004 at the Big Ten)

Amy was glad about regular Harmony-Amy meetings because she could get to know her better, where their differences lie. Harmony, Pam, and Trina also expressed their intention to move on to another year together. They were more articulate regarding what became an issue between them. Amy felt comfortable to show her weakness, lack of knowledge about special education and articulating children’s levels.
I didn't know their goals. I remember that Harmony was looking at me and I did not know why for a moment. Then I realized that I was doing something too high for the boy. I didn't know how to do that. I'd like to know how you do so that I can incorporate. (Amy, 5/12/04 Big Ten)

Pam proposed raising the bar on roles and responsibilities in the same Big Ten meeting.

We should have ownership of the classroom. We talked about the responsibilities but we should have ownership. ……We should be able to see what is not done yet and what is done. When you find something to be done, don't tell someone else. Just do it…..We can also share things like responsibilities. (Pam, May 12, 2004 at the Big Ten)

Pam is trying to share her view regarding responsibilities. This team could distribute their jobs and roles with a concrete system; however, she was feeling the needs to go further: that is, taking ownership of what they do in the classroom. Pam also used a metaphor of “living in apartment or house” to describe team-teaching. If we are living in an apartment, we would leave a mess in the room, but if we are living in own house, we would take care of the house better. This issue about cleaning the closet and classroom and maintaining toys reappeared next year as Head Start teachers had different standards about classroom maintenance and their priorities. The following excerpts are conversations among specialist and teachers at the same Big Ten meeting.

Harmony: I learned that there are things that cannot change, something like our own experience. We cannot change who we are. But we can be open and try new things. Occupational Therapist: That is something you guys were outstanding. Pam, you are outstanding to be open to try new things. After we tried the sensory integrated therapy, Pam said it seemed to be working, so let's do it. And in your class, children are integrated.

Amy: I like where we are. I had time to build an individual relationship. I and Harmony had different sense of time. If we had a group time at 10:00, I would start to look at clock and looked at Harmony at 9:45 and Harmony would think why Amy is looking at me. So I would go, "Isn’t it time to start clean up?" "No, no, not yet." At 9:55, “Not yet.” For Harmony, 10:00 would be the time to clean up…

Speech Therapist: Then a specialist comes in and asks Harmony, “Do you have time to talk?” and everything falls apart (jokingly).

Amy: Yeah (laughs). But I learned to let it go certain things. It is all about children. How they spend time. I like where I am.
This excerpt reflects the relationship between teachers and specialists. In my observations, this was the first Big Ten meeting that specialists spoke openly with Head Start teachers. Having specialists in the classroom is a common practice for special education teachers; however, it had been a challenge for Amy because she had to be more flexible in some situations. She had to let go of her control over the classroom to specialists. It was not only the specialists. I observed other kinds of numerous visitors, such as social service coordinators, a nurse, site managers, student teachers, student observers from the community colleges and universities, Head Start service coordinators, other teachers in the building, and researchers from universities. Classrooms in the ECYCF are exposed to the public.

On this day, Trina was relatively quiet. She did not speak out a lot. Trina and Amy did not have a respectful relationship with each other although they worked together professionally. When Amy was working smoothly with MRDD teachers, Trina tended to be reserved from the social circle of the team, and when Amy was out of the loop, Trina was more active in the group.

**Theme: Different views of children with and without disabilities.** Even though the four teachers were working together much more smoothly than the previous phase, I found some issues that disturbed trusting relationships between teachers. One is interactions with children. Head Start teachers consistently responded to county children less than MRDD teachers, while MRDD teachers responded to both Head Start and County children fairly from my observation in the classroom.
Both MRDD teachers and Head Start teachers felt responsible to teach and record what the children should be learning or individual goals. The classroom was "chaotic and over-stimulating," which was stated by teachers several times from February to April 2004. It was frustrating for them not to provide enough care and interventions to Jim, a boy in a wheelchair with developmental delays. One occurrence was during nap-time. When their absence could cause difficulties for children and other teachers, Harmony and Pam were reluctant to take their breaks. Especially when Pam had to take sick days in April and May, Harmony chose not to take breaks because some substitute teachers would not be able to support Jim, Estefan, and Leon.

We are depending on Ms. Pam to deal with Leon and Estefan a lot. So when she is not here, I have to take over her role. That is fine. But at the same time, I have to do whole lot of other things that I usually do. This is really tough. I am glad that you are here today. I really do. (Harmony, informal conversation on 4/30/2004)

When Pam was not in the classroom, classroom management became more difficult for the rest of the teachers. Jim had an epileptic fit during the school year and his abilities were deteriorating. Estefan’s behavior had a significant effect on the dynamics of children in the classroom. It was difficult for everyone to negotiate between his needs and the other children's needs. Harmony knew that not everyone could deal with Estefan and Leon’s behaviors without a good relationship with them. In addition, a few weeks before the above incident (Jim’s epileptic fit) happened, an incident occurred that affected trust between teachers. One day after outside play, the Head Start teachers left Leon and Estefan outside while Harmony and Pam were not available because they were either taking a break or taking a boy to the nurse’s station, and did not notice until Harmony
came back to the room. After that incident, when they had to leave the room, Harmony and Pam would take Leon and Estefan with them as much as possible. The teachers revisited their system of separate attendance sheets for MRDD and Head Start, and created another one with everyone’s name so that it would not happen again.

Children were integrated, but not teachers. There was another research project done in the same classroom regarding children’s socialization in inclusive classrooms (Katz & Galbraith, in preparation) in the spring of 2004. Their observations validated the integration of children in the target classroom; however, teachers are not as integrated as much as children. Even though Amy and Trina had good intentions to work for both Head Start and County children, they did have limitations in action, probably due to their limited experience and knowledge with special education and children with special needs.

Jim was awake, and ready to do something. Children began to do the game that gym teacher introduced. I was with Jim, and Amy and Trina were standing and watching children. No one was available to support him. (5/21/04 Classroom Observation, Applied Physical Education)

Right before Applied Physical Education (APE), Harmony took a child to the nurse station and Pam was taking a day-off. I was bothered by the fact that he had to be alone with me for a while when I thought it was an excellent moment to provide some physical activities for Jim. I was not sure if I should be moving Jim from a wheelchair to the mat. I was not sure if Amy and Trina felt that they should not or did not want to be doing anything without MRDD teachers or if Amy and Trina did not notice at all. Ten minutes later Harmony came back and moved Jim from his wheelchair and helped him participate in the activity. Regarding Jim, Trina said in the following year, “Oh, I think Jim was
included in our classroom. You guys (Pam & Harmony) were always with Jim. I did not feel like I would come and do something for him” (March 2005). Looking at the same situation, Trina, Pam, and I obviously had different perspectives.

During Potty Time, Trina had been reluctant to take Estefan, Jim, and Leon to change their diapers. On the other hand, Trina and Amy included Jim’s wheelchair in circle and followed the way MRDD teachers had done before to let Jim participate in games and music, and they facilitated interactions among children.

In an interview in June 2004, Amy was appreciative to have experience in how inclusion would work. Trina told me a story of her good friend back in her school, who had disabilities and how she related with her. On the other hand, in practice, there was a boundary between Head Start teachers and County children.

Trina: No offense, but I'm exhausted chasing Estefan. Jim and Estefan…I'm not the only one chasing him, I'm sorry but…
Harmony: That's fine. That's true. (5/21/04 4-Teacher Meeting)

Trina was making efforts to support County children, and this is a typical for any teacher to feel overwhelmed to deal with certain behaviors. It was good that Trina could share that with other teachers; on the other hand, Harmony also needed to share her overwhelming feeling of how to support Jim, Leon, Estefan, and their families. Harmony accepted Trina’s feelings.

The following episode also represents how people see the same situation from different perspectives.

Harmony: (Tries to put Jim on the floor using a cushion. She walked around the classroom to look for a red bean-bag cushion, asking other teachers and me if we saw it. She talked to Trina who was at the "writing" table. Trina was cutting out the shapes from
Trina could not see what the function of the red bean-bag and why it had to be in the classroom. Trina could not see Jim waiting on the floor alone in an uncomfortable position. Harmony saw Trina under the pressure to finish the cutouts for their small groups, and chose not to talk about it at the moment. This kind of moment was observed often both for Head Start and County children. Each teacher was learning to see the situation from the other side and from a bigger picture, but that was not a quick and easy process. Pam and Harmony commented on the change in Amy, how she changed her attitude toward County children and became more open to different options. However, there was more work to be done in the following year.

**Phase 3: Challenging to Institutional Limits/Getting to Know Each Other**

Half of the children in 2004-5 were returning students from the last year. Jim moved on to kindergarten, and so did his good friends from Head Start. Estefan and Leon came back to the same classroom. There were no County children in diapers, but there were three boys who just turned to three and needed guidance for self-help skills, such as potty training, feeding, and changing clothes.
Critical Event: Summer Institute. On September 1-2, 2004, the whole building was closed to attend the Summer Institute, led by the university partners. The aims of this Summer Institute were to revisit their values and beliefs and to share their ideas with other classrooms. Toward the end of the institute, each teaching team was asked to develop their goals as a team for the new school year. The four teachers and I had lunch together separate from other groups and began to share our personal experiences, such as why we got involved with early childhood education. I was shocked by the fact that they did not even have time to know each other in the whole year, and they enjoyed this time to build their personal relationships. All of them were very positive and excited to be back in the classroom.

During lunch, we were also disappointed by the fact that Head Start teachers could not attend one morning of the Institute because of their agency training. As we talked, it was apparent that this half day created a gap between teachers regarding their understanding of documentation and assessment. Harmony and I attempted to help them to catch up, but we were not so successful.

As one of Summer Institute activity, each teaching team was asked to create a documentation board to display their goals for this school year. The four teachers decided to have goals both as individuals and a team, as shown in Fig. 5.6. These goals represent the importance of assessment for these teachers, and using assessments relating to their curriculum. In other words, they perceived incorporating assessment into the curriculum challenging but critical to improving their practice. This is in fact a common challenge in the building, according to the focus group interviews I conducted later in 2005.
Individual Goals

Amy - I can only change myself.

Pam - To think broader

Trina - To interact with the children in a more playful manner

Harmony - Looking at the big picture

Statement of Intent

To have a system in place in which we can integrate our different assessments (IEPS, ICPS, state federal standards, “Get it, Got it, Go,” Creative Curriculum continuum assessment, using PT-WEBB and

Fig. 5.6: Goals Identified by The four teachers in Summer Institute, 2004-5

Theme: Negotiating an ECYCF Way. After the Summer Institute, the four teachers started a new year in the following week and exchanged their views of assessment, documentation in the Reggio Emilia Approach, and documentation display. I joined two lead teachers’ meetings on September 9, 2004. They acknowledged that this
is time for them to get to know the children, and for the children to get to know the classroom and each other. They discussed the possibility of using documentation for these purposes.

Amy: Documentation has main focus, generative, and child-initiated. It’s different from portfolio and assessment.
Harmony: Portfolio and assessment and documentation are similar to me.
Amy: What do you mean?
Harmony: (explained her view.)
Amy: Head Start has different assessment, more developmental. (9/9/2002 Amy-Harmony Meeting)

I asked Amy what she meant by developmental, but she could not offer clear ideas of the meaning of developmental for her. From other conversations with her throughout my participant observation, I assume that developmental assessment gives her ideas of where the child is and what goal that child is trying to reach next. Amy and Harmony went on to discuss how they do with their raw documentation, notes, charts, and artifacts. I noticed that Harmony was talking about assessment and documentation based on the content in the Summer Institute; on the contrary, Amy and Trina could not attend the first half day of the lecture part. She obviously did not have the same foundation as Harmony although she was at the previous Summer Institute in 2003.

They continued the conversation regarding documentation and assessment on September 29, 2004:

Chiharu: I think there is confusion here. Documentation is end-products or the process? I think we may want to use the word “documentation” a little bit more carefully.
Amy: Documentation is the process. Finished products include process, what was meaningful to them, and how it happened.
Trina: I think where to ask questions and documentation go hand-in-hand. Planning and documentation has to go together.
Amy: Right. What matters is where is it coming from, and what are you asking.
Harmony: Planning is coming from observation. Here I see the whole circle coming from,
that reflection circle, observation, assessment, planning, and teaching and observation again. (She is talking about the PT-WEBB circle in Fig. 5-2.)

Including September 29, 2004, they were not able to have a planning meeting with all the four teachers consecutively for five weeks due to days off and trainings. Therefore, the next time they could discuss about documentation and assessment was November 5, 2004.

Harmony summarized their discussion so far, and attempted to integrate the system for Head Start, MRDD, and ECYCF.

Harmony: Hypothetically we all are taking anecdotes (this is how teachers referred “anecdotal records of observed children’s behaviors), about all the kids, and sharing that information for the things that we particularly have for different agencies, then, o.k., so we take the information back to before even kids came back documentation thing…take concrete traces, and put them in the basket. You make copies for your thing, and put them back in basket, and we can go through and you know sit through and find the ones we need for our IEP goals. Then put them in our kids’ particular folders. We document by our kids’ particular folders. We put specific kid’s information in specific kid’s folders, that’s our system. I mean, then we put back our stack in basket. So whatever is in the basket can be for our thread of interest back to the documentation things. (11/05/04, 4-teacher meeting)

Harmony thought that if they could collect all of the anecdotal notes into one basket as a shared resource, then each one could make copies for the portfolio for individual children, records for assessment, and IEP folders, as well as using the notes in the basket for talking about the children’s interests, that is, for their curriculum planning. However, at first, Amy was resistant to her idea.

Amy: NO, THAT’S not the system. When I took that basket, when (inaudible), when we took that basket with ….Ms. B said why we are like that…she didn't like this… with all reality last year we did Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday things, folder and everything, works better because of the fact that I can see each day. Versus I have to go through. Go through. BUT nevertheless, our staff needs to be in that binder, and we have binders going to each one of our children. Children are divided up in that binder, and our
staff need to get written, and needs to go into the computer as quickly as possible.
(11/05/04, 4-teacher meeting)

Amy is typically resistant to adopting new methods. In this case, for Amy the new system could increase amount of work for her and might not satisfy the requirements of Council Head Start. Because Trina understood Amy’s reasons for her worries, she showed Amy how she could gather information with the new system using the anecdotal records on the previous day. She chose what she needed for Head Start children’s binders and made copies of them, then left the copies into the basket so that other teachers could have a chance to look at it. Harmony explained again that anecdotal notes will serve three purposes, Head Start assessment, IEP goals and portfolio, and curriculum planning. I created the visual representation of their ideas in Fig. 5.7.

![Diagram showing the proposed system of documentation and assessment for Room 701]

Fig. 5.7: Proposed System of Documentation and Assessment for Room 701
This system was an attempt to create a tool that works for Room 701 negotiating with the norms in the ECYCF building. This was a critical step for this team to have a system to accommodate the different requirements from Head Start and MRDD. The following excerpt shows Amy’s responses to the explanations about the new system from Trina and Harmony.

Amy: I think you (Harmony) and I can sit together to talk about the system….
Harmony: O.K. You and I can talk about for the thread of interest, Pam and I can sit down for our IEP goals, and you and Trina can sit together, we can't forget that piece. Now our IEP goals are written now we know what we need to do.
Amy: That's cool. I just make sure that….my supervisor wants to know and is always looking for what we are doing….and I don't want to hear it……I'm just thinking this is the way of us organizing our room, but….if I need to communicate that over, too, then I need to be able to tell her. (11/05/04 4-Teacher Meeting)

Initially, Amy attempted to postpone the decision on it and have a lead-teacher’s meeting to decide probably because she usually needs time to change her methods. Also, she has a mindset about how she should be doing things for Council Head Start from her trainings and was worried about using alternative ways. Amy did not understand that this proposed system was new for Harmony as well. Amy seemed to think Harmony’s proposition was out of her “Head Start thing,” while it was actually a new ECYCF way.

Theme: Regulations or Interpretations? As it appeared in the teachers’ discussions about documentation and assessment, the teachers began to question more explicitly their own agencies. These questions elicited thinking about their own agencies, which they discussed in the context of cleaning the closet on October 8, 2004:

Trina: They (Head Start) say I cannot clean when I have kids.
Pam: Again, Trina. This is about regulations and interpretations. This is about common
sense. You cannot use chemicals to clean but we have to clean when we have a mess in
the room to teach anyway.

When they could see what they do from the others’ perspectives, the other’s views
usually reminded them to think about the meaning of it such as the reasoning behind
regulations and requirements. Thus, they understood about themselves better. However,
when it comes to Creative Curriculum assessment (CC-net) for Head Start, it was harder
to take another perspective. CC-net is a concrete task with due dates, and teachers are
monitored on-line because they input the data directly through the internet. Each teacher
shared their thoughts about CC-net in their individual interviews later in the year. I asked
Amy why she always says CC-net is their priority:

Amy: No, No. I will be honest with you. I would love to work without assessment tools.
(She looked at my tape-recorder.) Because I can see the growth. I know where children
are with physically and academically. What it is we need to do to get them ready for next
step. But the reason why that is a priority in our room is because on our training that we
are getting. Okay?

Chiharu: Training in your agency.
A: Yeah, the agency is saying that it’s our priority. Every single day, there should be some
areas on (inaudible) those children fifty of these interest areas showing some type of
academic work. So it has put the pressure on. Then as a lead teacher, I answer more to it.
You know, I have six other teams. She has four. Then we are constantly monitored by our
agency on this assessment tool. We’re monitored [more] on this assessment tool than
anything else. So put in our priority. I love to work on portfolio more often. I would love
to work on hands-on activities a lot more. I started to do at-home activities so that parents
can start work with children at home. I send those every single week. Then on the top, the
assessment tool CC-net, okay, has become our priority for Head Start teachers in our
agency. We got to be writing all the time. So I am not moving around, then I might be missing something. So all
for of us are putting into the positions that we have to be writing and watching and
talking, did you see that? Did you see that? You know, constantly because of what the
agency is telling us. We also know this is not just here in this room. It’s all over. [in other
classrooms in ECYCF]
C: Yeah. Probably.
A: Yeah. We are constantly on the computer, constantly end up to say, “you know, I don’t
have a written anecdotal in for language for Steve.” I got get it done by the end of the
week. (3/11/2005 Amy Interview)
Amy had trouble finding the value of CC-net relating to the curriculum. Her task-oriented tendency increased her pressure to meet due dates. She shared this pressure with other Council Head Start teachers, and MRDD teachers were outsiders about this assessment.

I also asked Trina how she thinks about assessment and how she is using it:

Trina: …. So for us we have to take any anecdotal notes we have or whatever we remember, and we have to write it; we have to have everything written down. Then we write it in the book because we have an assessment book where we have to add everything for every single child in the book. Sometimes you have to handwrite the same things six times for the six different children that were all in the same play story. Or they will, then we will take that information and put it on the internet on the computer. [C: So..] That’s what we used to figure out where they are developmentally and try to get them pass that stage to the next level. Because they are three levels within our assessment. Yeah we have 50 goals and objectives, but each one of those has actually they have four levels, there are forerunner, level 1, level 2, and level 3. We try to get all those kids on level 3 on everything by the time they go to the kindergarten. Or at least on the level 2. (April 21, 2005, interview)

Trina’s description of CC-net is also task-oriented. She believes that she has to handwrite anecdotal records and cannot make copies of them. I tried to ask her how she relates her assessment information with her planning, but I could not have her own opinions except what she believed that she was told to do by her agency.

Pam understood the frustration with Trina and Pam, and the nature of the assessment for them. For Pam, anecdotal records are more for Head Start, and she described her tendency to prefer talking about it rather than taking notes about what children did and said.

Pam: I have assessment, but we work in totally different ways. What I understand from Trina and Ms. Amy is they have to have if it says “see Johnny walk on one foot,” then I think they take it sometimes too literally actually have to do. Where I would see that in Gym, oh check he did it. But on their assessment, they have to, they’re saying that they have to write down exactly what their child did [and] write that date down. And the county doesn’t do things like that. …[omission]… I think their paperwork [is] sometimes
redundant. Maybe frustrating for them. I think I would be. This doesn’t frustrate Trina as much as [it] did Amy. Yeah. That was a big problem. Amy looked for us a lot of time for support for anecdotal and stuff, which I said I have a hard time because I was hands-on so much with Estefan…how do you write anecdotal when you are along with kids at the same time, you know. (Pam, April 20, 2005, interview, underlined by author)

Pam is a good observer, but she keeps herself busy with children who require constant facilitation to participate in the activities. Harmony also found CC-net as a cause of conflict over which she did not have any control, as shown in the following excerpt from an interview with Harmony.

That was the end of quarter February 28th, that, like, date is burned into my memory forever, February 28th, February 28th, because that’s all they were talking about is they got to get all the stuff done before February 28th. And that was a big theoretical difference between us. Because my feeling about that was, “I’m sorry but we are not planning for assessment, we are planning for the children, so that children can have good experiences, then we should be able to pull our assessment from that.” And that was a big disagreement between us. And that never got resolved, either. We never agreed on anything, we never even agreed to disagree on that. That was just something, well I do on my way, and you can do your own way or whatever. (Harmony, April 20, 2005, interview, underlined by author)

Harmony was stressed because Amy’s attitude toward CC-net prevented her from working for the children and moved the classroom away from Harmony’s ideals. In order to meet CC-net’s due date, Amy needed to use children’s nap-time, which also could have been time used to discuss on-going issues with Harmony. Harmony’s assessment (above) also describes how these four teachers left their differences without managing them. The discussion about the observation system for this class did not reach consensus. Amy did not openly disagree with it, but she did not follow through either. When they had differences, teachers chose not to talk about the differences, or perhaps, they did not know how to talk about them.
I thought that this team sometimes felt a pressure to work together for the sake of “partnership” and avoided differences. What they needed to talk about was about their differences. Differences themselves are not negative; rather, attitudes toward differences can have negative effects on collaborative teaching. Some of the differences were institutional; however, interpretations of them were personal. Teachers sometimes needed to ask supervisors if their interpretations came from personal beliefs, an agency’s traditions, or Head Start regulations. They usually waited until the Big Ten meetings or let go of their questions.

**Theme: Feeling marginalized - Team vs. Building.** Regulations are not the only important difference between agencies. The amount of resources available was also different. Any teacher had access to the materials and space in the building; however, for the classroom materials, they buy classroom furniture out of the MRDD money.

Amy: Just like ordering supplies, like you [Pam] and Harmony sat down and ordering all the staff, me and Trina don't even know what you guys ordered. And while we think this is the team effort, before four of us sit down and ordered, but if out of the MRDD money, I felt that I don't have anything to say, although when I'm thinking about Head Start children, I think probably I would have looked at some staff. But we didn't have a say on that. And never did. (11/5/04, 4-teacher meeting)

Then, Pam asked why Council Head Start doesn’t buy things for the classroom, and Amy and Trina explained their system that they need to go through their main office and sometimes takes for months. They had an experience when their order of dry-erase markers and crayons were lost or delayed and Amy had to ask the MRDD office to get them.
Amy: But I'm just thinking that if we are thinking about supplies and materials and things like that, it would be kind of nice for me and Trina to sit down and see, you know, some, ah, make some ideas and have conversations whatever that might be. We are in the same room, but…
Pam: You have that right. You can get what you need and you can write requests with rationales.
Amy: I wasn't sure if I could do that. (11/5/04, 4-teacher meeting)

After this conversation, Pam realized the feelings behind not being able to make purchase orders. As Amy said, MRDD orders might be specific money to accommodate children with special needs. She would not have known. Amy and Trina know that materials in the building are for everyone in the building and they can freely use them. Site managers meant that it is acceptable for Head Start teachers to make requests or share ideas on MRDD purchases; however, emotionally it was not okay for these Head Start teachers. And MRDD teachers did not know how resource sharing in the ECYCF partnership was working.

Harmony: That's the thing. If you step back and look at it…
Amy: Two different agencies.
Harmony: Yeah, because we are appointed from two agencies, it's like, I don't think people are intending to do it, but they are throwing wedges between us. So we already, the four of us sitting down in this plane field, we are already got wedges, that things are not working for us, different time schedules, different policies, different…
Pam: Differences in kids! I'm sorry, but they are different.
Harmony: Yeah, that's true. There is difference in kids. Yes, there is. That's true. That's supposed to be. I mean, they are supposed to be paired with peer models.
(11/5/04, 4-teacher meeting)

I thought they had a very honest discussion on this day. All of them were determined to work together from September. As they began to think more as a team, they found obstacles coming from outside of the classroom. We (including me) were not sure how far leaders want us to be integrated. They were told that the two parties are equal, yet, they felt these differences almost prevented them from working together. The teachers
were still in the process of negotiating around these differences and constructing their own methods that work for this particular classroom.

**Phase 4: Collapsing Relationships**

After MRDD teachers and I came back from winter break, I found that the relationship between teachers changed again. The topics in discussions changed from about children to about adults, what teachers do, and the same topics were discussed for a month. Things were done without clear agreement some times. “Calendar Time” or calendar activities during morning meetings was one of these topics.

**Calendar time: A critical incident in Phase 4.** In early December, Harmony asked her team whether meeting times, especially calendar time during meetings is working for younger children. Amy responded rather passionately to this question and the two discussed what this group of children needed at the moment. After MRDD teachers and I returned after our winter break, Amy proposed discussing the same question in a 4-teachers meeting: the meaning of the calendar for 3-years-old. This discussion continued for three weeks and was almost cyclical in that they always returned to the issues from the previous week. I found this pattern almost identical to the first phase, “Negotiating roles and organizations of the classroom.” The topic changed from children to adults and what teachers do.

In order to capture the different perspectives of the four teachers, I asked each teacher to recall this incident later.
Amy: Yeah. I will tell you what it was for me. I was… I questioned the whole calendar in a pre-K classroom. Because my question was what is the children getting out of doing the calendar. [C: Okay.] Number one, I thought the calendar was long. I think that especially for 3-year-olds. The whole calendar idea was really high. I wanted to kind of simplify. To be honest with you, I wanted to make it fun. I wanted to make it work for them. I don’t think it’s fun, I think it’s wrong, I don’t know what they are learning. If it’s really important in our room, is there different way we can do it? Yeah. We have done a few different ways. Then I’ve seen the classroom they don’t do it at all. Because maybe it’s a preference thing, but … in… State College, going to educational process, we were told that the calendar in a pre-K classroom is not developmentally appropriate. Because of the concept of it. It’s too much. (interview on March 11, 2005)

I wrote in my notes about this interview that Amy’s responses seemed a little protective to justify her perspectives, listing her reasoning about the issue. She mainly commented on the initial discussion about appropriateness of the activity, but not about how discussion went. Her attitude was different from the City Project when she was open to criticism. On the other hand, the other three teachers were rather analytic about the issue, considering what was behind the issue rather than the issue itself.

Harmony: I think it was a manifestation of something else because calendar just can’t be that important. I mean calendar time can’t be that important. I think that has to be, I think there was the things within the discussions that were important enough to fight over. [omission] okay, for me personally it was important to try and get other team members to think about the calendar in a different way… I was looking for specific assessment in terms of raw-counting, in terms of number identifications, in terms of memory, attention and things like that. (omissions) ………it’s just like it seems like we kept getting off topic so much because in this calendar discussion, we talked about seasons, weather change, and you know all these different things, like yesterday, today, and tomorrow things were in there, there were new ideas that I was definitely willing to explore. But we couldn’t all… we were all like all over the place. Each of us, individually, it was crazy. I mean, it was just we just we kind of need to pull together on it. (Interview, April 20, 2005, my underlining)

In her memory, their discussion let them think about the calendar deeper; however, teachers valued different components of the calendar. Harmony valued assessment components in calendar activities, while Amy wished to examine the meaningfulness of
the calendar for young children. Pam saw Amy’s point and made suggestions to the discussion.

Pam: … so you know calendar is not really tangible (Pam explained a calendar example of one teacher). Yeah, you know, so kids can write the number and stuff. I tried… that was my problem. I tried to explain to Amy, (Pam demonstrated how she tried to explain) and I don’t think she really got a good grasp of it. So… I made a calendar, I think that was a construction from Mary Ann to go ahead and do it to put it up. And she (Amy) just pretty much ignored it. So… you know I was like “oh, well.” But I think she did get one thing out of it.

Chiharu: Yeah. Yeah. I noticed that. (Amy did change one thing in a way she did calendar)

Pam: So, I think that was, kind of, it was resolved by just giving up on it. I didn’t say anything. (Interview, April 20, 2005, my underlining)

Pam expressed her frustration over not being able to explain her ideas and being understood. Her reaction to the situation was “giving up.” She did not attempt to solve the problem through discussions. This negative resolution was the source of frustration for Trina, and disturbed the relationship among the teachers.

Trina: For me, it really wasn’t that big of a deal. Because you know the calendar is a calendar, doesn’t matter how you put it together, how it’s presented to children, they’re going to learn the numbers, they’re going to be able to recognize them, they’re going to learn the days of the week no matter … how you have it visually. I was kind of upset because the only reason I even got a little irritated, it was more of an irritation as opposed to upset. When Pam had come in with her own calendar that she had come to make the little snowman in January. It was only there for one week when Harmony was doing meetings, and next week, Amy took it down. Did not even discuss with anybody, did not even tell Pam why. That bothered me… because that was something we had all agreed to try at least a month. I remember that conversation very well we were talking about it during the Friday meeting. And it was only tried for a week. [omission] That’s what bothered me. And it was more of the consideration issues, opposed to the like whether or not it’s a big deal. (Interview, April 21, 2005, my underlining)

Trina was paying more attention to emotional relationship among teachers rather than the pedagogical meaning in the calendar system. Her recall reflects one of the weaknesses of
this team; that is, they only had Fridays to discuss issues together, and they could not settle problems during a week by talking about them or by being flexible. Whatever her reason was, by taking off the new version of calendar, Amy also gave up the dialogues about this issue, and so did others:

I noticed that something is awkward in the team. When I went in, Amy was preoccupied with something else, and oblivious of things happening in the classroom. She went around play areas but did not sit down in one place. Trina was unsettled, too. Her voice was louder than usual in higher pitch voice, and it was unsettling for me to stay in the room. Harmony was busy helping a student teacher’s cooking activity in and out of the room…….. Pam was not talking to Trina and Amy, and went for her break right on time, which was unusual for her, given the chaos in the room……. Trina led music time, but instead of music she asked questions about what they know about babies. Children did not know why they were talking about babies and Trina had to redirect them a lot and took 15 minutes. (Later, Trina tried to do this activity on Friday when children were more attentive and focused.) (January 26, 2005, Classroom observation)

This observation was done on the day that Amy took the new calendar system off the wall. Even before I knew what happened to the calendar, tension was noticeable in interactions between teachers.

It seems that two things were going on within this team. One is a difference in pedagogical beliefs in terms of what a pre-K room should provide; another is a difference in the understanding of ways to work together. Harmony and Amy clearly had different views about the calendar activity, and the difference became a long negotiation about elements to be included in the calendar. To Pam it became an issue regarding how to share and accept different ideas.

Pam: We (Pam and Harmony) were like, the thing it was just like let’s try it. I mean that was nothing was ever like written in stone like with the calendar and that was the big problem with that. I learned that I was telling one of the teachers, one of the assistants here the other day that we had her son years ago and I had her son with this different teacher. And I didn’t
think I liked her style of teaching at all. And I worked with her half a day for one year. She taught me so much. If you believe in something, you know, this little boy was something. He was worse than Estefan. He couldn’t sit. He would do this just wiggle, wiggle and wiggle. And she said he needs his chair at the meeting. You know, in my head I was thinking, “Oh, God. Now we got drag these chairs put him in. Ah!” But it worked. So, I mean I’m not too proud or too bull-headed to say “Oh your idea was great and I was wrong!” I think that was a problem there that she was not willing to do that. She wouldn’t be willing to do that. She didn’t want to see if it would even work. You know, I’ve tried so many things and haven’t worked over a year.

C: I know. We learn from mistakes.

Pam: We do. I think that was real hard for Amy. She didn’t want to admit her mistake. You know…that’s my opinion, I could be totally wrong, too. But, it’s all hard for us to say, “We’re sorry. You made a mistake. That wasn’t right.” (Interview, April 20, 2005)

Notably, Pam often used the word “we” to refer to “Pam and Harmony” and “MRDD teachers.” She has a strong sense of belonging to MRDD. Also, Pam is a type of person who learns from doing. She is conscious about how previous experiences affect her ability to understand a current situation. But she also learned not to be restricted by the previous experiences. If we do not accept there can be another way, it is hard to become better. This conversation with Pam spurred me to ask why Amy had to reject other possibilities presented by her teammates. Her resistance may have come from her understanding of teachers as established professionals, while for others, teachers are life-long learners who can make mistakes as long as they learn from them. Moreover, Amy seemed to be confused between what she was told to do in college and what actually happens in her classroom.

As the teachers’ collaboration became unstable, their emotions affected how they taught in the classroom. This issue was presented by their supervisors at the Big Ten Meeting.
Mary Ann: This is just a small observation. I am not sure about the dynamics. I didn’t even ask. I was watching Amy doing a group. There was a child, Larry, sitting on your (Harmony’s) lap. You had a child. And Amy goes in [and] gets Larry off of her. Harmony: No, she asked Trina to get Larry. Amy: I asked Trina to get Larry out. Mary Ann: Something happened there, but Larry comes off from here, and you had to take Larry. It’s like… those are small things, but there is no system in here. There is no trust in here. It was like everybody was doing their own thing. Specialist: There’s no flow. (2/17/2005 Big Ten Meeting)

Their observations are consistent with mine. In my observation notes during this period, teachers often broke the class into small groups, and moved their groups to other areas such as the art room and the hallways. In other words, I rarely saw all four teachers together in the room. Teachers might have been avoiding displaying their negative relationships in front of children. Another observation of mine was that Amy and Trina interacted with children when children asked rather than when they saw the needs of children. This tendency may be due to the fact that the CC-net, or Creative Curriculum Assessment, deadline was approaching.

This was a difficult time for them to have an objective opinion about the team because they knew they were not functioning well. The noise level in the room became high, as specialists and their supervisors expressed their concerns, as well as teachers. Mary Ann encouraged teachers to consider the effect of the adults’ relationship on the children.

In addition, the social service workers, Harmony, and Pam had been discussing an intervention plan for Estefan’s pregnant mother, who also had developmental delays and had been abused by her partner. Social workers and nurses visited Room 701 to talk during naptime, which was also the teachers’ meeting time. Consequently, the team lost
half of their meeting time for a few weeks. Although this was part of the critical work for Estefan and his family, losing meeting time was not helping the teachers at all.

**Theme: Professionalism and commitment.** One of new obstacles coming from the building level was “safety patrol.” Teachers, staff, and specialists took turns to watch the entrance for traffic safety. Because this is a full-day classroom, teachers had to schedule their duty when children were in their classroom or their personal time before or after the shift. Teachers talked about it in their meetings and shared their different perspectives. MRDD teachers chose to do it during their personal time, while Head Start teachers held that they were obligated to work only during paid work hours. When one of the Head Start teachers had a safety patrol shift, that teacher had to be out of the room for one hour and 45 minutes including her break. Consequently, MRDD teachers did not take breaks on those days, or they let a Head Start teacher take a break during naptime.

Taking a break fairly was a long-term issue for this room that reflected different cultures in two agencies. MRDD and Head Start teachers considered “time” differently. Head Start teachers were paid hourly, and their breaks were their rights to protect. Their beginning time starts when they report to the site manager, not the time they arrive at the classroom; in contrast, Head Start teachers had one-hour breaks and MRDD teachers had 30-minute breaks, so in total the classroom was down to three teachers for three hours. They chose to use nap-time as a time to talk and work together, although often times breaks were delayed and their meetings rarely began on time.
Responsibilities to come back on time and their rights to take breaks were conflicting issues for these teachers. Harmony prioritized the communication at the meeting so much and came to work on meeting days even when she was sick. Amy did not value Friday meeting as much as Harmony did, while Amy and Harmony had meetings by themselves as well. From my observation, although this was about professionalism and commitment for Harmony and Pam, Amy and Trina were simply fulfilling the responsibilities of their jobs. I sometimes informally tried to talk with Amy and Trina about how the Head Start way may not be able to apply to the ECYCF. They usually said, “But everyone is taking a break” or “we are supposed to take one hour.” In fact, through focus group interviews with other teaching teams, I found that other Head Start teachers in half-day programs in the building would have weekly lunch meeting and use lunch time for preparation and paperwork. Amy and Trina’s interpretation of the work standards for Council Head Start differs from other Head Start teachers in the ECYCF building as a consequence of their isolation from other rooms because they had different work-shifts.

In the Big Ten meeting on February 17, 2005, Sue (site manager, Council Head Start) asked the team:

Sue: I was under the impression that at least one of you guys are going to try…
Harmony: Here is the thing. We tried many things this year, and also about breaks. And unfortunately, breaks won. That kind of like how it worked this year.

Taking breaks was more important to Head Start teachers than attending Town Meeting for the whole building during break time. Town Meeting is every Monday (11:45-12:15), so the target classroom teacher cannot attend unless she is on break.
Pam usually came to work 90 minutes earlier, and Harmony often stayed one to two hours after their dismissal time. While Trina did not make an active effort to protect the MRDD teachers’ breaks, she often asked Harmony or Pam to stay after 3:00 pm to get a snack for Head Start children and other things. Amy often used that time to talk about children with Harmony during Harmony’s after hours. Pam and Harmony did not care for more than a year, but around January, they felt they were taken advantage of too much and began to work in other rooms when they came early or stayed late.

It was obvious that there are different expectations, moral standards, and professionalism for Amy and Trina, in comparison to Pam and Harmony, who seemed to be closer to the building-wide culture. Although this kind of issue may seem tedious to some people in general, it affected the teachers’ relationship and trust in each other. The four teachers could only reach a flexible solution if they had a mutually trusting relationship.

**Theme: Collapsed Communication.** In February 2005, the four teachers could not hold the conflicting situation together any longer. After Amy could not attend 4-teacher meeting on Fridays several times, the other three teachers decided to change their rotation cycle to prepare areas in the classroom from every two weeks to every month. The reason for the change was to give children the opportunity to explore the materials and their interests in the area for a longer time because when they rotate, teachers tended to change without really knowing the previous cycle, as they had never had time to prepare together because of different working schedules.
Harmony called Amy over the weekend and left a voice mail, so that Amy would
know what was discussed. Amy responded to the call almost in a panic, calling her
supervisor, Sue, and Trina to try to form a consensus that this decision was irrelevant.
Amy also wrote a letter to Harmony with carbon copies to Sue, Mary Ann, Trina, and
Pam. Harmony and Amy had a meeting on the first Monday and next Tuesday, then they
had Big Ten on Thursday; however, Amy again could not attend the Friday meeting. So
when the four of them came back together, it was two weeks after the 30-day rotation
decision, and their supervisors attended it as well.

Amy rejected the decision because to her that rotation would prevent her from
observing children in different areas, so that she can meet her CC-net requirements. She
said in her letter, “This idea to stay in an area for 30 days doesn’t line up with my
responsibilities as a lead teacher for Head Start.” There was obviously miscommunication
between them, and they were not sharing how they would work with children in the
classroom. Each teacher had two to three areas to prepare and with young children
teachers usually move around in the classroom. Thus, other teachers did not think that
one teacher would have to stay in one area, whereas Amy was so resistant to the fact that
other teachers made decisions without her in addition to the concerns for the Head Start
assessment. She felt that both she and her responsibility to Head Start were marginalized
by that decision.

They continued to have difficulty in meeting schedules. Before they could have
meetings to resolve their relationship difficulties, something else would always prevent
them from meeting. Head Start trainings fell on Fridays. An outside institution requested
Phase 5: Reflection and Preparation for the Future

Theme: “I just turned off.” The teachers and their supervisors had a meeting to hear Amy’s perspective before she left so that they could prepare for the next year. They wanted to understand her experience, so that they would know what it would be like to come into the ECYCF building as a new Head Start teacher. Amy shared her perspective with the teaching team in a professional manner:

Well…yeah. Ah, again being understanding that I come-in with own ideas…and own philosophy…and kind of give me tight (inaudible) ….that whole thing didn’t work out, too. Because I came in with my own ideas, what it should be like and what we should do and that was just too much, I mean, I just did anyway. I mean I just turned off. … [omission]… ah… What is the responsibility for lead-teacher and all of that… and then not really understanding partnership, I mean…you got kind of being patient with the new people around that. Not really understanding it …not really know how to be a lead with another lady, who both have the same type of position. But not knowing and understanding the whole thing of what is the outcome and standards whatever case may be for MRDD versus what it is in front of you… (4/21/05 Big Ten Meeting, my underlining)

I was surprised that Amy shared presumably honest feelings because she usually would not talk about her weaknesses. When she found that she would not teach in the way she
had assumed, she could not adjust to the new ways. Instead, she turned off to the partnership. Sue, the site manager from Head Start, also shared her struggle to prepare and support new teachers coming into the ECYCF.

Sue: I guess there are a lot of questions, but that’s what I am struggling with. Other than coming in and living in and figuring out what it the partnership is for you and for your team. Okay, I am going to have a new person now, how can I prepare them for what they’re about to experience?

Amy: I think I really would have appreciated a meeting only with the team before walking into the room. I would really like to have understanding of basically what the other teachers have been doing in that room, what they like about that room, what they like to change, and then have an understanding of basically can I strain any of this, you know? ‘Cause I’m coming in with all of these ideas strictly for Head Start and the agency, we got this views and all of this. I have Harmony’s and those are not our goals. Those are not the things that I am focusing on our children, our children we do this and the other, having a good understanding of how that room runs with specialists coming into that room…ah…that, I mean, just something like having gym class and art class and you have specialists coming in and they have to do the group, and ah, we had how many… (after interruption by a visitor to the room)… Yeah …a new person has to really understand the MRDD part in the room is a really big part of the room. Although we have kids in Head Start children in there, we have the things [that] are with [them]. Although 6 children in Special Ed, you have all those other things that doesn’t have anything with Head Start. You know, I’m just … yeah, it’s different. [omission]…no one ever told me how the room operates. I was in that room, and I thought I was always …uh… something was going out of my business, off-line [Sue: Specialists coming in…what’s going on…] whose that, and then lots of students going around, again and lots of times with the gym class I’ve been out in a fear that not understanding that interruptions is a really big part of the room, where you should know uh pre-K room in traditional schools, you don’t have that. (4/21/05 Big Ten Meeting, underlining mine)

Until then, it was clear that Amy did not see the commonalities of goals for Head Start and MRDD, which the directors and leaders think they have in common. In addition, the ECYCF program is not a typical preschool program; for example, the number of adults involved with the classroom is larger than typical preschool classrooms. With APE and art, the children’s days are segmented. It would be important to mention that she
considered challenges were coming from MRDD part, not because of the partnership.

The MRDD part occupied the major part of the room for Amy. This statement suggests that she may not understand MRDD teachers are also adjusting their ways a great deal so that they can work with Head Start and that they feel County children are marginalized.

Sue also evoked a conversation about personal philosophies:

Sue: But you are very outcome driven and results driven.
Amy: Yeah. Outcomes and results are very important to me. If I’m putting out a writing table, we are putting out that whatever that is that I really need to go from that. Whereas…in other way, the results are visible, too. That has opened up my eyes, too. Now you know that there is people looking a little bit differently….doesn’t have to be so traditional. I’m very thankful about that experience. I had been expecting goals. I don’t know from kids and myself! Lord…You know……and then I was telling Harmony when that other person is coming to the room, they have a clear understanding of what it is as you do. Here I don’t think I ever got clear-cut understanding of what you how and what it is to be in that way…being so traditional, I just turned it off. I just didn’t understand how to. [inaudible comments]
Sue: One thing building-wide, we need to improve on this, I don’t know, cross-training I guess? That’s the word? On you know, educating each other as a team on what each agency’s goals are, you know, I mean, you should totally know what the goals are for MRDD enrolled children and vice versa. (4/21/2005 Big Ten Meeting, underlining mine)

Sue pointed out that Amy also needed to fit into the ECYCF philosophy that is influenced by the Reggio Emilia Approach. In fact, Council Head Start has been a very enthusiastic advocate of the Reggio Emilia Approach, and Amy’s tendency is more of her personal philosophy than her agency’s. Sue is aware that something has to be done to invite new teachers differently to the partnership collaboration; however, it is not clear what may be missing yet.

One thing becoming clear is what Amy was missing: Harmony and Pam also were not trained to work for the partnership. They are also learning through their experiences. Harmony was also struggling to guide John and Estefan, because their cases were
different from the cases that she had experienced in college. In February and March when their conflicts were serious, Pam and Harmony were also closing down, and that could be why they made a decision without waiting Amy. Trina did not take action to act as a bridge between Amy and Pam during the calendar discussion because she could not take the tension in the room any more.

**Theme: Why and how do we work together?** Through a couple of crisis moments, teachers were asking about the difference in the values in partnering between general and special education, and the strategies to maintain openness in their relationships. As they discussed how they can explain themselves to a new teacher, they revisited the daily practice that they usually take for granted.

In individual interview in April, I asked three teachers what would be their goals for the next year, and how would they describe ideal classroom.

Harmony: I would really like to be prepared structurally. So, I would have everything written down, everything we can think of, how we do nap-time, and start the list on the back of the bathroom door. We started to list the things that we want to talk about in a written form. We need to really articulate ourselves formally to be able to have system ready. We **maybe doing some things automatically that we are comfortable with,** but we really got to write those down because we’ve already figured those out. Then there are other things that we are still trying to work on, still trying to figure out. Maybe writing them down and **making them more concrete** will help us figure out that’s where we need to be with that or another solution would be better or whatever, etc., etc. Professionally my goal from now until when the next school year starts at least, even if it means summer time, it’s going to be…help me to heal from this loss and get ready for something else…get our team ready. That’s my goal as a part of this team. I’m not doing that. That’s my professional goal for our team. Do you know what I mean? Like I don’t expect to do that by myself. But I expect to participate in the rest of our team to get those things done. (Interview on 4/20/2005, underlining mine)
She knows that collaboration must be mutual work, and it cannot be established by one person’s efforts. Harmony shared with me the minutes from the regular Team Meeting (MRDD teachers and specialists) on April 12, 2005; they discussed what they can do to prepare for any team changes next year. They listed:

- look at personality fit
- look at philosophy match
- operational structure
- curriculum including children’s interests, teachers’ ideas, and specialists
- times to start and end the day
- building trust, learning and respect of partnership
- commitment to project, to team, and to children

(From Harmony’s meeting minutes on 4/12/2005)

I found this list consistent with my observation of the issues in both MRDD and Head Start. With the same question, Trina emphasized communication aspects of collaboration as follows:

Trina: There will also be a mutual respect of everyone else’s ideas not just of everyone’s feelings but ideas and sharing ideas and open-mindedness, and thinking out of the box, wanting to try something new, never afraid to change something isn’t working, ah, and I want there to be an open honesty about, I mean that’s kind of hard to say for me because I always like to, I don’t like to step on another people’s feelings or other people’s toes, I hate all conflict and trying to confront somebody in any issue, but something that I’m personally working on. That’s something that we all need to work on.

Chiharu: It is more like how you confront people, right?

Trina: Yeah, you have to learn how to do it in more sensitive way. Being open and honest with one another… (Interview on 4/21/2005)

Trina talked about her personal challenge to learn how to have different ideas with mutual respect. She wanted her ideas valued in the team with more open communication. Trina mentioned about openness, which came up in Pam’s interview as well:

Pam: But I just got in this field because of my son, and I had no intention whatever. And then once I was like, “I like this job.” You know, I never used to like change at all. I used to have toddlers, I used to have multi-handicap kids. We had 8 multi-handicap kids in her class in back then. And I liked that. Change was hard for me. So I got into preschool.
That was a step. Again I kept saying, you know, *that’s broaden my horizon and I learned that change is not bad*. I used to hate change. Everything got to be in the spot. That’s what I learned is like change is not a bad thing. Yeah. I can just make a little difference in somebody’s life. I mean, that was, that’s the way I feel. (Interview on 4/20/2005, underlined by author)

Pam shared her story about being more open to change and valuing change as an opportunity to broaden the possibilities. She also acknowledged change is difficult for some people, and Pam was tired of working with people who are not as open to change. Despite their willingness to change, Pam and Harmony also questioned the values in inclusion and partnership.

Pam: … I feel like lot of times our kids are being cheated out of what we as teachers used to give them by integrating, you know, uh…John [who was in a wheelchair]…would be a good one. You know, ah…what would be better for him [to have] more physical therapeutic things, or ah…you know, the environment…I mean, the noise set him off. So I didn’t see what is helping him. You can’t expect 15 kids to be quiet either, so…it was a trade-off. I understand. (Interview on 4/20/2005)

Harmony: Okay. Ah……There was a time that I would say, I rather just have “our kids” MRDD kids separate again and be able to work with them. But for the society I don’t think that’s really possible. So, if there was an ideal situation, I think that it would be I would like to try at least to have two equal parts of children with disability and children without disabilities. I think having them equal, in a way we would make it more even like more even distribution, more even responsibility, and accountability and you know buying like we have equal part MRDD, equal part Council Head Start, and then equal part teachers as well. Everything is leveled at least on the same plane, you know. (Interview on 4/20/2005)

These are the excerpts from separate interviews, but they seem to share a similar concern.

Amy seemed to feel this way as well.

I also heard the teachers’ doubts sometimes during meetings, and shared that feeling sometimes. If they teach only for their children, they can focus on what their children need and provide appropriate experiences more promptly. By having another agency, they have to talk more and that takes time. Sometimes the other kids are taking
out what their children could have. So they began to ask, “Why are we being together?”

When I was sharing my Summer Center experience in 2004, which was a segregated environment, I said to Harmony, “Sometimes I wished to have typical peers because I could use them as a model and helpers. That definitely would have settled down their behaviors.” Harmony replied doubtfully, “Oh, yeah?” I sensed her disagreement with me. At that moment I realized that the children I had in the Summer Center had different needs than those in Room 701, and also I understood that I assumed peers to be a different population than those children in Head Start in Room 701, older children who are more capable in social skills. Their challenge is not just having typical peers in the classroom. Harmony reminded me to think about what it means for children with disabilities to be with peers from the Head Start program. In turn, what does it mean for Head Start children to be with children with special needs? In order to connect two groups of “my children,” teachers need a strong vision about partnership, which would sustain their passion. I hope that soon the team will be able to refer to everyone in the team as “we,” as people who are members of the ECYCF partnership, as well as the MRDD or Council Head Start.

**Summary of Analyzed Narratives**

The target classroom is used as a “tracer unit” (Dantas, 1999; Kantor, 2004) to examine the nature of classroom collaboration within the ECYCF partnership. This section re-examines the recurring themes and patterns in my narrative analysis, and attempts to relate these in order to examine the nature of collaboration at the practice
level. Although collaboration in this team was terminated by the departure of a teacher, the analysis revealed patterns that when compared to the focus group interviews were found to be consistent with other classrooms.

*Patterns of Life in Room 701*

Throughout and across the narrative analysis recurring patterns were found: coordination, relationship, communication, pedagogical beliefs, feelings, commitment and professionalism, and adjustment and change. Fig. 5.8 and Fig. 5.9 represent the patterns of life based on a meta-analysis of the themes found in this chapter. These patterns that affected Room 701 can be summarized into two spheres, the organizational sphere relating to coordination and the personal sphere relating to relationship.

Fig. 5.8 presents the organizational coordination sphere with its sub-elements. I organized these with the layers of the ECYCF context discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Within the classroom context, the teachers had to negotiate the coordination of “meeting time,” “break,” “role distribution,” “daily schedule of teachers and children,” “room organization of play areas,” and “documentation displays.” The sub-patterns of coordination in the building context include “purchase order system,” “lunch time negotiation with kitchen,” and “scheduling with specialists, art, and APE.” They also had to coordinate with “student teachers,” “community volunteers,” “various visitors,” and “scheduling play areas shared with other classrooms.” “MRDD tradition” and “Head Start tradition,” as well as the “Integrated Curriculum Model” of the partnership, affect the room. From outside of the building, Council Head Start affects the room through
“training,” required “creative curriculum and assessment system,” and so do “IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act),” “State Standards,” and newly implemented “State Assessment for Readiness” across the whole building.

The second set of patterns that captures elements of the recurring themes is “patterns of the relationships” with the team found in the personal sphere, as presented in Fig. 5.9. In this sphere, communication, relationship, pedagogical beliefs, interactions with children, feelings, commitment and professionalism, and adjustment and change are summarized in Fig. 5.9 as elements of daily life affecting Room 701 on the personal relationship sphere. Sub-themes of these patterns are displayed in Fig. 5.10.

Fig. 5.8: Elements of Daily Life that Had to be Coordinated in Room 701 in the Organizational Sphere

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Communication, pedagogical beliefs, and feeling are patterns deeply related to each teacher. Communication includes themes of “agreement or shared view,” “discourse and language,” “mismatch,” “own ideas,” “talk about children,” and “unfinished business.” Relationship includes themes of “control,” “together,” “trust,” “educating each other as a team,” and “understanding partnership.” When the teachers’ relationship was working better, they discussed more about understanding the partnership, or getting to
know more about the others’ agency and what it would be like to work for Head Start or MRDD. Pedagogical beliefs included “developmentally appropriate practice,” “documentation,” “kindergarten readiness,” “outcome,” and “anecdotal records and assessment.”

In the next layer of the classroom context, interactions with children, commitment, and adjustment and change work from teachers outward; that is, they related to how teachers work in the classroom. Interactions with children include themes of “views of disability” and “knowledge of disability” relating to the specific children who were often discussed at the meetings. These themes include teachers’ actions not only what they said. Commitment reflects themes of “attendance and late start of teacher meeting,” “being out of the room,” “using personal time,” and “commitment to the vision.” Adjustment and change includes sub-themes of “open vs. turned-off,” “confidence vs. lack of knowledge,” and “wishes vs. giving up.”

From the building to the classroom circle, “moral expectations,” “responsibilities for partnership,” “sense of membership/ identity,” and “responsibilities for agency” are presented as sub-themes of professionalism. As origin of personal values, “family background,” “experience,” “educational background,” and “the Reggio Emilia Approach” are contributors from outside of the building.
Fig. 5.10 Sub-themes Found in the Patterns Related to the Relationships
In the focus group interviews with ten other classrooms, similar patterns and themes were found. Room 701 had more coordination issues, although the topics discussed were almost identical to the target classroom. Things that were in the focus group interviews but did not appear in Room 701 include shared visions and time to nurture relationship. Room 701 teachers had common goals to work for the children in front of them; however, these were not strong enough to connect each other, probably because of the differences in “views of children” and how they valued children and what children do. On the other hand, the four teachers were struggling to make time to nurture relationships within the classroom, but they could not do so because they had to meet with colleagues from home agencies, which was made easier for them because of coordinated meeting dates for MRDD teachers and agency training programs for Head Start teachers.

Room 701 had some issues characteristic to them, but not for other rooms in the focus group interviews, for example, challenges as a full-day room. As Kagan et al. (2000) suggested in her report of Head Start – Childcare collaboration, the full day programs seemed to inspire more “acting-out” behavior on children’s parts; therefore, pedagogical issues should be paid attention. In a full-day classroom, teachers work in different shifts, and the child-teacher ratio changes throughout the day. Some standard practices implemented in a half-day classroom may not be directly applied to a full-day classroom.
Collaboration as a Process of Change

As a summary of my narrative analysis on the collaboration process among the four teachers, I present four charts that represent the changes in their relationship over the period of 16 months.

When I began observation in February 2004, the four teachers were physically in the same classroom around children. However, the teachers were working individually to complete job responsibilities rather than working together for the benefit of the group. Fig. 5.11 displays a graphic image of their relationship. MRDD teachers, Harmony and Pam had developed good relationship and knew each other personally; on the contrary, Head Start teachers, Trina and Amy were struggling to build a relationship between themselves and between them and the MRDD teachers.

Fig. 5.11: The four teachers’ relationship in February, 2004
Their images of teachers, how teachers should be working was different: different role distributions between lead and assistant, different standards toward work, different responsibilities, and different pedagogical beliefs.

Later during March 2004, as she began to use a phrase, “we are here for children,” Amy began to become open to different ideas from other teachers. Fig. 5.12 represents their relationship from April to June 2004. Amy found that it was possible for teachers from different agencies to have a shared goal to work together. Harmony was still skeptical about this vision of “for children” because she felt that Amy still prioritized “her” children in action.

Fig. 5.12: The four teachers’ relationship in April - June, 2004
My observations confirmed that Amy and Trina were not interacting with County children as much as they could have been, and I found that they were more reluctant to either step into the territory of MRDD teachers or not confident to deal with County children that year. This tendency could be a result of the challenging behaviors and medical conditions of some County children. Still, as they prioritized children ahead of adults’ differences, teachers began to work more cooperatively. Using one of Pam’s favorite words, they were more willing to "find another way" when something was not working in the way they were used to.

The above figure shows that an emerging shared classroom culture had connected them as a team. They used certain agreements, systems, and values to work together. This classroom culture was not stable, yet, the teachers and I felt that it was a good end of the year and possibly would bring a good foundation to the start of the next year.

In fact, when they began the next school year in September 2004, the teachers were excited to be back. They openly talked with others about their personal experiences, their strength and weakness, preferences and hopes, and questions and concerns. As they become more like a collaborative team, they began to acknowledge more challenges from outside.

Fig. 5.13 below represents the teachers being around their shared classroom culture. Surrounding their classroom, the ECYCF building and Council Head Start was alienated in opposition to their room because they felt that different agencies bring confounding requirements to teachers without enough support or systematic coordination. In the larger context of society, because the state government had implemented a new
assessment system, Head Start, as well as the ECYCF partnership as a whole, was under the pressure of accountability. As the teachers began to see the bigger picture of their surrounding context, they became more aware of the source of their stress. While Head Start teachers needed to learn how to live with CC-net in the context of ECYCF without a good model available to them, MRDD teachers had to provide experiences to achieve the IEP goals of County children in the context with Head Start children, who were not typical peers that they would have had in their traditional Peer Model Program in MRDD.

Fig. 5.13: The four teachers’ relationship in September, 2004
In the year 2004-05, teachers coordinated with specialists better than the previous year; on the other hand, they still could not overcome their pedagogical and philosophical differences. Confusions were added when they confused agency philosophies with personal philosophies. With less history to work with their home agency, Head Start teachers often interpreted policies of Council Head Start with their own beliefs, which was not always the correct interpretation according to Sue (the Council Head Start manager).

Beginning in November 2004, this teaching team had difficulty having all the teachers at their regular planning meetings and could not continue such discussions about their pedagogical beliefs. Their decision-making process was sometimes disturbed because they were reluctant to make decisions when one of them was not there.

Fig. 5.14: The four teachers’ relationship in January - March, 2005
As shown in Fig. 5.14, Amy’s participation in the team became unstable, and she confronted other teachers more at the meetings. Their discussion patterns were similar to the one in February 2004 when I started my observation. Teachers could not have consensus on many issues and the same things were discussed repeatedly over three to four weeks. It seemed that the practice and activities, except children’s play, were divided into two, Head Start and MRDD.

Critical words often caused emotional reactions, and it took time to discuss the main issues. In her interview on April 20, 2005, Harmony stated that they could take others’ criticism if they had a healthy relationship. In my observations also, teachers were stuck in a territorial mind, and perceived criticism toward their agency’s policies as personal criticism. As Amy could not attend several regular planning meetings and focused on writing anecdotal records rather than participating in play activities, she seemed to move in and out of the shared classroom culture that they had been constructing. When the other three teachers decided to change their rotation cycle for play area preparations, Amy could not talk to other teachers and called for her supervisor, Sue, for her help. Even after their serious conflict in February 2005, they still did not make time to talk about their issues, which left matters unresolved and eventually Amy decided to leave the position at the beginning of April 2005.

Sue often told teachers over these two years, “There is an elephant in your classroom. It’s there. You can’t ignore it.” Her metaphor of an elephant expressed the idea that something was sitting in the middle of the classroom interrupting communication and relationships among teachers. This was disturbing the teachers’ abilities to work together
because it overshadowed their ability to see others. In stead of “an elephant,” I thought that it may be something was missing rather than an extra obstacle. What teachers need for their collaborative relationships is something to connect teachers beyond differences and boundaries, possibly a clearly shared vision to work together.

Amy recalled her experience when she first came into the ECYCF.

Amy: This is a very different community. I am coming from a very traditional background, okay, teaching and what teaching gets. When you work here, it’s a community that is very like no other. It really is. It’s embracing, and it’s wonderful. But sometimes you feel like a small fish in the big bowl. You know…it is very different. (4/21/05 Big Ten Meeting)

As a new teacher to come in the ECYCF building, not knowing what it would be like, Amy felt isolated and lost to be in the big building within the ECYCF partnership. In addition, Amy came into the “house” where three women already lived before her and had to learn to live with them as a new “family.” Anyone who comes into the partnership needs to learn that it is acceptable to make mistakes as long as you learning from these mistakes, an idea Pam often expressed.

These stories of the four teachers imply that collaboration is a process that requires change. Change is inherent to teaching; teachers must accept the unknown and work for the possibilities. To sustain their inclination to change, teachers needed to have a shared vision, based on either what they themselves construct or what is provided by the partnership leaders. Chapter 6 further discusses the interpreted and theorized analysis of the narratives presented in this chapter by contrasting the nature of collaboration presented in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This is like a marriage. There are good days and bad days. We stick to each other and work it out. Some marriages work out, and some don’t. But you need to commit to this relationship. (Doris, interview in May 2004)

The purposes of this dissertation are to investigate the development of a collaboration and integration of general and special education sectors in the multilayered contexts of the ECYCF partnership. This partnership is a unique model that integrates general and special education for diverse children in an urban community, as well as the fragmented sectors of early childhood education in this urban community. By investigating this model of partnership, this dissertation seeks to make visible the complexities of this possibility, so that others in the field can learn from these pioneers. I adapted an ethnographic approach to investigate the situated nature of collaboration and the multilayered contexts of their collaboration. I took a comprehensive look at the process of collaboration, focusing on the intersection of general and special education sectors in which collaboration happens in layers of contexts such as the local early
childhood education professional network, the ECYCF partnership, the ECYCF building, and the classrooms within the building. In the data analysis, I organized the data into two levels of collaboration: the leadership/organizational levels and the classroom/practice levels situated in the leadership/organizational layers.

Regarding the classroom/practice level, I focused on one classroom as a tracer unit of collaboration within the ECYCF building over the period of 16 months. Because I also observed other classrooms and conducted focus group interviews with teachers in the other ten classrooms, it was clear that the target classroom, Room 701, reflected issues commonly happening in the building. I entered the target classroom with the hope of documenting positive changes in the process of collaboration among teachers. However, I experienced and witnessed a much more complex process as a participant observer. Given the current contexts of early childhood education with the influences of administration and governmental regulations, the process of teacher collaboration seems to have several challenging factors and requires teachers to change in order to adapt to the collaboration. In order to change, it is necessary for teachers to have an inclination to see the possibilities in a new horizon and therefore, also have someone to make the possibilities visible to the teachers.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I provided the analyzed narrative of collaborative work in the ECYCF partnership in two levels of the collaboration: the leadership/organizational and classroom/practice levels. I organized these narrative analyses with timelines, key events, themes, elements of culture, and voices of members in the collaboration. The findings suggest that challenges of integration are related to multiple elements in the
school culture: the different traditions, philosophies, histories, infrastructures, accountability systems, and professional cultures represented by different organizations. In this discussion chapter, I further present a theoretical analysis and interpretations of these findings, applying a cultural-historical perspective.

**Contrasting Two Levels of Collaboration**

As I examined my narrative analysis of the two levels of collaboration, the leadership/organizational level and the classroom/practice level, it became clear that the patterns of collaboration were fundamentally different in nature and could be better understood with John-Steiner’s (2000) classification system for collaborative patterns. While the leadership/organizational level seems to represent John-Steiner’s pattern of *integrative collaboration*, the classroom/practice level seems to fit to either *family collaboration* or *complementary collaboration*. In the next section, these classifications are explained more fully.

**The Nature of the Leadership/Organizational Level Collaboration**

*Integrative collaboration* (John-Steiner, 2000) requires a prolonged period of commitment and is “motivated by the desire to transform existing knowledge, thought styles, or artistic approaches into new visions” (p. 203). In integrative collaboration, “the participants construct a common set of beliefs, or ideology, which sustains them in periods of opposition or insecurity” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 203). The ECYCF partnership at the leadership level is an example of this pattern of collaboration.
Over their ten years of collaboration, the leaders of the ECYCF partnership thrived on creating a vision at the intersection of the different sectors of the early childhood education communities that they represented. They have grown and changed in the context of their own collaboration, which was sustained through dialogue, shared visions, trust and the risk-taking on which it was based. Their collaboration has been a creative process, because they did not have an example to follow except their own previous experiences with small projects between two or three agencies. Changes seemed to happen when the leaders understood the differences between each other. The leaders stayed in the partnership and resolved problems in creative ways. In the process, each leader learned to be a partner to others.

In addition to their regular responsibilities, the partnership leaders have continuously met on the third Thursday of each month for the past eight years. Before the construction of the new building, membership in the ECYCF group was fluid and voluntary and was based on the values that members shared. It should be noted that their passion and emotional engagement in the vision is a critical component to understanding this partnership. This group of collaborators affirms John-Steiner’s (2000) work, which emphasizes the emotional aspects of collaboration, as well as Bartunek’s (2003) work, which also suggests the importance of attending to the emotional and affective dimension, both positive and negative.

Their passionate engagement helped members of the partnership participate in this difficult endeavor and construct an infrastructure, a service delivery system, and a
curriculum for the new program. Because members were from different sectors of the early childhood field and had different histories and assumptions, the members were confronted with numerous challenges as they created the new program. To overcome these challenges, in John-Steiner’s words (2000), “emotional scaffolding” created “a safety zone in which support and criticism are practiced” (p. 8). This emotional engagement facilitated a more intimate relationship and a commitment to the shared vision that they had co-constructed.

**Collaboration as a joint construction of knowledge and practice.** In addition to the shared vision, the partners collaboratively constructed a new knowledge and practice to incorporate their ideals into social reality. The new program needed to respond to outside forces, such as newly installed state standards and assessment, renewed Head Start regulations and requirements, the economic impact on childcare, and a system change at governmental levels including the No Child Left Behind Act. Through the operation of the new program in the ECYCF building, the partnership leaders created an innovative system to combine and distribute resources. They also applied the integrated curriculum approach to blend practices and required assessments across different agencies, as well as between general and special education fields. They call their curriculum an “integrated curriculum,” which created a new discourse about the curriculum within the building. In other words, the partnership constructed their new local culture, or *figured world* (Holland et al., 1998). Consequently, the ECYCF *figured*
world now shapes the practice of teaching and the relationships among teachers, children, and their families.

The leadership of the ECYCF has continuously worked on classroom integration through various means, such as yearly professional trainings, weekly building-wide meetings, the hiring of a university consultant in professional development, and the promotion of teachers’ active participation in the building committees. On the other hand, a pedagogical mismatch between teachers and the new program resulted in some teachers’ departure. This might be a natural process when an organization accomplishes a major goal. Nevertheless, findings about the leadership-level partnership indicate that their collaboration process followed the stages in Kagan’s model (1991) with flexibility to share power, authority, and resources. With the complex task of blending and restructuring organizational systems, the leaders could not afford much attention to smaller units of collaboration, in particular the classrooms. In contrast to the solid collaboration on the leadership/organizational level with five years of careful planning, founded on a 14-year relationship among the leaders, collaboration in the classroom/practice level had to emerge without enough preparation time. The classroom/practice level seemed to have a less firm foundation in comparison to the leadership/organizational level, which had been well situated in the local and larger political contexts and supported by the larger community of early childhood local professionals.
The Nature of Classroom/Practice Level Collaboration

From the formation stage (Kagan, 1991) of collaboration, the classroom/practice level showed a somewhat different nature than the leadership/organizational level. Respecting the differences among them, teachers live in the classroom, a space in which teachers and children grow together. The collaboration patterns on this level can be characterized by family collaboration (John-Steiner, 2000).

In Room 701, when the teachers could collaborate smoothly, their interaction patterns fit the description of a family collaboration (John-Steiner, 2000), in which members confront their differences so that they can negotiate common vision and trust. Supported by vision and trust, the roles in family collaboration are fluid with the integration of different kinds of expertise.

When the teachers were less united as a team, their interactions seemed to fit the type of complementary collaboration (John-Steiner, 2000). In this type, members possess overlapping values in order to work together using a discipline-based approach with clear division of labor. The teachers in Room 701 changed their types of collaboration a couple of times throughout the period of my observation.

Collaboration patterns in the classroom/practice level. At the classroom/practice level, members (i.e. teachers) began to participate in the partnership collaboration through different processes, and not everyone voluntarily chose the center. The teachers from Head Start and YWCA did not always know that they would be assigned to the center before employment. Although this center is the main building for MRDD teachers,
the ECYCF has its own expectations of teachers. Urban Public School teachers were interviewed for the job knowing that they would be working for the building, but did not know what it meant to teach in the partnership program. What they all knew was that they were going to work for young children.

Teachers and directors described their relationships with partnering teachers using metaphors of marriage, housemates, or family. They often referred to the lead-assistant teacher relationship as a marriage, a type of relationship with a permanent commitment, as well as on-going challenges. “We would have good and bad days but work things out,” said an assistant teacher at the ECYCF. A classroom with more than two teachers can be described using the metaphor of housemates or family. They happen to live in the same place, sharing the time and space. Each member has a different personality, background, experience, age, gender, ethnicity, and values. They negotiate and respect each other’s differences in order to live together under the same roof. They grow together and may change their roles over time and depending on different situations.

One of the challenges for the classroom teachers is that they are obligated to readjust their group dynamics and socialization patterns when someone leaves and a new member joins the “house.” In the case of Room 701, different schedules between MRDD and Head Start added complications. Amy was a newcomer to the family of three teachers who had lived together for a year when she joined them. When she started, MRDD teachers, Harmony and Pam were on a regular summer break. Because the Head Start part in the target classroom is a full-year program, Amy began her work in the classroom with Head Start children only. When the MRDD teachers came back to their old house,
they changed its dynamics a great deal. In contrast, Amy faced the challenge of moving from a Head Start world to the *figured world* of the ECYCF partnership as a new teacher and was required to learn to live with differences as one family.

It took half a year for the four teachers to begin to see common values among them. As soon as Amy, the newcomer to the team, began to think, “we are here for children,” she became more flexible and responsive to different ideas and challenges in coordination between the two agencies. Amy’s attitude affected the whole group. During City Project in spring 2004, the teachers did not need to use communication tools and the job chart to distribute roles any more. They moved from *complementary collaboration* to *family collaboration*.

*The Classroom as a place where different figured worlds meet.* In Room 701, the four teachers were negotiating between the three *figured worlds* (Holland et al., 1998) of Head Start, MRDD, and the partnership. Because they work in the ECYCF building, teachers are expected to create their classroom culture to fit into the ECYCF *figured world* constructed by the leadership/organizational level partnership. Although the MRDD figured world is closer to the ECYCF’s than Head Start’s, teachers still realize differences between MRDD (i.e. traditional special education) and ECYCF (i.e. integrated approach of inclusion). Head Start teachers (i.e. traditional general education) also experience differences among three figured worlds.

In addition, teachers’ personal backgrounds differ. In Room 701, different people from different institutions happened to be in the same classroom containing children with
and without disabilities from an urban area. Their challenges were how to live together with their respective differences. For them, acknowledging differences was a subject of negotiation. For example, the Head Start teachers’ view of children with special needs was rather superficial and they would have said that children with special needs were no different from their Head Start children, while in practice they hesitated to engage with children who had more serious needs. Attending to these children was the responsibility of MRDD teachers in Room 701. In contrast, MRDD teachers provided discussions regarding children with special needs from their knowledge base as special education teachers so that they could share their expertise.

As in any cultural space of figured worlds, the ECYCF figured world has its own cultural norms and knowledge. In my observations, one example that reflects differences between the ECYCF and Head Start figured worlds is the planning and assessment systems used. The ECYCF partnership adopted philosophies inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards, et al., 1998), and constructed the integrated curriculum model to blend multiple agencies into one program. Leaders provided PT-WEBB to teachers as a tool to meet the different goals and interests of children. However, the four teachers struggled to internalize the tools and create their classroom culture based on the norms of the ECYCF figured world. Head Start teachers in particular could not see a possibility in the model of ECYCF figured world that is compatible with the Head Start figured world. Documentation, PT-WEBB, support from specialists, and other things specific to the ECYCF partnership were additions to the responsibilities of Head Start teachers. In other words, the ECYCF figured world stayed foreign to them as they
continued to live in the Council Head Start *figured world* instead of creating a new classroom culture in the context of the ECYCF. Teachers stayed back in their original *figured worlds* not only because it was comfortable but also because teachers did not know or could not see the possibilities of having a shared classroom culture, using the ECYCF *figured world*.

**Collaboration as a learning process for individual members.** As reported in Chapter 5, elements of the culture in Room 701 had two phases, organizational and personal spheres. While the previous section explain challenges in the organizational sphere using the notion of a *figured world*, this section discuss the personal sphere in Room 701 using the same cultural-historical theories.

In the case of Room 701, the four teachers struggled with and learned from the complex combination of the partnership *figured world*, their identities, and their individual cultural backgrounds. Harmony and Pam found commonality despite their differences in age, experience, and education. While they learned Amy and Trina’s personal cultures and the *figured world* of Council Head Start, MRDD teachers reflect on the MRDD *figured world* and their personal values and beliefs. Head Start teachers also reflected on their personal values and beliefs, but to a different degree. By entering the ECYCF *figured world*, Amy experienced a different school culture than that to which she was accustomed, and she had to develop a new image of teaching in the collaboration model. When the team of teachers worked smoothly, such as during City Project, the teachers could be honest and vulnerable to each other as a result of the developing trust in
the room. The teachers worked complementary to each other as they acknowledged each other’s expertise and strengths. Their role distribution became dynamic and fluid.

When people from different figured worlds meet, Holland et al. (1998) explained that they not only encounter a new set of norms, values, and beliefs, but also they realize their own norms, values, and beliefs that they would not have noticed previously. Similarly, John-Steiner (2000) described a long-term collaboration as “a mirror for each partner: a chance to understand one’s habits, styles, working methods, and beliefs through comparison and contrast with one’s collaborator” (p. 189). She also connected this phenomenon to what Vygotsky terms the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The space in which partners’ figured worlds meet can create a zone of proximal development, which helps members of collaboration to understand each other and themselves.

At the same time, this space of learning exists only if two or more figured worlds stay close to each other. In other words, members of the collaboration facilitate this zone for each other in order to learn from the shared experience. Members need to commit to stay in the space, which is also a space of negotiation between different figured worlds, such as Head Start, MRDD, and the ECYCF. Because staying in this space with each other’s differences is not an easy experience, it requires everyone to have a commitment to the collaboration project and a willingness to construct a new shared classroom culture. This means that each member needs to give up some of their old ways and appropriate new ways of thinking and teaching. In this sense, collaboration for individual members is
a learning process and a continuous *appropriation* (Rogoff, 1995) of the new context of collaboration.

In contrast to a *zone of proximal development* for individual learning and change, the notion of a *contact zone* (Pratt, 1991) may be used to describe the space in which a culture emerges for collective change. As findings from Room 701 indicate, creating a shared classroom culture requires *trust in each other* and *confidence in oneself*.

John-Steiner (2000) describes the phenomenon similarly:

> The collaborative process requires the lowering of the boundaries of the self. …partners need to learn to listen carefully to each other, to hear their words echoed through those of the collaborator, and to hear the words of the other with a special attentiveness born of joint purposes. (p. 190, underlining mine)

She continues to argue that in order to lower the boundaries of the self, one has to have the confidence to be able to do. One has to feel that it is acceptable to be vulnerable. In other words, one has to give up one’s control over the situation and be willing to construct a new identity or new agency in a new context.

**Commitment and Identity of Teachers.** Of the critical components in the personal sphere discussed in the previous section, “commitment” and “identity or individual’s agency” in relation to the given figured world of the collaboration can be expanded with further discussion.

Before teachers can construct a shared classroom culture, they must make an effort to create a space between the figured worlds. When teacher worked in ways
complementary to each other in Room 701, Trina seemed to struggle to obtain membership as a capable being on the team. I found a gap between her internal image of who she was and her colleague’s image of her. Amy struggled to understand the ECYCF figured world and how it operates, and she often went back to her safer and more comfortable ways of teaching.

Naturally, Amy and Trina were more committed to Council Head Start because it is the institution to which they belong. Although all the teachers were committed to working for children and families, as a new teacher Amy did not fully connect the Council Head Start and the ECYCF partnership missions, which were in fact carefully aligned with the other partner agency’s missions and coherent with each other. For Harmony and Pam, the ECYCF building was their main building. MRDD teachers make up 61% of the teachers in the building. This number excludes other MRDD employees such as therapists, specialists, secretaries, art and gym teachers, and auxiliary staff. MRDD teachers can see MRDD and ECYCF figured worlds as almost coherent. The challenge for Harmony, though, was traditional special education perspectives and the ECYCF vision. She needed to see how the partnership model would work for children with special needs. When the teachers had conflicts, they had to prioritize “my children,” those children who belong to their institution, and they often asked a critical question, “how does this partnership work for my children?”

In order to expand their commitment from their partner institution to the partnership itself, teachers probably needed a clear shared vision. The written mission statement of the ECYCF was not enough for new teachers. A vision has to be internalized.
to become a source of passion, so that they can sustain a collaborative relationship in and uncomfortable space or *zone of proximal development*. They also needed to feel that they are members of the partnership and the building to sustain their commitment. The teachers thought that the system differences of the two institutions became obstacles. Daily coordination between the different institutions is tedious and can create serious issues for the teachers.

In the end, Room 701 changed back their type of collaboration from *family collaboration* to more separate and complementary types of collaboration fulfilling their duties for their children and their institution by working separately. Their roles became rigidly assigned again, not fluid or integrated. When their relationship was falling apart, they could not consider that their counterparts could work even complementary to them. John-Steiner’s (2000) types of collaboration indicate that there are a variety of non-hierarchical types available, and any type that works for the members would be the right type of collaboration. However, in their “collapsing relationship” phase, Room 701 did not fit into the ECYCF *figured world* or the norms and standards of the building and became problematic.

*Connections and Discrepancies between Two Levels*

The partnership on the leadership/organizational level has made decisions and choices to construct the *figured world* of the ECYCF. In other words, the leadership of the partnership imposes the figured world of partnership on the classrooms. The leaders hoped that teachers could find ways to work together across agencies with their new
system and support. Some classrooms were able to find a way for them more quickly; others struggled. For some teachers, the ECYCF figured world was foreign to them; others could find a connection to it with their previous experiences.

New people at the administrative level fit themselves into the ECYCF figured world and developed their identities somewhat differently than at their home agencies. They are empowered by the trust that the original leaders place in them to represent their agencies. Each partner agency is an established large institution in the community. For Head Start, the ECYCF building is a satellite site for them, and their headquarter offices cannot always be considerate of its partners because “they do not know what’s going on here [at the ECYCF],” as representatives from Council Head Start and Metro Head Start stated at leadership meetings.

**Collaboration with references of culture.** The members of the collaboration worked together by making choices to live with differences. Teachers had resources from their personal experience and professional knowledge. In addition, their home institutions provided guidelines and on-going support in addition to the resources the ECYCF leaders provided to teachers to adapt to the “integrated curriculum model.” These resources from home agencies and the ECYCF functioned as a reference of culture, which became the basis for the teachers to make daily judgments. These three sources of references or elements of culture that feed the classroom culture intertwined with each other and had importance to teachers differently depending on person.
Even with the new vision of inclusion in the ECYCF, teachers make judgments from their experience and previous knowledge in their disciplines. This referencing sometimes facilitates teachers’ understanding of inclusion, but could preclude new ideas from them. Inclusive practice need to be presented as a shared construct in connection to their sources of reference.

Lessons Learned

The strength of the ECYCF partnership came from the clear vision and goals shared by the original leaders of the partnership. It is living evidence that we can serve children and their families better and more effectively with collaboration. As Kraus (1980) proposed, collaboration requires non-hierarchical relationships among members. The leaders develop a democratic relationship among them, and members take ownership of the decisions made in the partnership meetings. While a non-hierarchical relationship asks members to give up certain powers, it contributes a new kind of power to the collaboration. This was happening to newer members of the leadership/organizational level members as the passion and commitment among the original leaders were transferred to them.

However, on the classroom/practical level, leaders did not have enough time to share their vision and history with teachers. It is recommended that the history of successful collaboration as well as the shared vision and passion be deliberately transferred to the practice level with on-going professional development. Teachers have
to know the vision and history, so that they can adapt and build their classroom practice on it.

Most importantly, members of the partnership need to see the different patterns of collaboration on the organizational and practice levels: *integrated collaboration* and *family collaboration*. Moreover, the collaboration patterns in the classroom can be fluid and change depending on the activities and events in which teachers and children participate. General and special education teachers may choose to work separately to write their evaluation summaries but together as a blended team plan curriculum for all the children and for each child’s educational goals. They may choose to work separately while they inform and contribute to each other’s children. These different patterns and styles of collaboration can happen in the same teaching team at different times as a result of the teachers negotiated choices in each classroom.

The original members of the partnership were key-decision makers or influential figures for the partner institutions, while teachers at the practical level do not possess such power and ownership of the partnership project at the same level as the leaders do. In order to bridge the gap between organizational and practical levels of collaboration, at least two kinds of support are necessary. One is system coordination and another is a social-emotional support system.

Collaboration requires shared time and information. Daily, weekly, and yearly schedules should be strategically planned to account for teachers’ shifts, special events, meetings, and training, which can create an environment in which to develop social relationships and trust. In addition, leaders can share more information with newer
teachers in terms of their visions, history, and the values of the partnership. It is necessary for teachers to know the partnering institutions and how these partnership institutions relate to their responsibilities. For some it is difficult task to think beyond their employers. After achieving a clear understanding of the nature of the partnership and partnering agencies, members would not find it difficult to update happenings in individual institutions as well as in the partnership.

For the social emotional support, teachers need to have clear images of how to work in the ECYCF as a teacher for Head Start, MRDD, YWCA, or UPS. It would be helpful for teachers to understand the ECYCF figured world in relation to their own institution rather than simply the general ideas. By sharing information, they can minimize misconceptions. For example, some Head Start teachers felt that they needed to be coherent with other Head Start sites, while each site of her agency probably needed to be different to respond to different children and families’ needs.

Everyone needs to feel ownership of the classroom and the building instead of “renting” a room, as Head Start teachers sometimes felt. The classroom should be the place where teachers and children grow together. The teaching team naturally has a function of on-the-job-training for each other because everyone has expertise and provides something to the team. For example, teachers can educate each other about their own institutions, skills, and knowledge in the general and special education fields, and experienced teachers can share their knowledge with new teachers. Once the teachers recognize each other’s expertise and the possibilities to learn from each other, the team is more likely to work smoothly. Again, to have this kind of relationship, leaders may need
to initiate dialogues through trainings and coordinate time and space for classrooms.

This dissertation has asked new questions for research on the classroom level by looking at the nature of the curriculum in the negotiated framework. Cultural-historical perspectives have provided a lens to understand the teachers and the classroom situated in the multilayered contexts. In my observations, adults were part of the environment as well as the planners of the classroom ecology.

Odom and Bailey (2001) argue that there is a linkage between classroom ecology and child outcomes. High-quality early childhood education programs are necessary to provide effective inclusive placements. Not all children with disabilities can learn best in inclusive early childhood settings and in many cases adaptations to the curriculum and environment are necessary (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000; McWilliam, Wolery, & Odom, 2001). The quality and quantity of interventions have linkages with the children’s outcomes, and teachers in the classroom may often play critical roles to provide a high-quality educational environment. Aligned with these suggestions, adaptations for children with special needs in inclusive settings have been discussed, including those in the physical and social environment, assistive technologies, and collaborative curriculum planning by the interdisciplinary team or general and special education teachers (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000; Wolfe & Hall, 2003; Wood, 2002). The literature also suggests that the quality of communication and collaboration between general and special education teachers and other professionals is critical to inclusive classrooms and list recommendations in their articles (McWilliam, Wolery, and Odom, 2001; Wolery & Sainato, 1996; Wolfe & Hall, 2003). The findings in this dissertation
affirmed general recommendations in the field; however, what is challenging for practitioners is the process to accomplish these recommendations.

Even though the above literature utilizes “collaboration,” the collaboration in the ECYCF partnership model seeks to move beyond simple co-teaching. The partnership has attempted to blend the curriculum and the environment so that they would not require many adaptations. The framework of a negotiated blended curriculum in the ECYCF is similar to the concept of “universal design” (Orkwis, 1999; Ross & Meyer, 2002), which accommodates both children with and without special needs from the beginning. In other words, the ECYCF partnership envisions the possibility of a curriculum with universal design instead of including children with special needs into another setting or vice versa. This ambitious project needs to be continuously followed and reported to the field.

Problems of the Study

Did this dissertation answer all the research questions? Unfortunately, my answer is no. Although this dissertation conducted a two-year-long participant observation both at the target classroom and the leadership level, meetings and teachers came to consider me to be a member of the target classroom, and there were a couple of aspects in which I could not gather enough data. Even though children were in my observations, I could not capture enough children’s voices about the classroom. At least, I found that adults cannot be responsive to children when adults have their own issues. Similarly, I could not fully include the specialists and art teachers in my observation, although they play significant roles in children’s learning experiences.
Because a challenging situation for the four teachers lasted for a long time, I could not investigate children’s outcomes as well as program and curriculum effectiveness in relation to the types or patterns of collaboration. In the future, quality and types of collaboration should be directly examined in relation to curriculum effectiveness and the wellness of children with and without disabilities.

**Reflection on Myself as a Participant Observer**

Because of the nature of an interpretive approach, the narrative analysis that I presented in Chapters 4 and 5 is mediated through my perspectives with my best efforts to capture the collaboration process of the four teachers and the leadership. My perspective is also situated in the context of the building, the early childhood education field, and my experience as a preschool teacher. For trustworthiness, it was crucial to describe my multiple roles in the ECYCF building and the change over time so that readers could know my positions in relation to participants and the data. I also shared these thoughts with the four teachers.

In findings, I also attempted to represent the four teachers separately in key incidents by quoting their voices in parallel. In order to listen to them equally, I made conscious choices to have fair relationships with each of the four teachers. I also wanted them to know me well, so I stayed during the time after County children left when MRDD teachers still had a little time to chat and Head Start teachers are often more relaxed. I asked directors, teachers, and a student teacher in the room how they perceived my participation in the classroom. Overall, they agreed that they did not change their
attitudes despite my presence in the classroom, and we developed a kind of friendship.

I shared emotional states with teachers, and when I talked to teachers, directors, and my colleagues, I referred to the teachers as “we” rather than “them” during my observation. On the other hand, in my writing I used “them” to separate myself from them, so that I could write about the four teachers’ story from my perspective, which stood at the boundary of their classroom culture and the ECYCF partnership culture. I was also at the boundary of the general and special education fields because of my education in graduate school and my previous teaching experience. As a Japanese international student, I was also at the boundary of ethnic identities in the ECYCF as one of four or five Asian staff/volunteers there. Being at the boundaries, I believe that I could have a fair relationship with the four teachers and other people; on the other hand, I could have had a more involved relationship if I were not at the boundary.

As a part of my ethical consideration, I was worried about situating myself between teachers and directors, because I observed leadership level meetings as well. Unexpectedly, there was no need for me to worry about this because teachers and their supervisors in their institutions had great relationships with sharing and trust. Directors knew that I was observing the teachers, and the teachers knew what I talked about informally with their supervisors. I shared opinions that could have been sensitive for teachers at the Big Ten meetings when both teachers and directors were at the table.

As teachers in the center are visible to public, I have been visible to the staff in the building. I was seen as I followed the group to the art room, gym, motor space, and outdoor play area. I was seen when I attended to a child crying in the hallway. I believe
my participant observation (Spradley, 1980) helped me to understand the context and the people within the context.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In classrooms of the ECYCF, different teams of teachers have constructed different styles of collaboration. It would be beneficial to document different types of co-teaching within the same curriculum model to make a variety of possibilities visible. Further data regarding children and their families in the program would be helpful to reveal the effectiveness of the program in terms of resource distribution and educational services.

It would be also beneficial to further investigate individual teacher’s professional development in collaboration as a learning process to reconstruct their personal agencies or identities within the collaborative context. I believe that the conceptual framework I applied in this discussion is useful to understanding the process of collaboration; however, using this concept, practical professional development needs to be developed to support the space between *figured worlds*, the space that can also be called *zone of proximal development or contact zone*.

**Epilogue: An Emerging New Partnership in the Area**

In 2004, another project of collaboration started in the urban area where the ECYCF is located. A laboratory school of a university decided to move into an urban-area community and asked the Urban Public Schools, Council Head Start, and
MRDD to work together in the new building, which will open in 2006.

When Rachel (a university professor) heard that the laboratory school received funding to move into a local community, she recommended that the laboratory school staff and other professors visit the ECYCF. This visit gave them a new vision of a community-based program to expand the boundaries of the laboratory school as a university institution. When Betty (UPS) and Michaela (Council Head Start) received invitations to the new project, they answered ‘yes’ right away, probably because they know that they can do it and that their institution will support it because they already have had experience in the ECYCF.

The ECYCF show the possibility of crossing boundaries in the field and is locally spreading its seeds. Although the ECYCF partnership took more than 10 years to begin its new program, this new project will take only two years to open. I hope this locally constructed knowledge of collaboration will continue to benefit early childhood education and care, and I hope my dissertation will contribute to make this possibility more visible to a wider audience.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
BUILDING MAP OF THE ECYCF
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS AND LETTERS
TO THE TEACHERS, FAMILIES, AND DIRECTORS
REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Phase I: Collaboration in the community

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

Dear (Participant's Name),

Hello, we are a research team at the Ohio State University, College of Education. We are writing this letter to request your participation to our research project. Our mission is to document the history of partnership in the Educational Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF) in multiple perspectives such as history as a system, as a building, as a classroom, and as individual teachers and staff. Under this broad mission, we have other sub-research questions such as how different institutions come together, what professional development opportunities are provided and needed more, and how your program supports diverse children. For example, what is the history of ECYCF as a system, as a building, as a classroom, as a community and as individuals?

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your experience in the partnership. Interviews will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. We are hoping to hear your stories about how you began to become involved, your initial hopes, and any shifts in the project, for example. We may ask you to participate in additional interviews if more time is needed. Interviews may be audiotaped with your permission. Only the research team will have access to these tapes. Tapes will be transcribed and kept in a locked office at The Ohio State University for 5 years after the completion of the study before those are erased. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose not to participate at any time during interviews.

It is important to us that you feel comfortable with this project, therefore we encourage you to express any questions or concerns that you may have by contacting Dr. Rebecca Kantor at (614) 292-8512. If you would like to participate please sign the attached consent form.

We thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Rebecca Kantor & David Fernie
The Ohio State University
College of Education

* * * * * * * * * * * *

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Phase I: Collaboration in the community

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

I consent to participate in research being conducted by Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie at The Ohio State University. The investigators have explained the purpose of the
study, the procedures that will be followed, and the amount of time it will take. I know that I can choose not to participate without penalty and I can decline my participation at any time.

I consent to the use of audiotapes. I understand how the tapes will be used for this study.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and to obtain answers to my questions. I understand that I can contact the investigators at 614-292-8512, if I have any further questions. I may also contact the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792, if I have questions or concerns about my rights as a research participant.

I have read this form or I had it read to me. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

**Print Your Name:** ________________________________  **(Organization:____________________)**

**Signature:** ________________________________  **Date:** ______________________________

**Signed:** ________________________________  **Signed:** ________________________________

**(Participant)  (Principal Investigator or her authorized representative)  (Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)**

Witness: ________________________________

**(When required)**
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Collaboration in the classroom

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263
Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

Dear Teachers,

Hello, I am a graduate student at the Ohio State University, working with Dr. Rebecca Kantor & Dr. David Fernie. Our mission is to document your program's history in multiple perspectives such as history as a system, as a building, as a classroom, and as individual teachers, professional, and staff. Under this broad mission, we have other sub-research questions such as how different institutions come together, what professional development opportunities are provided and needed more, and how your program supports diverse children. For example, what is the history of ECYCF as a system, as a building, as a classroom, as a community and as individuals? Under this broad mission, there are other sub-research questions such as: how do different institutions come together? What professional development opportunities are provided and needed at ECYCF? How does your program support diverse children’s needs? To explore these questions, we would like to observe your classroom, attend your meetings, and interview you individually. We will keep detailed notes of all activities that we take part in.

Observations will take place in the classroom and during meetings. While in the classroom, we would like to participate in regular classroom activities. No interventions will be implemented. We will always ask your permission to be in the classroom and we will work around your schedule. We would like to observe your classroom over time. The length of time can be consulted with you and your teaching team. You may also choose for us NOT to observe at any time without negative consequence.

Interviews will be approximately 30 to 60 minutes and will take place over 3~5 sessions. We may ask you to participate in additional interviews if more time is needed. Interviews may be audio-taped. However, we will always ask your permission and you can request to stop the audiotape at anytime without negative consequence. Only the research team will have access to these tapes. Tapes will be erased after transcription and will be kept in a locked office at The Ohio State University.

We hope that our research will result in a mutually beneficial relationship so that we can both learn more about your classroom. While this is our hope, there are no inevitable benefits or risks associated with participation. If our study does result in publication, you will in no way be associated with the results. We will also share the findings of our study with you.

It is important to us that you feel comfortable with this project, therefore we encourage you to express any questions or concerns that you may have by contacting Dr. Rebecca Kantor at (614) 292-8512. If you would like to participate please sign the attached consent form.

We thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Chiharu Uchida
Graduate Student
The Ohio State University, College of Education
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Collaboration in the classroom

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263
Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

I consent to my participation in research being conducted by Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie and their authorized representative, Chiharu Uchida, at The Ohio State University. The investigators have explained the purpose of the study, the procedures that will be followed, and the amount of time it will take. I know that I can choose not to participate without penalty.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without any prejudice to me.

I consent to the use of audiotapes. I understand how the tapes will be used for this study.

I had been given the opportunity to ask questions and to obtain answers to my questions. I understand that I can contact the investigators at 614-292-8512, if I have any further questions. If may also contact the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792, if I have questions or concerns about my rights as a research participant.

I have read this form or I had it read to me. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Print Your Name: _________________________________

Date: ___________________________ Signed: _______________________________.

(Participant)

Signed: ___________________________ Signed: _______________________________.

(Principal Investigator or her authorized representative) (Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)
REQUEST & CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Collaboration in the classroom

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Hello, I am a graduate student at the Ohio State University, working with Dr. Rebecca Kantor & Dr. David Fernie. I am part of a research team at The Ohio State University that is examining how multiple agencies work together to provide comprehensive services in early childhood education settings. I am writing this letter to request your permission to observe your child's classroom.

The goal of our project is to document the history of Educational Center for Young Children and Families (ECYCF) by looking at their model of collaboration. For example, what is the history of ECYCF as a system, as a building, as a classroom, as a community and as individuals? Under this broad mission, there are other sub-research questions such as: how do different institutions come together? What professional development opportunities are provided and needed at ECYCF? How does your program supports diverse children’s needs?

In order to study the practice at the center, it is necessary for us to observe the classroom. If you agree to have your child to participate in our study, we will observe and take notes about your child’s classroom and school. Researchers will observe the daily routine activities and social interactions among teachers and children. We would like to do this over a period of time. The specific time and dates will be determined by your child’s teacher. The dates and time will be given to you prior to observations. All observations will be conducted in the naturally occuring setting of your child’s classroom. We will not implement any interventions, evaluate, or test individual children. We are simply there to observe the interactions and daily activities of your child’s classroom. There are not foreseeable benefits or risks associated with our observations. However, we do hope to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with your child’s classroom so that we can share thoughts about what we observe with your child's teachers.

Your child’s participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw him/her from this study at any time without negative consequence. Your child’s identity will remain anonymous and if we publish the results of our study, your child will in no way be identified with the results. Your child will not be treated differently whether or not you agree for your child’s participation. If you decide not to participate, your child will not be included in our field notes and research presentation in any format.

We hope that our research will be used to create better models of early childhood education. Therefore, you will make a vital contribution to our project by allowing us to observe your child’s classroom. It is important to us that you feel comfortable with our research project. If you had any questions or concerns of our research, we encourage you to contact Dr. Kantor at 614-292-8512.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Chiharu Uchida
Graduate Student
The Ohio State University, College of Education
614-292-1044 (office) / 614-298-1237 (home), E-mail: uchida.5@osu.edu
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Collaboration in the classroom

Protocol title: Collaboration, Communication and Coordination among Head Start, Columbus Public Schools, YWCA, MRDD and the Ohio State University.

Protocol number: 2004B0263

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie

I consent to my child’s participation in research being conducted by Dr. Rebecca Kantor and Dr. David Fernie at The Ohio State University. The investigators have explained the purpose of the study, the procedures that will be followed, and the amount of time it will take. I know that I can choose to have my child not to participate without penalty. If I agree to participate, I can withdraw my child from the study at any time without penalty.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and to obtain answers to my questions. I understand that I may contact the investigators at 614-292-8512, if I have any further questions. If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I may call the Office of Research Risks Protection at (614) 688-4792.

I have read this form or I had it read to me. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Print Your Name: ________________________________

Child’s Name_______________________________

Child’s Date of birth___________________________

Date: ____________________ Signed: ____________________

(Participant’s parent or guardian)

Signed: ____________________ Date: ______________

(Principal Investigator or her authorized representative)
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS IN SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
**Interview Questions to Investigate Histories of the Partnership of the Community**

1. Why did you initially get involved with this project?
2. After the initial meetings, why did you continue to stay involved with this project?
3. Have you collaborated with other organizations, and if so, what are they?
4. What did you hope to get out of this project? Partnership?
5. What made you want to stay committed to the project?
6. Was the finalized project different from your initial ideas?
7. Did you have any institutional hindrances?
8. Can you reflect on your involvement with the project? Where there shifts of levels of involvement during the whole process?

**Example Questions for Interview to Investigate the Partnership in the Building (Administrators and Directors)**

1. How would you reflect this year for the classrooms with your agency?
2. How often and what content do your teachers and staff consult with you?
3. What kind of advice would you give them usually?
4. Did you feel difference in the classroom in this project I observed? If yes, how different was it?

**<Personal History>**

1. What is your goal as a director/coordinator?
2. Do you have any specific event or person that affected your teaching?

**<Partnership>**

1. Please describe your responsibilities for your agency and for this center.
2. When did you start working in the ECYCF center? How did you phase into the partnership? How was it different from your previous experience in your agency?
3. What curriculum do you follow? Does it different from the classrooms in different locations?
4. What would be challenges of your role?
Questions for Interviews to the target classroom teachers

Date: 
Participant: 
Place: 

ABOUT THE CITY PROJECT

How did you begin to involve the project? How did it happen?

What part did you most like about?

In your opinion, what was the best part of the project for children?

How did you plan or talked about the next day?

Did you record anything about children? In what format?

AS A TEACHER

How would you reflect this year?

Please describe your roles in the classroom

What is your goal of teaching?

Do you have any specific event or person that affected your teaching?

Can you identify anything that I can help you in the future? Any theme of professional development?
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (April – May, 2005)
Classroom #: __________________.
Teachers: ____________________________

Date & Time: ________________________

1) How/when and with whom do you plan for the week?

2) How/who and where do you observe? For assessments? For PT-Webb?

3) When do you input assessment observations?

4) How are the roles/tasks distributed/shared in the room?

5) What do you feel is working well in your classroom collaboration?

6) What do you still feel challenged by in your classroom collaboration?

7) What do you feel is going well in the overall partnership project (at the building level)?

8) What do you think is still challenging?

9) What advice would you give a new partnership starting up?

10) What kind of support system/training do you feel you need at this point in time?
APPENDIX D

INITIAL DESIGN OF THE ECYCF BUILDING
### SUMMARY OF SPACES

#### Tabulation of Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Spaces</td>
<td>1,104 nsf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Spaces</td>
<td>1,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Spaces</td>
<td>2,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood School Spaces</td>
<td>21,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Base &amp; Neighborhood Work Spaces</td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiology, Speech, Vision, Psychology, Children's Computer</td>
<td>1,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.T./P.T./A.P.E.</td>
<td>4,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Support Spaces</td>
<td>2,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37,458 nsf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25% Factor to convert NSF to Gross SF
(20% walls, corridors, chases, etc. and 5% mechanical equipment areas)

9,364

46,822 Gross SF

#### Existing Facilities — Gross SF Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>Gross SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Floor</td>
<td>37,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Floor</td>
<td>1,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>39,610</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Addition, Are Required

7,212 Gross SF