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VOLUME I

DISSERTATION

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

By

Mary Ann Connolly, M.S.Ed.

* * * *

The Ohio State University
2000

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Gail McCutcheon
Advisor
College of Education
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2000
ABSTRACT

Little previous research was found in the literature related to the characteristics of associate degree programs of prekindergarten early childhood teacher education. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding regarding two typical associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in Ohio.

The major questions guiding this research were: (a) what are the characteristics of two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education and (b) what characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), are found in these programs. A qualitative, naturalistic, non-manipulative case study research approach was used to explore in detail the contexts of each program. Data collection methods included: (a) in-depth, semi-structured interviews of early childhood faculty and staff, (b) examination of varied documents related to each program, (c) observations of selected early childhood classes and program facilities, and (d) photographs of program facilities.

A constant comparison method of data analysis was utilized to analyze data using the tool QRS*NUDIST 4, a qualitative data analysis software program. Two conceptual frameworks guided this study: (a) Schwab's (1978) four commonplaces of
the curriculum: the teacher, the milieu, the students, and the subject matter; and (b) characteristics of quality and coherence in exemplary programs of teacher education as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). Individual case studies of each program were written to describe the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of each case.

The major findings of the study were: (a) both unique as well as shared characteristics regarding the faculty, students, milieu, and subject matter were identified in the two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education; (b) both programs possessed a practical, deliberative approach to curriculum development; (c) each program had a distinct conceptual orientation to teacher education: one used a practical, problem-solving/decision-making orientation while in the other, a personal, valuing-the-individual orientation permeated the program; and (d) most, but not all, of the characteristics of quality and coherence, as described by Howey and Zimpher (1989), were identified in the two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in this study. Implications for future research were suggested.
Dedicated to my mother

Rita Katherine Moorman Connolly
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The field of early childhood education continues to grow as more than 13 million young children under the age of five attend programs of education and care each day (Kagan & Cohen, 1997). Research indicates the growth and development of young children who attend programs of early education and care is affected by the quality of the program (Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, & Peisner-Feinberg, 1999). The level of professional knowledge of the early childhood professional is a key factor influencing the quality of programs of education and care for young children. Many of those in the field of early childhood acquire professional knowledge in programs of prekindergarten teacher education in community colleges. What are the characteristics of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education? In this study two associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education were researched to explore what these programs are like and identify characteristics of quality and coherence within these programs.

It is helpful to understand the milieu in which associate degree prekindergarten programs of teacher education are situated. This chapter begins with an overview of the context of programs of early education and care for young children including the demographics of the field, professional requirements, and the relationship of quality
programs for young children and professional development in the field. The first sections of this chapter contain descriptions of both the multiple contexts of professional development as well as the varied opportunities for professional development in the field of early childhood. Subsequent sections of this chapter consist of the statement of the research problem of this dissertation, the purpose of the study, the research questions guiding the study, and previous research regarding early childhood teacher education. The chapter continues with a brief review of the design of the study, the research methodology employed, the methods of data collection, data analysis and representation, and site selection. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study and an overview of this dissertation.

The Context of Early Education and Care

A number of terms are used in the literature to describe the field of early childhood education. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines an early childhood program as “any group program in a center, school, or other facility that serves children from birth through age 8. Early childhood programs include child care centers, family child care homes, private and public preschool, kindergartens, and primary-grade schools” (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 3). The Ohio Department of Education (1996) uses the term prekindergarten to describe licensing requirements for teachers of young children who are not yet old enough to attend kindergarten. The Ohio Department of Human Services (1995) legally categorizes young children as older and younger infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age in the rules for licensing childcare centers. The terms prekindergarten
and preschool are often used to describe early childhood programs for three- and four-
year-old children. The U.S. Department of Education (NCES, 1999) categorizes
educational programs for young children as preprimary, combining preschool and
kindergarten as one level of education. Due to the focus of this study, the terms young
children, early childhood, early childhood education, early childhood development,
prekindergarten, and preschool, when used in this dissertation, refer to children and
programs of early education and care before kindergarten.

The Demographics of Early Education and Care

The actual population of infants, toddlers and preschool children in early
childhood programs grew approximately 28% during the 1980s (Kagan & Cohen,
1997). This trend of growing enrollments in programs of early education and care has
continued into the 1990s. Nationally, between 1991 and 1996, enrollments of three-
and four-year-old children in early childhood programs such as Head Start, day care,
nursery school, and prekindergarten rose by 5% (NCES, 1999). This means the
enrollment of young children in early childhood programs increased approximately
360,000 during this time period (U.S. Census, 1990), resulting in a need for as many
as 24,000 additional early childhood professionals.

By 1996, approximately 36% of all three-year old children and 58% of four-
year-old children were enrolled in some type of early childhood program (NCES,
1999). Two broad social trends affected this dramatic rise in enrollment of young
children in programs of care and education. The first trend was the establishment of
early intervention programs for young children who are poor or who have
developmental delays and/or disabilities. Bredekamp (1996) points out there is a "growing recognition that education begins at birth or at least well prior to what has traditionally been considered the beginning of formal schooling" (p. 323). Head Start, the federal program for preschool children living in poverty or who have special needs, enrolls over 800,000 young children every year (Jacobson, 1999). Thirty-seven states currently fund prekindergarten public school and/or Head Start programs specifically for children living below the poverty level or who are developmentally delayed (Mitchell, Ripple, & Chanana, 1998). In Ohio approximately 67,000 preschool children are enrolled in public school prekindergartens and Ohio Head Start (Mitchell, Ripple, & Chanana, 1998).

The second trend impacting the growing enrollment of young children in programs of education and care was the increasing numbers of mothers who are employed outside of the home. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1998) reported the number of preschoolers whose mothers were employed was 10.3 million. Approximately 30% of these children, almost three million children under the age of five, were enrolled in day care centers, 16% were cared for in family day care homes, and 44% were cared for by relatives or babysitters (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). As a result of the increased need for childcare, the number of child care centers doubled from 25,000 in 1977 to 51,000 in 1992, while the number of paid employees in these centers grew from 190,00 to 468,000 during the same time period (Casper & O’Connell, 1998). The professional requirements vary greatly for those employed in the field of early education and care.
Professional Requirements in the Field of Early Education and Care

Who provides education and care for the 13 million prekindergarten children in our country? While all states mandate a minimum of a baccalaureate degree and state certification or licensure to teach kindergarten, "we allow virtually anyone to be a teacher for children below kindergarten age in most states in the U.S." (Clifford, 1999, p. 14). Federal and state regulations for persons working with young children vary widely. For example, in Ohio, the requirements to work with children in a day care center are to be 18 years old and have a high school diploma (Ohio Department of Human Services, 1995), while the minimum requirement to be a teacher in an Ohio public school prekindergarten classroom is an associate prekindergarten teaching certificate (Ohio Department of Education, 1996).

The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College (Morgan et al., 1993) conducted a national study of career development in early childhood education and found minimal requirements for child care workers, such as those in Ohio, to be typical of most states. Professional requirements for those working with young children are a key factor affecting the quality of programs of early education and care.

Quality Programs of Early Education and Care

In 1995 the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team (1995) found, in a national study, most child care centers provided "poor to mediocre" (p. 2) programs of care and education. This study found poor to mediocre programs were not supportive of young children's growth and development. The researchers in this study also
identified quality programs of early education and care. The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team (1995) found persons who had studied early childhood education staffed quality programs. The children in the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study have been followed through the second grade in a longitudinal study. This research shows children who had attended quality programs of early education and care demonstrated higher cognitive and social skills during their primary schooling than children who had attended poor to mediocre programs (Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, & Peisner-Feinberg, 1999). This study indicates the benefits of quality programs for young children extend at least through elementary school.

Quality programs for young children are clearly related to the level of education of the early childhood professional (Bredekamp, 1996; Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, & Russell, 1995; Clifford et al., 1999; Copple, 1991; Galinsky, O’Donnell, Beyea, & Boose, 1998; Howes, 1997; Kagan & Cohen, 1997; Morgan et al., 1993; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). The National Child Care Staffing Study concluded, “the education of child care teaching staff and the arrangement of their work environment are essential determinants of the quality of services children receive” (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989, p. 44). The ongoing Florida Child Care Quality study found “increased teacher education and ratio requirements significantly contributed to children’s cognitive and emotional development” and “teachers with an advanced education (an AA, BA, or higher degree in early childhood education) had the highest scores in terms of children’s development and classroom quality” (Galinsky, O’Donnell, Beyea, & Boose, 1998),
While research clearly indicates a relationship between the quality of a program of early education and care and the level of education of the early childhood professional, there are varied opportunities for professional development for those in the field. Multiple contexts affect opportunities for professional development in early education and care.

The Contexts of Professional Development in Early Education and Care

Bowman (1997) describes three contexts within the field of early care and education impacting the variety of available professional development opportunities. The first context is the diversity of programs of early education and care. "Programs for children and families take place in diverse settings, operate under different auspices, deliver a variety of services, and are embedded in several different professions" (Bowman, 1997, p. 107). Programs of early care and education are located in a variety of locations including public schools, childcare centers, churches, colleges, hospitals, corporations, homes, and social service agencies. Services in the field of early childhood include hourly, part-day, and all-day programs of education and care for infants, toddlers, preschool, and/or school-age children. Education, mental health, and social service agencies are the primary professions involved in programs of early education and care.

A second context identified by Bowman (1997) as impacting professional development in the field of early education and care includes the "economic and regulatory pressures on the field [which] discourage formal early childhood training, except for teachers and administrators in public schools" (p. 107). There is a
relationship between levels of professional development and wages in the field of early education and care. Licensing requirements for childcare staff in most states mandate little to no professional development to enter the field, wages in early childhood are low, frequently minimum wage, and there is limited funding available for training and education (Morgan et al., 1993; Willer, 1994).

The final context identified by Bowman (1997) as impacting the diversity of available professional development opportunities in early childhood education is the growth of early intervention programs for children living in poverty. Bowman (1997) states because these “early childhood programs are often used to encourage community actions and provide employment for people in poor communities, there has been a traditional ambivalence regarding formal training and credentials. . . . To require such degrees is often viewed as professional gatekeeping, unduly inflating educational requirements and driving up the cost of child care” (p. 107). Trickett (1979) explains the federally funded Head Start program, begun in 1965, did not mandate degreed, licensed, or certified teachers in Head Start classrooms. As a part of the War on Poverty, a focus of the Head Start program was on employing and training parents and others living in targeted communities. By 1990, Head Start was spending over $30 million a year on in-service training (Washington & Oyemade Bailey, 1995).

In 1972, after concerns regarding the quality of Head Start programs were raised, the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential system was established, in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). To achieve a CDA credential, early childhood teachers developed a
portfolio and demonstrated their proficiency in work-related competency areas. By 1981 Head Start guidelines required all teachers in Head Start programs to be in CDA training, have a CDA, or have a bachelor’s degree (Trickett, 1979). The CDA remained the federally required credential for Head Start teachers until the Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act (1998). This federal legislation mandated that, by 2003, at least half of the teachers in center based Head Start classrooms have the minimum of an associate degree in early childhood education or early childhood development.

The diversity of the field of early education and care, economics, standards, and the federal Head Start program are all a part of the context of professional development in early childhood. These multiple and diverse aspects of professional development in early childhood education are reflected in the varied opportunities for professional development in the field.

**Opportunities for Professional Development in Early Education and Care**

The multiple opportunities for professional development in early childhood education are varied and largely uncoordinated (Costley, 1996; Hutchison, 1994; Morgan, 1994; Morgan et al., 1993; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). Bowman (1997) points out while most professions mandate formal programs of education, “this is not the model for the early childhood field, where there is little agreement regarding the kind or the amount of training needed for direct service providers, managers, trainers, or advocates” (p. 107). Copple (1991) offers this summary of the varied opportunities for early childhood professional development:
At present, training is delivered principally by 2- and 4-year colleges (in a variety of departments, including child development, education, home economics, health, and social work), professional organizations, private and not-for-profit training organizations, and Head Start. Different professional communities recognize different professional credentials. Support for preparation and training, as well as services for young children, derives from a variety of funding sources, which further contributes to fragmentation. (p. 4)

Morgan et al. (1993) identify three basic types of early childhood training: (a) orientation training for persons hired in a new position, (b) pre-service training required for persons to qualify for a position, and (c) training mandated as a job requirement. There are three broad areas of professional development in early childhood education established to meet these training needs: (a) training opportunities through individuals, private organizations, and public organizations, (b) technology based training, and (c) programs of early childhood teacher education in schools and colleges.

One area of professional development in early childhood education is training opportunities through individuals, private organizations, and public organizations. Individuals in the field of early education and care, such as child care center staff members or center directors, provide varying levels of preservice and inservice training. Various professional organizations, such as the Red Cross and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as well as private organizations such as High Scope, training companies, and consultants, offer workshops, seminars, training, and conferences in topics related to the field. Training opportunities through individuals, private organizations, and public organizations are often calculated in clock hours and are usually not associated with college credit.
Technology based training is a second area of professional development in the field of early childhood education. Video packages, teleconferences such as the NAEYC's Leading Edge, listservs on topics such as Reggio Emilia and the Project Approach, and the World Wide Web all offer opportunities for non-credit early childhood professional development. Early childhood education courses for college credit are available via distance learning opportunities on the World Wide Web, through audio courses, video courses, telecourses, and interactive distance learning classrooms through community colleges such as the Oregon Community College Distance Education Consortium, colleges like Pacific Oaks, and universities including the University of Wisconsin.

A third area of early childhood professional development, programs of early childhood teacher education, may take place in high schools, vocational education schools, and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate colleges. Nationally, articulation among these systems is poor (Hutchison, 1994; Jones, 1994; McCarthy, 1994; Morgan, 1994; Willer, 1994). External authorities in the field sanction these traditional methods of professional development. For example, in this study, both associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education were within community colleges chartered by the Ohio Board of Regents and accredited by the North Central Association. Both associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in this research were also certified by the State of Ohio Department of Education to offer coursework leading to the Ohio Prekindergarten Associate Teaching Certificate. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
(NCATE) accredits baccalaureate and graduate programs of early childhood teacher education based upon guidelines for associate, baccalaureate and graduate programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) (NAEYC/DEC/CEC, 1996). The American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS), in alliance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, anticipates having a voluntary National Early Childhood Associate Degree Program Approval System based upon the NAEYC/DEC/CEC (1996) guidelines in place by 2002 (ACCESS, 1999).

A primary source of professional development for early childhood education continues to be the community college. Bredekamp (1990) points out, “teachers in child care centers are more likely to be prepared in two-year community colleges or vocational education programs” (p. 145). Community colleges may offer as many as four different types of opportunities for early childhood professional development: (a) individual courses in specific areas of early childhood education, (b) Child Development Associate (CDA) training programs for students seeking this national credential, (c) one-year certificate programs in early childhood education, and (d) associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education (Morgan et al., 1993). Each of these types of professional development in early childhood education offered by community college programs of early childhood teacher education falls within the professional categories for early childhood professional development recognized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
**NAEYC Early Childhood Professional Categories**

In 1993, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) adopted a conceptual framework for early childhood professional development calling for the establishment of a coordinated, coherent, and well-articulated system of early childhood professional development (Willer, 1994). This NAEYC position statement acknowledged, “many roles exist with the early childhood profession, and those roles exist within a variety of settings. Roles vary in the specific knowledge, competencies, and levels of education that are required” (Willer, 1994, p. 17). Levels of professional development were explicated in the NAEYC position statement and are summarized in Table 1.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level I</strong></td>
<td>Supervised while working with young children and participating in CDA training or college coursework in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level II</strong></td>
<td>One-year early childhood certificate OR Child Development Associate (CDA) credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level III</strong></td>
<td>Associate degree in the field OR an associate degree in a related field plus course work and supervised field experience in early childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level IV</strong></td>
<td>Baccalaureate degree in the field OR state certification in early childhood OR baccalaureate degree in another field plus course work and supervised field experience in early childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level V</strong></td>
<td>Master's Degree in the field of early childhood education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level VI</strong></td>
<td>Earned doctorate in the field of early childhood education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 NAEYC Early Childhood Professional Categories
The Research Problem

Associate degree programs of teacher education, identified as Level III in the NAEYC professional categories in Table 1.1, are unique to the field of early childhood education (Bredekamp, 1996). There are approximately 700 prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in the United States, most of which are in community colleges (Morgan et al., 1993).

What are the characteristics of these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education? What are the roles of faculty members in community college programs of early childhood teacher education? What kinds of students attend community college programs of prekindergarten teacher education? What are the goals of these students? What is the milieu affecting associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education? After an extensive search in the literature, I have located very little research regarding associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education. During my literature search I did, however, locate a number of statements regarding associate degree programs. These statements raise the following questions concerning the characteristics of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education:

- Do programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges consist simply of "vocationally oriented courses" (Spodek & Saracho, 1990b, p. 214) primarily "concerned with practice and application" (Filimon-Demyen, 1997, p. 3)?
• Are associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education “technical programs in which transfer of credits is not the primary objective” (Willer, 1994, p. 8)?

• Are associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education “designed to articulate with a baccalaureate program in which it is presumed that more professional course work will be taken at the upper levels” (Willer, 1994, p. 12)?

• Do community college programs of teacher education only prepare “teachers in child care programs along with assistants and aides” (Saracho, 1993, p. 412)?

• Are community college early childhood education faculty members “often certified vocational home economics teachers or persons with experience in the child care field” (Spodek & Saracho, 1990b, p. 39)?

• Do “programs in two-year institutions or community colleges typically stress working with younger children” (Willer, 1994, p. 8)?

• Is there a trend for “preschool teacher education to be marginalized in community colleges and two-year Associate Degree programs” (Beatty, 1995, p. 206)?

While studies are limited regarding associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, research has been done regarding programs of elementary teacher education. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified specific characteristics of quality and coherence in their study of exemplary programs of
elementary teacher education. Those characteristics of quality and coherence are summarized in Table 1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students identify with a cohort group</th>
<th>Faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program</th>
<th>Programs goals are clear and reasonable</th>
<th>Programs are rigorous and academically challenging</th>
<th>Program curriculum is thematic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced</td>
<td>Faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program</td>
<td>Program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum</td>
<td>Programs have adequate time within the structure of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories</td>
<td>Programs have curriculum articulation with the schools</td>
<td>Programs link with research and development in teacher education</td>
<td>Programs are systematically evaluated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Characteristics of Quality and Coherence in Exemplary Programs of Teacher Education

Are any of the characteristics of quality and coherence described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) found in associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education? What are the characteristics of associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education? Howey and Zimpher's (1989) conceptual framework of characteristics of quality and coherence were used to study these two
questions related to prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to research characteristics of quality and coherence in a purposeful sample of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges in Ohio. Ohio has 24 prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, eight of which are found in community colleges. There is little if any research about these, or any of the almost 700 (Morgan et al., 1993) associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education found in community colleges nationwide. There is clearly a lack of research related to prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education and many researchers have indicated the necessity for research in this area (Bredekamp, 1996; Ott, Zeichner, & Price, 1990; Powell & Dunn, 1990; Saracho, 1993; Spodek & Saracho, 1990b).

I selected associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges because such programs were clearly identified in the literature as in need of study. Case study research of associate degree programs of early childhood education would lead to increased understanding regarding these particular types of programs of teacher education. The specific research questions guiding this study are identified in the next section.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What is the structural and conceptual orientation of prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education in at least two community colleges in Ohio?

2. What is the nature of the curriculum in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education? How is the curriculum organized?

3. What is the role of faculty in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

4. What are characteristics of prekindergarten associate degree early childhood education students?

5. What social, cultural, and/or environmental contexts contribute to understanding these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

6. What aspects of a high-quality, coherent program of teacher education, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), are present in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

7. How are the programmatic aspects of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), represented in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

8. What unique elements are contained in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

**Early Childhood Teacher Education Research**

Bredekamp (1996) points out “there is insufficient research specifically addressing the issue of early childhood teacher education” (p. 323). Saracho (1993)
and Bredekamp (1996) both concur an understanding of early childhood teacher education must be inferred from research in other areas. Bredekamp (1996) identifies five areas of research presently informing understanding of early childhood teacher education: (a) research on the effects of teacher behaviors on children's development, (b) research on curriculum and teaching practices, (c) research on family and community relations, (d) research on assessing and adapting programs for individual differences, and (e) research on professionalism. The clearly identified lack of research in the area of associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education relates to the significance of this study.

Significance of the Study

This research sought to advance an understanding of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Due to the lack of research regarding associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, the cases included in this study were chosen to increase understanding of these programs. To extend the significance of this research and build upon knowledge in the field, I chose to utilize the conceptual framework of program characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). By studying these aspects of quality and coherence in associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, the understanding of these program characteristics of quality and coherence will also be increased.

Eisner (1991) describes instrumental utility, or usefulness, as "the most important test of any qualitative study." Eisner (1991) suggests instrumental utility
may assist understanding and future decision making. This study is important because it fills a gap in the literature concerning associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Many scholars in the field of both teacher education and early childhood education have called for knowledge about these programs. Such knowledge may be useful for: (a) informing deliberations concerning the development of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, (b) evaluating associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, and (c) developing articulation agreements between associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education and other programs of early childhood teacher education and preparation.

The design of this study, the methodology employed, site selection, methods of data collection, and the data analysis and representation are summarized in the following section.

**Design of the Study**

Qualitative research is seen as a process in which questions related to an aspect of society are studied as a whole to enable understanding. Qualitative research is based upon assumptions that reality is complex, contextually bound, socially constructed, and best understood from the emic or insider’s point of view (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education within the fields of early childhood education and teacher education. Stake (1995) explains the goal of qualitative research is to comprehend a particular case “not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it” (p. 43). Due to repeated
calls for such research, this study focused on developing a holistic view of two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education.

**Conceptual Framework**

The interpretive conceptual framework, which has its roots in the complex philosophy of phenomenology, informed the conceptual framework of this study. Phenomenologists make deductions about inner experiences from external indicators, seeking to portray what Willis (1979) terms “general phenomenological patterns” (p. 66) and making them known. Phenomenologists are concerned with individuals and how changes in people’s thoughts and knowledge can become clearer. Phenomenologists maintain that understanding, **verstehen**, is “a complex process by which all of us in our everyday life interpret the meaning of our own actions and those of other with whom we interact” (Bernstein, 1976, p. 139).

A characteristic of qualitative methodologies, including this research, is their reflection of an interpretive paradigm. Greene (1994) relates a goal of an interpretive conceptual framework is working to understand the question “How is the program experienced by various stakeholders?” (p. 532). Greene (1994) believes a preferred research method for qualitative research with an interpretive conceptual framework is a case study utilizing data collection methods of interviews, observation and document review.

**Methodology**

The qualitative case study was selected as the research method in this study. Merriam (1998) states “a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and
analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. xiii). The central purpose or focus of a case study is to investigate the case or system (Creswell, 1997; Stake, 1994). The bounded phenomena in this research were prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Stake (1995) views a case as “a bounded system” constrained by a particular time and place. “Programs clearly are prospective cases” according to Stake (1995, p. 2).

Stake (1994) characterizes the nature of every case study as both complex and unique. He believes case studies include aspects of the history inherent within the case, the physical environments surrounding the case, the participants central to the case, and the political, economic, and social factors impacting the case (Stake, 1994). In this study the conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum, the subject matter, the milieu, the teacher, and the students (Schwab, 1978), ensured these key elements identified by Stake would be fully examined in this research.

While there are many types of cases, Stake (1994) identifies three types of case studies that reflect the “variation in the concern for and methodological orientation to the case” (p. 238). The three types of case studies identified by Stake (1995) are: (a) the intrinsic case study which is developed to increase understanding of the case, (b) the instrumental case study which advances understanding of theory, (c) and the collective case study which extends an instrumental case study to more than one case. Elements of each of these types of case study are to be found in this research. This study employed the intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case study approaches to
increase understanding of associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education and advance understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in programs of teacher education in two cases.

**Site Selection**

When selecting a case to research, Stake (1995) suggests "the first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn. Given our purposes, which cases are likely to lead us to understandings, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of generalizations?" (p. 4). Patton (1990) urges the researcher to use a strategy he terms the purposeful sample to choose the site for the study. The primary selection criterion used in this study was to select the sample or samples with the greatest potential to be an information-rich case.

I determined the essential criterion for site selection in this study to be prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education holding the Prekindergarten validation of the State of Ohio Department of Education. Associate degrees are most commonly granted in community colleges and there were eight community colleges in Ohio who met the initial criterion of validation by the State of Ohio Department of Education. Because of the stated clear lack of knowledge about such programs in the literature, I then determined that selecting typical programs of prekindergarten associate degree programs would be an important selection criterion. Prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education with a single full-time faculty member were identified as typical within the literature (Bredekamp, 1996; Katz & Goffin, 1990). Four of the eight associate degree prekindergarten
programs of early childhood education met this criterion. I determined two programs of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education to be the minimum sample. Two of the four possible research sites were within reasonable driving distance from my home and entrée was gained at each of those sites.

**Methods of Data Collection**

In this study I utilized particular data gathering techniques for the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of the case. I fully explored the intrinsic elements of each case by asking specific interview questions, gathering documents, and conducting observations. To assist in the development of the instrumental elements of this case, specific interview questions were utilized related to the conceptual framework of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). Data sources for this study included multiple interviews, the collection and review of documents and reports, observations, and photographs.

The basic field methodology was similar at both sites. I determined the gatekeeper and primary informant for each site to be the single full-time early childhood education faculty member. I contacted each of these early childhood education faculty members by telephone and requested an appointment to discuss the possibility of researching the early childhood program. At each site both faculty members were enthusiastic and interested in participating in the research. At the initial appointment with every participant I reviewed a detailed explanation of the research, my role as researcher, and the expected role of the individual participant. I
interviewed each of the full-time faculty members three to four times. I then used a snowball sampling technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) for further informants by requesting that each of the primary informants suggest two other persons who could help me learn about the program. As relevant documents were referred to during the interviews, I requested to borrow and/or receive copies. I observed classes, classroom facilities, libraries, early childhood education resource rooms, and campus child care programs at both sites.

I recorded information in a variety of ways. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by myself. Having personally transcribed all of the interview data in this research enabled me to establish a closeness to the data I was able to maintain throughout data analysis. I also used the transcription process as a research log, noting and/or highlighting preliminary points of analysis, asking questions, and adding descriptors to more fully describe a tone of voice or mannerism of speech. When observing classes, classroom facilities, libraries, early childhood education resource rooms, and campus child care programs at both sites I took field notes. The field notes from Early Childhood Education (ECE) class observations were transcribed and annotated. A data collection technique that emerged from the study was the use of photographs. Photographs of dedicated college classrooms, teacher resource centers, and campus child care centers proved to be a valuable source of data for the rich descriptions of the milieu at both sites.

25
The on-going process of data analysis began as I started collecting data, utilizing a method of constant comparative analysis, described by Glaser & Strauss (1967) as a data analysis technique “concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems” (p. 104). I utilized the techniques of categorical aggregation, the development of themes or categories from the data (Creswell, 1997; Stake, 1995) as well as direct interpretation in which the researcher looks “at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances” (Creswell, 1997, p. 153-154). Direct interpretation is an important aspect of case study research because, as Stake (1995) explains, “some important features appear only once” (p. 74).

Meaningful data, leading to direct interpretation and categorical aggregation in these case studies, could have be buried in the volume of raw data gathered in this study. I decided to use the QSR NUD*IST 4 data analysis software program to help me develop and analyze the significant themes of this study. Eisner (1991) indicates the qualitative researcher’s findings “can be used more or less inductively to generate thematic categories” (p. 189) and views themes as providing “structures for the interpretation and appraisal of the events described” (p. 190).

Qualitative data analysis programs such as NUD*IST 4 do not analyze data. The qualitative researcher analyzes data using the selected tools offered by the program. The selection of tools is, in itself, a part of the analysis. As I had developed and planned this study I had used the conceptual framework of Schwab’s (1978)
commonplaces, the student, the teacher, the subject matter and the milieu. I used Schwab’s commonplaces as the basis for establishing the themes in this study. As I began to code the transcripts, there were areas that clearly fit into Schwab’s commonplaces, the four root nodes I created in NUD*IST 4. It was a simple process in the NUD*IST 4 program to create subcategories for each of the four root nodes. There was also an area in the NUD*IST program called “Free Nodes” where I could code data if I was not clear about where it fit. I used a feature of the NUD*IST 4 program entitled “Definition” which allowed me to define each of the thematic nodes I developed. This process of defining each node forced me to clarify my emergent understanding of each category and served as a way of memoing my ideas about the emergent themes.

The constant comparative method required me to study the data, code the data, and, as an on-going process, constantly compare codes and data. I utilized Creswell’s (1997) conceptual framework of data analysis processes to describe the data analysis procedures I used in this study. These procedures are: (a) data managing, (b) reading and memoing, (c) describing, analyzing, and interpreting, and (d) representation. The representation of research data in this dissertation consists of two case studies, each presenting the commonplaces of the curriculum for each of the associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education in this study as well as a description and discussion of the program characteristics of quality and coherence.
Limitations of the Study

I have identified three limitation to this research: the antecedent knowledge of the researcher, the limitation of interviews to faculty and program staff, and the modest number of classroom observations. As the research instrument of this study, I used my antecedent knowledge and my awareness of this knowledge during the course of this inquiry. I acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of my antecedent knowledge throughout the study. The advantage of my antecedent knowledge was the ability to readily understand concepts and theoretical frameworks in the field of early childhood teacher education. My antecedent knowledge also had clear disadvantages. I had to regularly work to “made the familiar strange” (Erickson, 1984, p. 6). I believe participants may have offered a different understanding of their programs to a researcher whom they perceived as not knowledgeable in the field of early childhood teacher education.

The second limitation to this study was the limitation of interviews to program faculty and staff. It could be valuable to consider the understandings of others, such as students and cooperating teachers, involved in associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education.

The third limitation to this study was the modest number of observations of actual early childhood classes. Observations of other courses as well as practicum sites could facilitate increased understandings of how the intended curriculum (Eisner, 1994), the written explicit curriculum in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, is used in the classroom.
Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters. Chapter One has offered an introduction to the study and includes a delineation of the research questions guiding the study and research methodology. Chapter Two provides a survey of the literature informing this research. Chapter Three details the research methodology utilized in the study. Chapters Four and Five describe the early childhood education students, faculty, programs of teacher education, and milieus of Beachline Community College and Mapleview Community College, offers identification of the characteristics of quality and coherence found in each of the programs, and presents unique attributes of quality identified in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education. Chapter Six provides an analysis and summary of the findings of this research and offers implications of the study.
CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE

Programs of early childhood teacher education have a unique history and have evolved in particular contexts within the broader field of teacher education. This chapter begins with an overview of the historical and philosophical contexts of programs of teacher education and early childhood teacher education. Further subsequent sections of this chapter include discussions of structural issues and conceptual orientations of programs of teacher education, the conceptual frameworks of issues of coherence and quality of programs of teacher education and the commonplace of the curriculum, the national discourse and guidelines for programs of teacher education within the field of early childhood education, and unique aspects of the field of early childhood teacher education. Finally, the relationship of these aspects of teacher education and early childhood teacher education to this study is summarized.

Historical Programs of Teacher Education

Historical Review

To develop an understanding of the conceptual framework of a coherent and high quality program of teacher education, it is informative to review the historical and philosophical development of such programs. This historical review begins with
the colonial period in America, explores the evolution of Teacher Institutes and Normal Schools, examines the growth of secondary schools and liberal arts education, and concludes with the advent of teachers colleges and colleges of education.

**The colonial period.** Education in the American colonies prior to the Revolutionary War evolved regionally in response to both social and economic conditions. In the New England colonies "schooling became important as a means of sustaining a well-ordered religious commonwealth" (Spring, 1994, p. 13). In the seventeenth century elementary schools were established in these northern colonies to teach reading, writing, and religion while grammar schools were begun to prepare young men for college. In Virginia and the Southern colonies, economically dependent on the plantation system and slavery, "only a few pauper schools and apprenticeship training were available for the poor, but for the elite there were private pay schools and opportunities for education in the mother country" (Spring, p. 13). Colleges were founded in many of the colonies to teach eligible male students a traditional liberal arts curriculum. During this period, however, few people actually went to school and those who attended came irregularly and for brief periods of time (Cremin, 1953).

There were no formal programs of teacher education during this era (Urban, 1990). The dominant ideology was rationalism, "the belief that it is possible to obtain by reason alone a knowledge of the nature of what exists" (Flew, 1984, p. 298). It was believed God had ordained natural laws, including social laws, which were fixed and waiting to be discovered. Nature, including society, was established and never
changing. During this time “it was thought that knowledge was itself the best preparation of a teacher, and that the more knowledge a teacher had, the better he would teach” (Cremin, 1953, p. 164). Cremin’s reference to teachers as males was correct. Except for “ ‘dame’ schools operated by women in their homes for small children, providing custodial care and rudimentary training at low fees” (Kaestle, 1983, p. 30), most teachers were men. With the growth of the common school movement in the nineteenth century, women were encouraged to become teachers of younger children to provide both nurturing and moral training (Spring, 1994).

**Teacher institutes.** The common school movement in American education in the first half of the nineteenth century sought to resolve the dilemma of maintaining the balance between order and freedom by educating all citizens in the same schools utilizing the same curriculum. Spring (1994) defines the term common school as “a school that was attended in common by all children and in which a common political and social ideology was taught” (p. 63). The goal of social reform through schooling was to be achieved by “education for assimilation” (Kaestle, 1983, p. 72). The early growth of industrialism during this period placed a premium on education as preparation for work. Increasing numbers of teachers were needed for these common schools.

During the first half of the 19th century, local governance at the county level began utilizing teacher institutes for teacher training. These short programs of teacher education featured prominent educators who were invited to the community, often on a yearly basis, to model lessons and lecture on a variety of classroom techniques.
Institutes frequently lasted one or two weeks and included day and evening sessions (Kaestle, 1983). Spring (1994) notes "the primary objective of the institutes was to provide a brief course in the theory and practice of teaching" (p. 106). These institutes also included prayers, hymns, and speakers, including ministers, who addressed moral and religious topics. Teacher institutes were particularly popular in the Midwest (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

**Normal schools.** While teacher institutes increased in popularity in the Midwest, educators in the East became more interested in establishing training schools for teachers modeled after the Prussian normal schools. The use of the term normal "originated in France and meant that teachers should be trained to perform according to high standards or 'norms'" (Kaestle, 1983, p. 129). The first normal school in the United States was begun in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839 (Cremin, 1953; Kaestle, 1983; Urban, 1990). Male candidates had to be 17 years old while female candidates only had to be 16 year of age, but most students in normal schools were female (Urban, 1990). There was an entry process into the normal schools. Students "had to declare their intention to be teachers, take an entrance examination in primary school subjects, and submit evidence of good moral character" (Cremin, 1953, p. 165). The program of teacher education in the normal schools included academic subjects such as grammar, history, and mathematics, modeling of lessons by a master teacher, listening to remarks made by the master teacher during instruction, lectures on teaching, and practice teaching in the laboratory school. (Cremin, 1953; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Kaestle, 1983). The normal school program lasted from one to two
years. Graduates of normal schools could only teach in elementary schools. Spring (1994) points out, however, “that a majority of teachers in the nineteenth century were not graduates of normal schools” (p. 108), but had attended an elementary school and simply returned to that school as the teacher. The normal schools were gradually replaced by teachers colleges and university colleges of education during the first decades of the 19th century, providing teachers with a broader liberal arts education (Spring, 1994).

**Secondary schools and liberal arts education.** Secondary schools evolved during the nineteenth century with a particularly rapid growth in the last few decades of the century due to increased emphasis on education to serve the needs of those preparing for college (Spring, 1994). Teachers of secondary schools were generally qualified in colleges and universities through a classical liberal arts education. Within the tradition of a liberal arts education, it was presumed that persons who knew their subject matter well could teach (Feiman-Nemser, 1990). The dominant theme of the liberal arts tradition continued to reflect rationalism. “Liberal and useful knowledge were incompatible” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 214). However, Feiman-Nemser (1990) makes an interesting point when she concludes education in the liberal arts is more than “subject matter preparation. . . . What makes the relationship between liberal arts education and teacher education unique is the fact that the goods intrinsic to liberal education – humane values, critical thinking, historic perspective, broad knowledge – are central to teaching” (p. 214).
Teachers colleges and colleges of education. In the period following the Civil War, universities and liberal arts colleges began establishing undergraduate and graduate programs of education. At this time the curriculum of teacher education expanded as scholars started researching and studying the history and philosophy of education, teaching methods, and children (Urban, 1990). “Like their counterparts in law and medicine, educators sought to place teacher education in the modern research university, hoping that the new location would dignify education as a career, lead to the development of a specialized knowledge base, and support the professional preparation of educational leaders” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 215). Ideologies were changing in response to Darwin’s theory of evolution and the growing belief that the scientific method could be applied to human endeavors to the benefit of society (Flew, 1984).

By the turn of the century, some normal schools had also begun offering four-year programs of teacher education in preparation for secondary school teaching. The additional two years in these programs of teacher education focused primarily on the study of academic subjects. Many of these four-year normal schools evolved into teachers colleges granting baccalaureate degrees in education. The first such degree was awarded in 1905 by the Michigan State Normal College at Ypsilanti (Cremin, 1953).

Feiman-Nemser (1990) notes three evolving trends in teacher education emanating from the beginning of the 20th century: graduate degrees in education were pursued primarily for administrative and supervisory positions outside of the
classroom; researchers sought to develop a science of education in an attempt to solve social ills; and faculty in programs of teacher education were increasingly distanced from schools and classrooms. The basic structure of contemporary programs of teacher education for the 20th century would be essentially in place within the first two decades of the century. It was during this period that programs of teacher education and programs of early childhood teacher education began to converge. A review of the historical and philosophical contexts of programs of early childhood teacher education is presented in the following section.

**Early Childhood Teacher Education**

It is important to understand that contemporary early childhood professionals are found in kindergartens, prekindergartens, primary classrooms, childcare centers, Head Start programs, and home childcare situations within the parameters of what is loosely termed early childhood education. The construct of what is early childhood is defined differently by professional organizations in the field and governmental agencies. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), an early childhood professional organization with a membership of over 100,000, supports both quality programs for young children and the professional development of early childhood professionals. NAEYC defines early childhood as birth through age eight (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Early childhood is defined legally in numerous ways within individual states, necessitating frequent clarification of language as issues relating to teacher licensure are studied (Morgan et al., 1993).
Ohio Department of Education (1996) defines early childhood as ages three through eight.

The field of early childhood education has been impacted, historically, by social forces that have shaped practices of early childhood teacher education as well as the philosophical orientations which have reflected beliefs about the nature of children, the process of learning, and the nature of knowledge. Weber (1984) states, "every program for children is built on a series of beliefs about many things including the nature of man [sic], the process of learning, the nature of knowledge, the role of knowledge in life, and the relationship between society and education" (p. 6). Four broad episodes will be used to frame this review of the historical and philosophical contexts of programs of early childhood teacher education: (a) the roots of contemporary early childhood education in the 19th century, (b) the child study movement, and (c) the growth of constructivist theories of learning, and (d) Federal early childhood programs.

19th century programs of early childhood teacher education. The concept of children as evil and born in sin was common in the 19th century. At that time it was considered important to teach children obedience to maintain social order as well as to ensure a child's salvation in the afterlife (Spring, 1994). It was this conceptual orientation to childhood that shaped the development of education in colonial America.

The 19th century saw the beginnings of what is generally perceived to be contemporary early childhood education. In the 19th century the works of both
Pestalozzi and Froebel were influenced by the writings of Comenius and Rousseau whose romantic views of childhood were in direct contrast with the construct of the sinful child (Braun & Edwards, 1972). Comenius believed children were “born in the image of God” (Morrison, 1997, p. 64), and education should follow the natural development of the child through a process of sensory interactions with real things (Morrison, 1997; Weber, 1984). In 1728 Comenius wrote:

> Now there is nothing in the understanding, which was not before in the sense. And therefore to exercise the senses well about the right perceiving the differences of things, will be to lay the grounds for all wisdom and all wise discourse, and all discreet actions in ones course of life (1887/1968, p. xiv).

In contrast to previous views, Rousseau believed children were essentially good but became corrupted by society. Education, according to Rousseau, should assist the natural process of unfolding the innate knowledge within the child, while focusing on the child’s natural curiosity and the stimulation of the senses. (Weber, 1984; Winterer, 1992). Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, an early 19th century Swiss educator who was heavily influenced by the work of Rousseau, promoted education as a process of natural development (Hewes, 1992). Although Pestalozzi actually taught young children, his practice focused on teaching mothers to educate their young children through a natural process of sensory education emphasizing children’s interactions with physical objects in the environment (Winterer, 1992).

Friedrich Froebel, the German educator who is considered the father of kindergarten, studied with Pestalozzi and based his concept of a child’s garden, or kindergarten, on Pestalozzi’s ideas of teaching children according to their natural instincts through self-activity and play. Froebel concurred with the concept of the
good child, viewed childhood as a stage of human development, and considered play the key to development. Froebel believed each stage of development required particular teaching methods. For the young 4- to 6-year-old children in his kindergartens, Froebel devised an organized series of fixed exercises with what he termed gifts and occupations (Braun & Edwards, 1972; Winterer, 1992). Children manipulated Froebelian gifts, such as different geometric shapes constructed of various materials, with guidance from the teacher. Occupations included carefully planned experiences with modeling materials, drawing, coloring, and sewing (Braun & Edwards, 1972). Songs, stories, and poems were also developed by Froebel and used in the kindergartens to present models of good behavior. Froebel considered the gifts and occupations divinely given to assist in the educative process of revealing the essence of spirituality in children (Weber, 1984).

German immigrants introduced kindergartens into the United States, with the first kindergarten opening in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1856. Until the early 1870s, kindergartens were limited to German speaking schools in America. Froebel’s specific pedagogy of gifts and occupations necessitated teacher training. The first programs of teacher education in early childhood education can be traced to the apprenticeship training of the Froebelian kindergarten teachers beginning in the 1840s in Germany and in the 1870s in the United States (Hewes, 1990; Reyer, 1989). Hewes (1990) notes kindergarten teacher training in Europe focused more on Froebel’s theory of creative play while kindergarten apprenticeship programs in the United States appeared to have emphasized the teaching techniques for using Froebel’s gifts with
young children. Few of Froebel's writings had been translated into English in the 19th century and a great diversity of interpretation of Froebel's philosophy developed. An informal apprenticeship program of teacher education for kindergarten teachers evolved in the United States during the latter half of the 19th century. These programs reflected a practical orientation to teacher education, focusing on apprenticeship learning and teaching as a craft. Within this apprenticeship system kindergarten teachers were expected to learn the craft of teaching through a process of observing and modeling a master kindergarten teacher. Hewes (1990) relates a substantial cohort system developed among these initial early kindergarten teachers, with knowledge of both the master teachers and their apprentices identified within an informal kindergarten teacher network.

Froebel believed divine law mandated that the teachers in kindergartens should be female because of their instinctive nurturing and loving natures (Reyer, 1989; Winterer, 1992). In 1849 Froebel began a training school in Germany for his kindergarten teachers, whom he called 'child guides' (Hewes, 1990). This training school would serve as the model for more formal programs of kindergarten teacher education in the United States. Froebel's six-month training program included instruction and modeling of the use of the gifts, occupations, songs, and play. Three hours a day were spent in clinical practice with children. This model was interpreted diversely in the United States, but a significant aspect of Froebel's philosophical tenets remained: the belief that kindergarten teachers could not learn to teach simply by
reading books and listening to lectures but also had to “experience kindergarten with the children” (Hewes, 1990, p. 9).

Kindergarten programs in the United States flourished during the last quarter of the 19th century, necessitating increasing numbers of kindergarten teachers. Elizabeth Peabody, an ardent supporter of Froebel and the kindergarten movement, had opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in the United States in 1860 (Hewes, 1988). Peabody and others began kindergarten training schools, often with teachers from Germany (Hewes, 1988). These training schools varied widely in their interpretation of Froebel’s educational philosophy. Peabody’s training school emphasized a strict teacher-controlled pedagogy in relationship to Froebel’s gifts and occupations (Hewes, 1992). Other kindergarten training schools, however, promoted teaching practices that were more child-centered, focusing on the development of inner control by the child. William and Eudora Hailman, for example, trained kindergarten teachers in a more child-centered orientation to Froebelian theory from the 1880s until about 1920 (Hewes, 1988). They promoted a three-year course of kindergarten teacher education with an additional year of supervised classroom work. They established kindergarten training schools in Louisville, Kentucky and other cities (Hewes, 1988). It was this child-centered orientation to Froebelian theory that would be blended into the 20th century progressive education movement (Hewes, 1992). At the turn of the century, kindergarten teacher training began to move into the normal schools and teachers colleges and by 1922 no kindergarten training schools could be located (Hewes, 1990).
The dichotomy in philosophical interpretation of Froebelian philosophy was reflected in the curriculum of the normal schools and teachers colleges. Hewes (1992) depicts the teacher-directed/child-centered theoretical dilemma in early childhood as related to the determination of locus of control. By the 1920s kindergarten programs had been established in many public school systems as preparation for first grade, and teacher education for kindergarten had been incorporated in programs of education for elementary teachers (Hewes, 1990). These kindergartens and the programs of teacher education, from which the kindergarten teachers had graduated, were by this time being greatly influenced by the child study movement.

The child study movement. A technical, scientific orientation to programs of teacher education impacted early childhood through the work of G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gesell, leaders of the child study movement of the 20th century. The concept of the child, which had been changing from evil to innocent, now began to be viewed through a scientific lens. Braun and Edwards (1972) quote this 1923 description of 'man' [sic] by Gesell: "Man is neurologically a bundle of neuron patterns and psychologically a bundle of habit complexes and conditioned reflexes" (p. 151).

Laboratory schools, such as those at the University of Chicago, Teachers College at Columbia, and The Ohio State University "practiced experimentation, curriculum study, and the investigation of the science of teaching" (Kelley, 1970, p. 25). John Dewey established the first of the experimental schools at the University of Chicago. He believed experimental schools were essential laboratories for both
faculty and students (Langemann, 1996). Dewey (1943/1990) emphasized the unique aspects of an experimental school. He wrote the experimental school:

Is not a normal school or a department for the training of teachers. It is not a model school. It is not intended to demonstrate any one special idea or doctrine. Its task is the problem of viewing the education of the child in the light of the principles of mental activity and processes of growth made known by modern psychology (Dewey, 1943/1963, pp. 96-97).

Weber (1994) notes a number of influences on teaching, learning, and teacher education emanating from the child study movement. Intelligence was perceived as fixed and predetermined. Specific developmental stages were identified and data from the study of child development was used for curriculum development. Particular stages of development were identified in which specific learning was emphasized. Teachers needed knowledge of child development as well as an understanding of typical behavior patterns for specific age groups. Weber (1984) points out “a series of films characterizing particular ages (for example, ‘Terrible Twos’ and ‘Trusting Threes’, ‘Frustrating Fours and Fascinating Fives’) were widely used in teacher training” (p. 58).

Programs of teacher education adhering to a strict interpretation of the child study model would follow a technical, scientific conceptual framework. An overview of a program of early childhood teacher education with a technical orientation, as outlined by Day and Goffin (1994), would include: (a) knowledge of direct instruction techniques for teaching, (b) knowledge of a standard curriculum suitable for all young children, (c) knowledge of curriculum planning by subject and/or skill, and (d) knowledge of standardized assessment techniques.
Child development knowledge is widely considered the predominant theme of programs of early childhood teacher education. A major influence on child development knowledge in the past thirty years has been the constructivist learning theories of Jean Piaget and, more recently, Lev Vygotsky. These constructivist learning theories are described and discussed in the following section.

**Constructivist learning theories.** The position statements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children on developmentally appropriate practices in programs for young children (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) are a significant part of the framework for describing the knowledge base for programs of early childhood teacher education (Bredekamp, 1996). Both editions of this position statement on developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood reflect a constructivist conceptual framework. In the revised edition, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), this constructivist position is clearly stated:

Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them. Children contribute to their own development and learning as they strive to make meaning out of their daily experiences in the home, the early childhood program, and the community. Principles of developmentally appropriate practice are based on several prominent theories that view intellectual development from a constructivist, interactive perspective (Dewey, 1916; Piaget 1952; Vygotsky 1978; DeVries & Kohlberg 1990; Rogoff 1990; Gardner 1991; Kamii & Ewing 1996) (p. 13).

Constructivists believe active learning takes place through varied opportunities and methods that combine prior knowledge with new opportunities for learning (Woolfolk, 1995).
Implications for professional development are also clearly described in Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Early childhood professionals "have an ethical responsibility to practice, to the best of their ability, according to the standards of their profession" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 24). While not specifying a formula for professional preparation, NAEYC recommends that "a system exists for early childhood professionals to acquire the knowledge and practical skills needed to practice through college-level specialized preparation in early childhood education/child development" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 24). A program of teacher education adhering to a constructivist model of developmentally appropriate practices would follow a personal orientation. An overview of a program of teacher education with a personal orientation, as outlined by Day and Goffin (1994), would include: (a) knowledge of child development with an emphasis on the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, (b) knowledge of play and techniques for interacting with young children, (c) knowledge of planning an integrated curriculum that includes activities for active exploration by young children, (d) knowledge of planning early childhood programs that include large blocks of time for young children to participate in child selected activities.

**The impact of specific types of early childhood programs.** Thompson (1992) and Beatty (1995) offer clear insights into the relationship between type of early childhood program and the level of professional development of the early childhood teacher. Thompson (1992) describes the historical development of four distinct types of programs for young children and the requisite levels of professional
development required for the adults who were caring for and/or educating children. Each of these types of early childhood programs has had an impact on early childhood teacher education.

The first type of early childhood program was termed the day nursery (Beatty, 1995; Thompson, 1992). Day nurseries evolved in the 19th century as social service programs established to care for the young children of poor working mothers and/or children who were neglected. Most day nurseries were custodial in nature, focusing primarily on the health and safety of the young children in their care. Workers in day nurseries were generally untrained female workers from the same neighborhoods as the young children in their care. These women generally worked under the supervision of a social services professional (Thompson, 1992). The heritage of the 19th century day nurseries continues up to the present day. Most states regulate childcare as a social service, not as educational programs, and mandate little to no professional knowledge in the field of early childhood as a job requirement (Morgan et al., 1993).

The second type of early childhood program was the kindergarten. As described earlier in this chapter, kindergarten programs and kindergarten teacher education were both absorbed into the mainstream of public schooling and baccalaureate programs of teacher education early in the 20th century.

The third type of early childhood program was the called the nursery school. Nursery schools became well established in the United States during the 1920s, primarily through college departments of psychology and/or education.
schools were instituted in response to both the child study movement, described above, and progressive education (Thompson, 1992). The progressive education movement was an educational response to the work of the American educator and philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey (1938/1963) believed education should offer students opportunities to engage in educational inquiry related to real problems. Dewey was convinced that children did not come to school with a fixed or determined level of knowledge, but entered with minds that are “the organized habits of intelligent response which they have previously acquired by putting things to use in connection with the way other persons use things” (Dewey, 1916/1985, p. 38). Dewey viewed the teacher’s role in the classroom as recommending “activities that would ‘fit in with the dominant mode of growth in the child’” (Beatty, 1995, p. 86). Hewes (1976/1996) explains, “nursery schools were established for educational experimentation, for demonstration of methodology, or for purposes of research, but not for the relief of working mothers or neglected children” (p. 3). The purpose of nursery schools was to provide “supplementary care and enrichment during the preschool years” (Thompson, 1992, p. 7). Nursery school teachers were “professionally trained and many possessed baccalaureate degrees” (Thompson, 1992, p. 7) in fields including education, child development, and psychology.

In 1925, the nursery school teachers held a national professional organizational meeting and began the formation of what was then called The National Association for Nursery Education (NANE), the parent organization of what today is known as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In 1929, the
membership of National Association for Nursery Education voted overwhelmingly not
to join with the International Kindergarten Union (IKU) (Hewes, 1976/1996). This
move led to a professional separation of nursery school and kindergarten teachers,
nursery schools and kindergartens, as well as programs of teacher education for
nursery school and kindergarten teachers.

The fourth category of early childhood programs, which has impacted
programs of early childhood teacher education, consisted of programs sponsored by
the Federal government. Federal programs for young children included WPA
nurseries, Lanham Act programs, and Head Start. The first federal program for young
children was the Works Program Administration (WPA) nursery schools. In the
1930s, WPA nurseries were established as a part of federal New Deal programs to
employ out of work teachers and "develop the physical and mental well-being of
preschool children in needy unemployed families or neglected or underprivileged
homes" (Hewes, 1976/1996, p. 6). Many of those employed by WPA were elementary
and secondary teachers who had little professional knowledge of early childhood
education. The National Association of Nursery Educators (NANE), the parent
organization of the present day National Association for the Education of Young
Children, established "a network of free and inexpensive training programs" (Hewes,
1976/1996, p. 7) for the WPA nursery school teachers. The National Association of
Nursery Educators (NANE) sought to have the nursery school model of facilitated
play adopted in the more than 2000 WPA (Works Progress Administration) nursery
schools. During the 1930s NANE also began developing and publishing materials
with practical ideas and resources related to early childhood education as well as research reports for both teachers and parents (Hewes, 1976/1996). This practice of publishing both practice and research is continued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) up to the present day.

The Lanham Act established the second federal program for young children. During World War II the Lanham Act provided federal funds for early childhood programs for children whose parents were working in war related industries (Beatty, 1995). In the 1940s early childhood professionals were involved in running and supervising programs established under the Lanham Act as well as educating those employed in the programs. Once again the nursery school model was adopted. At the conclusion of World War II these programs were closed.

The third federal program for young children was Head Start. In 1965 Project Head Start was federally funded as a part of the War on Poverty. Head Start programs were established through the Office of Economic Opportunity, not through any educational office or department. Head Start programs were established to offer children living in poverty early school experiences while establishing a pattern of parent involvement for the families of enrolled children (Beatty, 1995). A professional knowledge base in early childhood education was not a requirement to become a Head Start teacher. In 1972, due to growing concerns with the quality of Head Start programs, Head Start began a program of on-the-job competency based training in association with the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Persons who completed training, developed a portfolio, and demonstrated
their competence as an early childhood professional were awarded a credential called Child Development Associate (CDA). The CDA or an associate degree in early childhood education became the federally mandated national professional standard for lead teachers in Head Start classrooms (Beatty, 1995). In 1998 Congress passed legislation reauthorizing the Head Start program within a bill entitled “Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act of 1998”. A provision in this legislation was an amendment establishing new professional requirements for classroom teachers in Head Start programs. By September 30, 2003, at least half of all Head Start programs must have a lead teacher with a minimum of an associate degree in early childhood education.

Federal programs for young children have influenced the field of early childhood teacher education. The WPA and Lanham Act programs, by not mandating early childhood professionals, influenced the expansion of professional development activities and publications on the part of the National Association of Nursery Educators, later the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which continues to the present day. The Federal requirements for Head Start teachers have directly influenced programs of teacher education. Most associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education were begun following the 1972 legislation mandating either an associate degree in early childhood education or the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (Morgan et al., 1993).

Particular aspects of the program design and conceptual framework can be identified in programs of teacher education. Specific structural issues and conceptual
orientations within contemporary programs of teacher education are described in the following sections.

**Structural Issues in Contemporary Programs of Teacher Education**

Tom and Valli (1990) believe there is a “broad consensus that the teacher education curriculum should be composed of three areas of study: general education, subject matter knowledge, and professional education” (p. 373). Structural issues in teacher education concern topics such as number of years and/or credits in a program of study, required and elective courses of study, sequencing issues, and amounts of field and laboratory experiences. Five differently structured programs of teacher education are described in the literature: (a) associate degree programs, (b) baccalaureate programs, (c) extended fifth-year programs, (d) graduate programs, and (e) alternative certification programs. While each of these programs differs in length, curriculum, types of academic credit, degrees, and pattern of inservice and/or preservice field and laboratory experience, they all “confront the question of what teachers need to know and how they can be helped to acquire and develop that knowledge” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 220). Each of these five differently structured programs of teacher education is described below.

**Associate Degree Programs**

Associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education are primarily found in community colleges. This section begins with a profile of contemporary community colleges and includes an overview of community colleges, and descriptions of community colleges students and faculty. Next, the lack of research
regarding associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education as, well as
the pressing need for studies concerning these programs, is clearly detailed.

**Community colleges.** Foote (1997) defines a community college as “any
institution accredited to award the associate in arts or sciences as its highest degree”
(p. 1) The first junior college, the forerunner of the contemporary community college,
was founded in 1901 (AACC, 1998). The growth of community colleges in the
United States was supported by the passage of two important pieces of Federal
legislation: (a) the GI Bill, instituted in the mid 1940s, which offered financial
assistance for education to persons with eligible military service, and (b) the student
financial aid legislation which was initiated in the mid 1960s and continues to the
present day (AACC, 1998). Currently, over 5.3 million students are enrolled for credit
in more than 1,400 publicly supported and independent community colleges in the
United States (The Community College Liaison Office (CCLO) of the Department of
Education, 1996; American Association of Community Colleges, 1998; National
Center for Education Statistics, 1998). Nationally, almost 54% of undergraduates are
enrolled in two-year colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). Public
community colleges enroll 37% of all college students (National Center for Education
Statistics, 1998). By the mid 1990s, over 150,000 students were enrolled in
community colleges in Ohio (AACC, 1998). Community colleges are generally
funded through state appropriations, local funding resources, and tuition (Foote,
1997). The Community College Liaison Office of the Department of Education
(CCLO, 1996) notes the community college traditionally offers programs "for traditional fields and newly emerging employment areas" (p. 4).

The typical community college student is 29 to 32 years old, female, attends school part-time, works, has a family, and needs classes at times and locations convenient to work and family schedules (CCLO, 1996; Clowes, 1997; Foote, 1997). Students in community colleges typically have one of these three broad goals: (a) complete course work equivalent to the first two years of a baccalaureate degree in order to transfer to a four-year college or university, (b) complete an associate degree as a terminal degree, or (c) pursue specific vocational training to upgrade current job skills or to retrain for a new job (Tobolowsky, 1998). Community colleges enroll 58% of all Hispanics and 45% of all African Americans currently pursuing higher education in the United States (Curry, 1988; National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). In addition, community colleges enroll a great many older students who are preparing for a career change (Curry, 1988). While many students enter community colleges with uncertain and/or vague academic or career goals, 40% of students with clearly identified goals earn a degree or certificate within five years (Curry, 1988; ERIC Clearinghouse on Community Colleges, 1998).

There remains a high rate of student attrition at community colleges, particularly among minority students (Curry, 1988). Genzuk (1996) describes four common barriers to the community college teacher education student: (a) the difficulty in obtaining financial aid, (b) the potential differences in "values, norms, and behavioral and intellectual styles" (p. 2) between the community in which the student
lives and the college or university, (c) the academic challenge of passing standardized
admissions tests for programs of teacher education and teacher competency tests, (d)
the personal challenge of trying to work, attend classes, and fulfill family
responsibilities.

Foote (1997) describes three key characteristics of community college faculty:
(a) there are about 77,000 community college faculty members nationally, (b)
approximately 31% of faculty are full-time while 69% are part-time, (c) around 64%
of community college faculty members have a masters degree as their highest earned
degree, approximately 20% have a doctorate or professional degree, and about 16% of
the remaining faculty have a baccalaureate degree and/or other degree and
professional training. Half of community college faculty members are female (AACC,
1998).

There is the growing need for articulation among community colleges and
other colleges and universities. Tobolowsky (1998) relates the traditional articulation
model of high school to two-year college to baccalaureate institution still exists but
other models of articulation, such as community college to university then back to the
community college or concurrent registration at a community college and a university,
are utilized by contemporary college students. Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn,
and Fideler (1999) conclude research is needed regarding articulation agreements
between community colleges and programs of teacher education in four-year colleges
and universities. Community colleges face particular challenges in responding to the
needs of the community. Associate degree programs of early childhood teacher
education, discussed in the next section, were developed in response to community needs for early childhood educators.

**Associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education.**

Bredekamp (1996) points out associate degree programs of teacher education are unique to early childhood education. There are approximately 700 (Morgan et al., 1993) associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in the United States. Associate degree programs of early childhood education (ECE) grew as increasing numbers of early childhood educators were needed in Head Start programs and programs of early childhood education. While associate degrees in early childhood education are terminal degrees for many students (Bredekamp, 1996; Morgan et al., 1993), increasing numbers of associate degreeed graduates in ECE are seeking to articulate and attend the baccalaureate and graduate programs of teacher education described later in this chapter.

There was nothing located in the literature describing the structure of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. The literature clearly identifies the lack of research related to associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Many scholars have indicated the necessity for research in this area. It is clear from the literature that programs of early childhood teacher education, including associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, need to be studied and a detailed view of such programs should be presented. Spodek and Saracho (1990a), discussing associate degree programs, relate "there are few descriptions of these programs in the literature" (p. 39). Powell and Dunn (1990) state "the research
base of non-baccalaureate professional education is woefully inadequate" (p. 61).

Ott, Zeichner, and Price (1990) conclude:

Research therefore needs to provide us with information about what prospective early childhood educators are taught, and what they learn under different conditions of teacher education. In-depth studies of the lived reality of teacher education programs ... are needed (p. 131).

Saracho (1993) makes "a plea for developing increased research about early childhood teacher education programs" (p. 424). Bredekamp (1996), who authored the early childhood chapter for the latest edition of the Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, states "this chapter begins from the premise that there is insufficient research specifically addressing the issue of early childhood teacher education" (pp. 323). Yonemura (1991) points out there is an increasing number of studies, such as works by Ayres (1989) and Paley (1984), regarding early childhood teachers but little research related to early childhood teacher educators. This study addressed the clear need for research of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Contemporary programs of teacher education other than associate degree programs have been studied, and structural issues related to these programs are described in the following sections.

Baccalaureate Programs

The basic program of contemporary teacher education is what Feiman-Nemser (1990) terms the "plain vanilla" (p. 216) program. The baccalaureate program evolved in programs of secondary teacher education and later became the norm in elementary teacher education after World War II. This program consists of two years of general education coursework and two years of professional teacher education
study, a format developed in the early 1900s at Teachers College at Columbia University. Feiman-Nemser (1990) describes the curriculum of this two plus two program as consisting of “general culture, special scholarship, professional knowledge, and technical skills” (p. 216). This model of teacher education continues to be supported today as an adequate and cost-effective program of teacher education, particularly when combined with an induction program during the first year of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Tom, 1986, as cited in Howey & Zimpher, 1989).

Education in the United States, including programs of teacher education, came under sharp criticism in the early 1960s, in the wake of the Russians orbiting Sputnik, the first satellite in space. The professional standards of both teacher educators and students enrolled in programs of teacher education were criticized (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Urban, 1990). As a result many programs of teacher education initiated structural changes, such as adding a fifth year to the program.

**Extended Fifth-Year Programs**

In an effort to integrate theory and practice in education and support the professional development of students, some programs of teacher education changed the structure of their program by adding a fifth year. These teacher educators believed “the extended time frame allows the possibility of greater emphasis on academic preparation and fieldwork and has encouraged some rethinking of the professional sequence” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 217). Some common features of extended programs of teacher education include integrated methodology courses and an
emphasis on early and multiple field experiences. Extended fifth-year programs are sometimes combined with graduate programs.

**Graduate Programs**

Feiman-Nemser (1990) notes two types of graduate programs in education: 

"an academic model emphasizing academic knowledge and practical experience and a professional model combining professional studies with guided practice" (p. 218).

The academic model is based on a program of teacher education for secondary schools begun at Harvard University in the 1930s. This program recruited liberal arts students and combined "advanced study of a scholarly discipline with a sequence of professional seminars and an internship" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 218). These programs were particularly popular during the 1950s and 1960s when there was a shortage of teachers and foundation funding (Feiman-Nemser, 1990).

Another graduate-level program of teacher education is the professional model. The professional model offers preservice students a master's degree program in professional education. This program of teacher education has been promoted in the current movement of educational reform, particularly by the Holmes Group, a consortium of schools and colleges of education committed to developing teacher education and the profession of teaching. The Holmes Group (1986) supports the professional model of teacher education, as opposed to the 'plain vanilla' baccalaureate program, with the dual goals of greater subject matter knowledge as well as professional knowledge for future educators.
Alternative Certification Programs

Alternative certification programs “provide on-the-job training to college graduates with no previous education background” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 219). “Typically developed and administered by state departments of education or school districts, these alternate route programs give college graduates a short period of preservice training then provide continued training and support during their first year on the job. At the end of the training period the state agency or school district recommends the candidate for credentialing” (Stoddart & Floden, 1995, p. 1).

Alternative certification programs, like the teacher institutes of the 19th century, place the responsibility for teacher education on local governmental agencies such as school districts and state departments of education. Alternative certification programs are available in at least forty states (Stoddart & Floden, 1995). These programs of teacher education are perceived as being responsive to teacher shortages, responsible for attracting minorities into teaching, particularly in urban districts, while varying widely in composition, substance, and direction (Stoddart & Floden, 1995).

The various structural programs of teacher education described above are guided, implicitly and/or explicitly, by conceptual orientations. Grow-Maienza (1990) points out “both the structure and the substance of teacher education programs are related to the philosophical assumptions on which the various movements and counter-movements in education are built” (p. 507). Five conceptual orientations related to contemporary programs of teacher education will be examined in the following section.
Conceptual Orientations in Contemporary Programs of Teacher Education

A number of words and phrases are used interchangeably in the literature to describe conceptual orientations. Schultz (1988) says "a few of the terms used somewhat synonymously with 'conceptual framework' are frame of reference, theoretical orientation, conceptual approach, theoretical perspective, conceptual model, and paradigm" (p. 31). Conceptual frameworks in education are based upon "underlying ideas and assumptions" (Wolcott, 1992, p. 7) regarding the nature of knowledge, views of the world, characteristics of learning and learners, and teaching methodologies. Feiman-Nemser (1990) uses the term conceptual orientation in her discussion of conceptual frameworks and programs of teacher education. Feiman-Nemser (1990) states:

An orientation refers to a set of ideas about the goals of teacher preparation and the means for achieving them. Ideally, a conceptual orientation includes a view of teaching and learning and a theory about learning to teach. Such ideas should give direction to the practical activities of teacher preparation such as program planning, course development, instruction, supervision, and evaluation. Unlike structural alternatives, conceptual orientations are not tied to particular forms of teacher preparation. They can shape a single component or an entire professional sequence and apply to undergraduate or graduate level programs. Nor are the conceptual orientations mutually exclusive. By design or default, they can, and indeed do, exist side-by-side in the same program (p. 220).

Five conceptual orientations to programs of teacher education identified by Feiman-Nemser (1990) will be used to frame this discussion. These conceptual orientations are: (a) academic, (b) practical, (c) technological, (d) personal, and (e) critical/social. Feiman-Nemser (1990) notes that while each of these orientations emphasizes different points, "none offers a fully developed framework to guide
program development" (p. 227). Grow-Maienza (1996) also points out that most programs of teacher education are some type of “synthesis view” (p. 512) of conceptual orientations while Eisner (1994) concludes, “ideologies are never as definite or clear in practice as they are on paper” (p. 56).

**Academic Orientations in Programs of Teacher Education**

An academic orientation in programs of teacher education emphasizes the transference of knowledge from teacher to pupil and the development of understanding on the part of the student. The academic orientation is “traditionally associated with liberal arts education and secondary teaching” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 221). The teacher is perceived as an academic expert whose scholarship is the critical component of teaching. The student is “viewed as a developing scholar . . . [and] the knowledge base is in the core discipline of the liberal art and sciences” (Grow-Maienza, 1996, p. 510). Teachers in preparation within this orientation are “educated through a rigorous program of academic preparation followed by an apprenticeship with a skilled and academically prepared teacher” (Carter & Anders, 1996, p. 561). Programs of teacher education with an academic orientation are perceived as maintaining academic rigor through a process of careful selection of students and high academic standards (Doyle, 1990).

Feiman-Nemser (1990) notes:

The academic orientation focuses attention on the distinctive work of teaching. What distinguishes teaching from other forms of human service is its concern with helping students learn worthwhile things they could not pick up on their own. It follows that preparing people to teach means helping them develop ideas and dispositions related to this goal (p. 228).
Practical Orientations in Programs of Teacher Education

Practical orientations in programs of teacher education emphasize "the
elements of craft, technique, and artistry that skillful practitioners reveal in their work" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 222). The practical orientation is traditionally associated with apprenticeship learning and teaching as a craft. Programs of teacher education reflecting a practical orientation offer students multiple opportunities to construct knowledge about teaching as they interact with teachers and children in classrooms. Tom and Valli (1990) term the craft orientation as "generally acknowledged to be the dominant orientation among both classroom teachers and teacher educators" (p. 377). Within the practical orientation the teacher is viewed as a person who must deal with the real world of the classroom (Carter & Anders, 1996; Feiman-Nemser, 1990). The knowledge base of the practical orientation is the pragmatic wisdom of master teachers. Programs of teacher education with a practical orientation include the study of specific teaching techniques of master teachers as they are teaching and varying levels of participation with children in the classroom (Carter & Anders, 1996; Doyle, 1990; Feiman-Nemser, 1990). Feiman-Nemser (1990) points out "the technological and practical orientations represent different ideas about the nature and sources of knowledge about teaching and how it can be acquired and developed" (p. 227). The practical orientation views programs of teacher education as encompassing knowledge of children, the teacher, the contexts of the classroom, and the subject matter being taught. These four factors are the basis of the practical orientation to curriculum development described in the next section.
The practical orientation to curriculum development. Schwab (1978) describes a theoretically pragmatic, “practical” orientation to curriculum development. Reid (1992) and McCutcheon (1995) term this approach to curriculum development a deliberative approach utilizing processes of solo and group deliberations in a process they both describe as a practical art. McCutcheon (1995) defines deliberation as “a process of reasoning about practical problems. It is solution oriented, that is, toward deciding on a course of action” (p. 4). A key element in deliberation is the word practical. Practical problems are described by Reid (1992) as “a puzzle about what to do” (p. 84). Reasoning about practical ‘puzzles’ is the basis of pragmatic theory.

Charles S. Peirce, the father of American pragmatism, described a method of reasoning used by “manipulating real things instead of words and fancies (1877, p.2). Peirce stated, “our beliefs guide our desires and shape our actions” (1877, p. 3). Beliefs are the factors which “puts us into such a condition that we shall behave in some certain way, when the occasion arises” (Peirce, 1877, p. 3). Peirce believed experiences and inquiries into real situations formed beliefs. John Dewey, a student of Peirce, based his philosophy of education upon Peircean pragmatism. In 1916 Dewey wrote, “the theory of the method of knowing which is advanced in these pages may be termed pragmatic. Its essential feature is to maintain the continuity of knowing with an activity which purposely modifies the environment” (p. 354). Dewey believed learning was a life long process in which people continually encounter problems, requiring inquiry to reacquire what both Peirce and Dewey termed habits or beliefs.
Schubert (1986) points out the roots of practical orientation to curriculum development lie within the pragmatism of the progressive education movement as well as a focus on individual perspectives and phenomenological understanding. Schubert (1986) describes four assumptions within practical curriculum inquiry: (a) it is based on a real need to develop new or revised curriculum, (b) all aspects affecting a particular curriculum are carefully considered, (c) the results of the inquiry are specific to the situation, (d) and the consequence of the inquiry is a determination of the best course of action. Schubert concludes a practical orientation to curriculum development "is constantly renewing. It results in decision, action, and/or increased personal and professional meaning. This, in turn, brings into clearer sight other problems to be pursued, other needs to be met, and further meanings to be recovered" (1986, p. 293).

Practical problems in teacher education include what to include in the curriculum. Deliberators view curriculum as a practical art as opposed to viewing it as a set plan, societal oppression, or personal phenomenon (Reid, 1992). Curriculum development for deliberators involves an inquiry process which includes the discovery of curriculum problems, reflection upon the problems, and considerations of varying solutions and approaches (Reid, 1992). The process of deliberation is used to solve the practical problems of curriculum development. McCutcheon (1995) describes characteristics of deliberation as including: consideration of alternative solutions; anticipation of the outcomes of various solutions; concern for means, ends, facts, and values; recognition of time factors; consideration of morals and/or ethics; attention to
responsible to students, teachers and society; a continual aspect of many things
happening at once; interest on the part of those involved; and conflict (p. 5). The
deliberative curriculum development process occurs as both a solo and group process.
The outcome of deliberation "is a decision, a selection and guide to a possible action"
(Schwab, 1978, p. 228).

Schwab (1978) suggests four "bodies of experience" (p. 365) or
"commonplaces" (p. 371) which must be considered equally by curriculum
deliberators: (a) the subject matter, (b) the learners, (c) the teachers, and (d) the
milieu. Schwab (1978) explains knowledge of the subject matter includes familiarity
with "the scholarly materials under treatment" and "the discipline from which they
come" (p. 366). Included within the commonplace of the learners are broad types of
knowledge, such as child development knowledge or knowledge of adult learning
styles, related to the students for whom the curriculum is planned. Schwab (1978)
also indicates knowledge of the learners should include specific knowledge about the
students, "knowledge achieved by direct involvement with them" (p. 366). Schwab
(1978) perceived knowledge of the learners to include details of student's career goals,
their families, friends, and neighbors, as well as their roles in "their political
community, their ethnic or religious community" (p. 366). Schwab (1978) considered
professional knowledge about the teachers another commonplace to curriculum
development. He believed such knowledge included information about "what these
teachers are likely to know and how flexible and ready they are likely to be to learn
new materials and new ways of teaching" (Schwab, 1978, p. 367). Finally, Schwab
pointed out the importance of the commonplace of the milieu to curriculum development. Schwab (1978) notes multiple contexts that may impact one another as well as the development of the curriculum. The milieus can include: the school, the classroom, the students’ interpersonal relationships with one another, the interpersonal relationships of adults, the organization structures of the school and classroom, “the family, the community, the particular groupings of religious, class or ethnic genus” (Schwab, 1978, p. 367).

**Technological Orientations in Programs of Teacher Education**

Technological orientations to programs of teacher education emphasize the “knowledge and skill of teaching. The primary goal is to prepare teachers who can carry out the tasks of teaching with proficiency” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 223). The technological orientation is traditionally associated with the scientific study of teaching with its “roots in behavioral psychology and the associated procedures of task analysis and instructional design” (Carter & Anders, 1996, p. 560). The teacher is viewed as a rational decision-maker who has developed specific teaching competencies which can be independently evaluated (Carter & Anders, 1996; Feiman-Nemser, 1990). Learning outcomes are standardized. Students are expected to acquire knowledge that is composed of distinct abilities that can be taught and evaluated individually. Programs of teacher education with a technological orientation are often termed teacher training. Feiman-Nemser (1990) describes a model of teacher training in which students are sequentially taught: (a) the theory related to a particular teaching skill, (b) the skill is demonstrated to the students in the college classroom
through a simulated demonstration or video, (c) students practice the skill in the college classroom with one another, (d) their observable behaviors are evaluated by the professor, and, (e) finally, students are expected to transfer their skills to an actual classroom. The technological orientation reflects a positivistic belief in a scientifically determined knowledge base regarding teaching that can be acquired by students through a process of demonstration and practice in a college classroom.

**Personal Orientations in Programs of Teacher Education**

Programs of teacher education with a personal orientation emphasize teaching and learning as the heart of the educational process while “the teachers’ own personal development is a central part of teacher preparation” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 225). The personal orientation to programs of teacher education is associated with “coming to terms with one’s self, maximizing a sense of self-efficacy, clarifying one’s values, and discovering one’s own person meaning and style in teaching” (Doyle, 1990, p. 5). Carter and Anders (1996) characterize programs of teacher education with a personal orientation as including such elements as counseling, interviews, support groups, journals, reflection, the study of narratives, and action research. Doyle (1990) and Grow-Maienza (1996) point out the personal orientation includes a developmental approach to teaching and learning. Doyle (1990) notes within the personal orientation “in addition to personal understanding, knowledge of human development and of processes for creating supportive learning environments to promote growth are considered to be at the heart of teacher education” (p. 5). Grow-Maienza (1996), describing the knowledge base for the personal orientation, says:
Education should facilitate the unfolding natural goodness of the child, the aims of education become individual and idiosyncratic, and thus learning outcome standardization is deemphasized [sic]. For the teacher, there are no standard competencies to be acquired. The focus is instead on coming to terms with self, acquiring knowledge of the stages of child development, and demonstrating an empathetic relationship with students more as equals than in an authoritarian role. . . . For developmentalists, the teacher is viewed as a naturalist, an artist, or a researcher of child development (p. 511).

Feiman-Nemser (1990) believes "the personal orientation reminds us that learning to teach is a transformative process, not just a matter of acquiring new knowledge and skills" (p. 227).

**Critical/Social Orientations in Programs of Teacher Education**

Critical/social orientations to programs of teacher education emphasize "a progressive social vision with a radical critique of schooling" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 226). The critical/social orientation to programs of teacher education is associated with the identification of social inequities and hegemony while assisting in the formation of a new social order. Grow-Maienza (1996) points out the goal of education in the critical social orientation "is to facilitate children in their struggle to become, and to reconstruct the society that, like the individual and knowledge, is constructivist in nature, struggling to become" (p. 512). Within the critical/social orientation to programs of teacher education, issues of power are the focal point.

The role of the teacher and programs of teacher education in a critical/social orientation is to participate in social reform to create a more just and equitable society (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Grow-Maienza, 1996; Zeichner, 1993). The knowledge base for a critical/social orientation "must include awareness of political and social contexts of schooling" (Grow-Maienza, 1996, p. 512). Feiman-Nemser (1990) concludes, "the
critical orientation highlights the teacher's obligations to students and society” (p. 227).

Zeichner (1983) regards the identification of conceptual orientations in programs of teacher education as essential for establishing program priorities:

The identification of general orientations to teacher education is intended merely to convey the priorities within each approach. All of the orientations are concerned in some way with mastery of content knowledge and technical skill in teaching. All orientations are concerned with the reorganization of teacher perceptions and with fostering some form in inquiry about teaching. It is the set of priorities within which the other concerns are addressed that distinguishes one approach from another.

It is the establishment of a conceptual orientation in programs of teacher education that enables the articulation of program priorities and informs the issue of quality and coherence discussed in the next section.

Issues of Quality and Coherence in Programs of Teacher Education

Shulman (1999) believes “the most critical part of the terrain in the landscape of teacher development is the quality of teacher educators and the effectiveness of the programs they conduct” (p. xiii). Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their research of programs of primary teacher education, identified specific aspects of quality and coherence in these exemplary programs. Issues of quality and coherence in programs of teacher education are discussed in the following sections.

Quality

Quality is described in Webster's dictionary as “the degree of excellence” (Mish, 1994, p. 955). Different individuals and groups will assess the quality of programs of teacher education in different ways based upon their conceptual
framework. For example, at the national level, programs of teacher education that have been accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have demonstrated their quality through a process of rigorous self-study and external review. Though voluntary, NCATE accreditation has been achieved by more than 40% of the approximately 1280 baccalaureate and graduate schools and colleges of education in the United States (Roth, 1996). NCATE does not accredit associate degree programs at this time. The National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, a division of NAEYC, in conjunction with the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS), is developing an approval system for associate degree programs (ACCESS, 1999). This voluntary accreditation process is based upon the NAEYC standards for associate degree programs of early childhood education and is planned to be fully operational by 2002 (ACCESS, 1999).

Examples of quality assessment for programs of teacher education are also found at the state level. Programs of teacher education are often deemed excellent when graduates of those programs achieve passing scores on national teaching examinations and/or their students pass national and state proficiency tests. These standards are what Katz (1994) terms "top-down perspective on quality" (p. 201) and deal with program aspects that "are directly observable and can be regulated" (p. 201).

Specific attributes of quality programs of teacher education identified in the literature include: (a) clear identification of a conceptual framework, (b) the presence of a curricular theme, (c) a balanced relationship between integrated content
knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience, and (d) socialization into the profession of teaching. Each of these attributes is discussed in the following sections.

**Conceptual framework.** Howey and Zimpher (1989) offer detailed descriptions of programs of teacher education. They believe a program of teacher education must have conceptual frameworks/orientations “that explicate, justify, and build consensus around such fundamental conceptions as the role of the teacher, the nature of teaching and learning, and the mission of schools in this democracy” (p. 242). Howey (1996) believes the cornerstone of program coherence is a conceptual orientation:

> Such a framework, when fleshed out, makes explicit conceptions of teaching, learning, schooling, and learning to teach. ... A conceptual framework of this nature when negotiated across appropriate parties assists in deciding on a reasonable number of derivative themes or core abilities for preservice teacher (p. 143).

Sources of conceptual frameworks for programs of teacher education include “disciplinary content knowledge, conceptions of what professional practice entails, standards-setting activities focused on the commonplaces of schooling, models and theoretical constructs concerned with teaching and learning, craft wisdom and scholarship, and enlightened P-12 school reform initiatives” (Howey, 1996, p. 150).

Howey and Zimpher (1989) consider conceptual frameworks as guides for the structural aspects of the program, including all components of the teacher education curriculum.

**Curricular theme.** A second attribute of quality within programs of teacher education is the presence of a curricular theme. Howey (1996) notes “if a preservice
student is to internalize fully and employ often complex understandings and pedagogical strategies embedded in a particular conception, then opportunities for understanding and use need to extend beyond a course and be manifested thematically through the program” (p. 156). There is a clear curriculum theme in early childhood teacher education: knowledge of child development. Bredekamp (1996) states “one of the primary tenets of early childhood education is that teaches need to understand and apply knowledge of child development and learning in all domains – physical, social, emotional, language, aesthetic, and cognitive” (p. 329). Bredekamp (1996) believes “child development knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are so closely linked in practice that it is very difficult to separate them conceptually” (p. 330). The issue of child development knowledge is more fully discussed as a programmatic theme in early childhood teacher education later in this chapter.

**Balanced relationships among types of knowledge.** A third attribute of a program of teacher education is a balanced relationship among integrated content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience (Howey & Zimpher, 1989). Murray & Porter (1996) believe programs of teacher education must address five broad questions related to the acquisition of knowledge: (a) how will students acquire content knowledge? (b) how will students develop scholarly “habits of mind” (p. 155) from general and liberal knowledge? (c) how do students learn pedagogical content knowledge, the transformation of content knowledge for learning? (d) how do students learn to make curriculum “accurate with respect to the best of recent
scholarship on matters of race, gender, ethnicity, and cultural perspective" (p. 156) and (e) how do students learn to make decisions about teaching and learning?

Saracho (1993) describes the interrelationships among general education, professional foundations, instructional knowledge and practice in early childhood teacher education. She believes general education is basic to early childhood teacher education because “the content of early childhood education is drawn from general education” (Saracho, 1993, p. 415). Saracho (1993) points out general education “knowledge must be integrated and understood to create a broad perspective” (p. 415). Saracho (1993) suggests professional foundations, instructional knowledge, and practice in early childhood teacher education must be informed by knowledge of child development, the cultural contexts of teaching and learning, learning theory, the history and culture of the profession of early childhood education, and knowledge of classroom practices including curriculum design, instructional techniques, and classroom management.

**Socialization into the profession.** A fourth attribute of programs of teacher education is socialization into the profession, regarded as a key element by Howey and Zimpher (1989) and described by Howey (1996) as “activities that socialize preservice students in purposeful and positive ways” (p. 143). Examples of purposeful teacher socialization include various types of student cohort groups and the development of learning communities (Howey, 1996). Descriptions of or discussions concerning student cohort groups or learning communities for students in programs of early childhood teacher education could not be located in the literature. There is, however,
support for the induction of teachers into the early childhood profession. Spodek and Saracho (1990a) address socialization of new early childhood educators and suggest "creating an induction period or internship for novice teachers" (p. 40). Albarado (1994), also calling for and professional induction, relates her first year of teaching:

would have been very different had I maintained continued contact with my college teachers. . . . They would have supported my creativity and provided a sense of security that would have made it easier to take risks. They would have questioned me and made me question myself, just as they had done during my undergraduate years. Unfortunately, a mechanism to provide this kind of support to beginning teachers is seldom available (p. 55).

Specific attributes of quality programs of teacher education, as represented in the literature, have been identified. Issues related to coherence within programs of teacher education are described next.

Coherence

Coherence is defined in Webster’s dictionary as “systematic or logical connection or consistency . . . to be logically or aesthetically consistent” (Mish, 1994 p. 223). Buchmann and Floden (1990) note “what is ‘coherent’ is supposed to have direction, systematic relations, and intelligible meaning, thus conveying a sense of purpose, order, and intellectual as well as practical control” (p. 1). Tom (1991) points out programs of teacher education have been criticized in the past as dull, impractical, fragmented, and without direction. Tom (1991) states “both supporters and critics of teacher education often agree that education courses have little relationship to one another” (p. 14). Tom (1991) relates what may appear to be a directionless program is often “multi-directional, with each instructor blazing a separate trail” (p. 16). He believes programs of teacher education have lacked coherence and become
fragmented because both education courses and departments of education have been segmented by knowledge specialization. Howey and Zimpher (1994) believe “programs with some conceptual coherence can provide a more interrelated, focused, and cumulative impact on the preservice students enrolled in such programs than programs reflecting a series of more loosely coupled courses” (p. 156).

Buchmann and Floden (1990), while cautioning their readers not to equate program coherence with a quest for certainty, offer the metaphor of building a spider web to assist in the development of a construct of program coherence. Buchmann and Floden (1990) explain within a web of program coherence “threads hang together, but there are fuzzy bits and new strands of experience and meaning, with outworn or odd patches being worked over or unravelled [sic] over time” (p. 8). They explain that programs of teacher education such as those depicted by Tom (1991) as segmented and directionless can result in webs with few connections for learning while programs that are quite tightly structured can create webs too dense to allow new learning connections. Buchmann and Floden (1990) conclude “desirable program coherence is found where students can build connections among various areas of knowledge and skill, but where loose ends remain, inviting a reweaving of beliefs and ties to the unknown” (p. 8).

**Research on Quality and Coherence in Teacher Education**

Howey and Zimpher (1989) studied six exemplary programs of elementary teacher education at baccalaureate colleges and universities. They selected particular programs of teacher education for their case studies “because of nominations from
multiple sources which indicted that they were distinctive and/or exemplary in some ways" (Howey & Zimpher, 1989, p. 9). While each program varied in conceptual orientation and structure, Howey and Zimpher (1989) found all of the programs shared the attributes of exemplary programs illustrated in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students identify with a cohort group</th>
<th>Faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program</th>
<th>Programs goals are clear and reasonable</th>
<th>Programs are rigorous and academically challenging</th>
<th>Program curriculum is thematic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced</td>
<td>Faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program</td>
<td>Program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum</td>
<td>Programs have adequate time within the structure of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories</td>
<td>Programs have curriculum articulation with the schools</td>
<td>Programs link with research and development in teacher education</td>
<td>Programs are systematically evaluated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Quality and Coherence in Exemplary Programs of Teacher Education

These characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their research, were utilized as a conceptual framework in this study. A full description of the use of the conceptual frameworks guiding this
research is detailed in Chapter 3. While no studies of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education were located in the literature, specific issues related to quality and coherence were discussed in the early childhood literature. Issues of quality and coherence specifically addressing programs of early childhood teacher education are described in the following section.

Issues of Coherence and Quality in Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

Issues related to aspects of coherence and quality in programs of early childhood teacher education are discussed in the literature. In this section the context of early childhood teacher education is described to situate programs of early childhood teacher education, including associate degree programs, within the early childhood literature. Next, national guidelines for programs of early childhood teacher education are explored. Finally, unique aspects of the field of early childhood teacher education are discussed.

The Context of Early Childhood Teacher Education

Early childhood education is a distinct but varied field, which includes a wide range of educational programs for young children from birth through age of eight. Early childhood educators work in a variety of settings including homes, schools, and childcare centers. Standards and regulatory systems in early childhood education are quite diverse and mandate distinct types of education. Guidelines for baccalaureate and advanced degree programs of early childhood teacher education are approved by NCATE (Bredekamp, 1996). All states require certification for those who teach in kindergarten through third grade. Morgan et al. (1993) report some states require no
training or education for those working as early childhood assistant teachers, early childhood teachers, directors, or family/group home care providers due to insufficient regulations, scarce requirements, or exemptions granted because of the lack of qualified individuals. Nationally, for those public school early childhood teachers of children younger than kindergarten age, 20% of the states have specialized prekindergarten certification, 30% have no prekindergarten certification or endorsement, and the remaining 50% either combine preschool and early primary children as a certificate or offer early childhood endorsements to elementary certification (Morgan et al., 1993).

In the state of Ohio, early childhood educators working with preschool age children three to five years of age can be regulated by the State Department of Human Services and/or the State Department of Education. Each Department requires a distinctly different level of professional development for those working with young children. The State of Ohio Department of Human Services licenses childcare facilities. Those employed in a licensed childcare center are required by the State of Ohio Department of Human Services to be 18 years of age and complete 45 clock hours of in-service training in child development or early childhood education, child abuse recognition and prevention, first aid, and in the prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases. Child care staff members are exempted from the 45 clock hours of training if they have an associate or higher degree in child development or early childhood education, a pre-kindergarten teaching license, or a
Child Development Associate (CDA) national credential (Ohio Department of Human Services, 1995).

The State of Ohio Department of Education mandates that lead teachers in preschool programs in public schools have, at a minimum, the associate pre-kindergarten teaching certificate. In Ohio, application for a pre-kindergarten teacher certificate can be made by persons who have earned an associate or baccalaureate degree from a state approved pre-kindergarten teacher education program. Twenty-four academic institutions are approved by the State Department of Education to offer coursework leading to the pre-kindergarten associate teaching certificate. Included among these academic institutions are eight community colleges, five technical colleges, and 11 baccalaureate colleges and universities (Ohio Department of Education, 1996).

Morgan et al. (1993) found two states other than Ohio offering a type of teacher certification for those who have earned an associate degree in early childhood education. California has instituted levels of professional development in early childhood and requires an associate degree to apply for the ‘supervisor’s permit’ required to direct a childcare program. Alaska has a type of early childhood credential that permits an associate degree to be applied as an early childhood endorsement to a baccalaureate teaching certificate. Bredekamp (1996) concludes, “early childhood education is unique among teacher preparation programs in that degree programs in the field are available at the associate level” (p. 326).
Programs of early childhood teacher education, focusing on young children ages three to five, grew dramatically during the 1960s and early 1970s. This was due to the advent of the Head Start program well as the increasing need for childcare for preschool and school age children (Morrison, 1997). In 1982, when Spodek and Davis studied programs of early childhood teacher education, they found almost 60% of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education had begun since 1972, the date when Federal legislation mandated the CDA credential or an associate degree for lead teachers in Head Start classrooms. The inadequacy of research on programs of early childhood teacher education has led other reviewers to conclude that “an understanding of early childhood teacher education requires extrapolating from research on related areas” (Bredekamp, 1996, p. 324).

Different types of research are currently used to support programs of early childhood teacher education. The first type of research used to inform early childhood teacher education is a small number of longitudinal research studies on the effects of particular models of early childhood education programs on young children, primarily children who belong to minority cultures and live in poverty (Stallings & Stipek, 1986). A second source of research is studies of the effects on children who have participated in a childcare program. These studies have been used to establish goals for programs of early childhood teacher education and to inform the development and discussion of pedagogical content knowledge in the profession (Bredekamp, 1996). A third source of research for programs of early childhood teacher education is extrapolated from studies of programs of traditional kindergarten through third grade.
elementary teacher education programs. Saracho (1993) and Katz (1994) advise caution in this approach. Katz (1994) states young children have unique characteristics such as developing language and social skills, which often necessitate the interpretation of behavior. Katz (1994) believes that because of the special nature of young children, programs of early childhood professional preparation must be grounded in the knowledge base and standards of early childhood education. The national guidelines for early childhood professional preparation programs are discussed in the following section.

**Guidelines for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs**

National voluntary guidelines for early childhood professional preparation programs have been developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in conjunction with the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) and the National Board for Profession Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (1996). These guidelines describe a coherent and high quality teacher education program in early childhood education at the associate, baccalaureate, and advanced degree levels. In the following sections the conceptual framework of the guidelines is reviewed and the recommendations concerning general studies, content studies, and quality of teaching and learning are summarized.

**Conceptual Framework**

Howey (1996) terms the use of a conceptual framework for programs of teacher education the cornerstone of program coherence. The guidelines for early
childhood professional preparation call for programs of early childhood teacher education to be “derived from a conceptual framework that is knowledge based; shared among faculty, candidates, and other community members; and written, well articulated, and regularly evaluated” (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996, p. 5). The guidelines also specify that “coherence exists among the conceptual framework and the student outcomes, courses, field experiences, teaching and learning practices, and evaluation” (NAEYC et al., 1996, p. 5). The guidelines stipulate that programs of early childhood teacher education ensure that teachers in preparation can integrate knowledge to assure meaningful learning for children. Issues of diversity and discrimination must be addressed and students should be prepared to work with diverse populations and persons of varying abilities. Finally, candidates should be prepared for collaborative work environments with community organizations, other professionals, and families.

**Guidelines for General Studies and Content Studies**

The guidelines suggest a curriculum of general studies in early childhood professional preparation programs to support the development of a broad, generalized knowledge base, integrate multicultural and international perspectives, and develop candidate’s communication skills. “The program ensures that candidates develop theoretical and practical knowledge in humanities, mathematics and technology, social sciences, biological and physical sciences, the arts, and personal health and fitness” (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996, p. 5).
The guidelines (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996) relate content studies to three levels of professional development in programs of early childhood teacher education: associate degree, baccalaureate degree, and advanced (masters and doctoral) degrees. At the associate and baccalaureate degree levels, guidelines specifically address content knowledge in child development, curriculum development and implementation, family and community relationship, assessment, and professionalism. Differences in content studies between the two degrees include greater breadth and depth of study at the baccalaureate level as well as an expectation for higher levels of professionalism. At the advanced degree level the guidelines call for extensive theoretical and research knowledge with applications of professional and interdisciplinary knowledge within contexts of professional leadership.

**Guidelines for the Quality of Teaching and Learning**

A program of early childhood teacher education is expected to integrate theory and practice through field experiences. Classroom teaching should reflect the conceptual framework of the program, a knowledge of culture, familiarity with adult learning styles, use of a variety of methods including appropriate technologies, support active learning, encourage reflection, utilize methods of continuous evaluation, and provide accessible environments (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996).

In addition to guidelines for professional development in early childhood, specific program themes are found in the literature relating to programs of early childhood teacher education. These themes are identified and described in the following section.
Programmatic Themes in Early Childhood Teacher Education

Three broad programmatic themes unique to early childhood teacher education are found in the literature. These themes are (a) knowledge of child development, (b) the use of campus child care centers as field and laboratory sites, and (c) multiple levels of professional development. Each of these early childhood teacher education programmatic themes is described in the following section.

Knowledge of Child Development

As indicated earlier in this chapter, knowledge of child development is widely considered the predominant theme of programs of early childhood teacher education (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp, 1996; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; McCarthy, 1990; NAEYC, 1985; Peters & Klinzing, 1990; Spodek & Saracho, 1990a; Willer, 1994).

Professional guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (1996) describe knowledge of child development as essential for the early childhood professional. The first guideline is entitled “Child Development and Learning” and directs the use of child development knowledge to support all learning activities, interactions with individual children, and the preparation of the learning environment for young children (NAEYC et al., 1996).

The construct of child development knowledge and its applicability to programs of early childhood teacher education is currently being deliberated in the profession due to increased questioning of the generalizability of the knowledge base
because of its reflection of a "particular sociocultural position" (Stott & Bowman, 1996, p. 169). That sociocultural position is white and middle-class. Goffin (1996) points out child development knowledge can not be objective knowledge but must include social and cultural features. Lubeck (1996) believes "there are many ways of understanding how children develop and learn, many ways to teach, and a range of curricular options" (p. 147). She encourages the profession to consider:

Two definitions of a child — a universal child and a culturally constituted child — and two explanations of what theory is all about; it is scientific, describing a universal human experience, or it is a "cultural invention," a comment on our time and/or one of a number of plausible explanations for a particular phenomenon (Lubeck, 1996, p. 155).

Lubeck espouses a critical/social orientation to programs of teacher education. Lubeck (1996) states "theories should be evaluated in terms of their usefulness in the creation of a more equitable society" (p. 159) while calling for "education that is both multicultural and social reconstructionist [which] explicitly teaches students to analyze ways in which inequality is maintained and prepares them for social action" (p. 162).

Katz (1996) acknowledges her long support of child development knowledge as an essential element in programs of early childhood teacher education. She points out assumptions regarding the universal nature of child development have changed and continue to be reconsidered. Katz (1996) perceives development and cultural contexts as changeable and evolving while questioning whether the full complexity of development can even be known. She notes that child development literature in the recent past has focused on the individual while contemporary authors are stressing Vygotsky's theory of socially constructed knowledge. Katz (1996) concludes the
professional conversation concerning what is essential or desirable knowledge of child
development must proceed.

Sociocultural approaches to learning and development, based on the theories
and work of Lev Vygotsky and his associates in Russia during the 1920s and 1930s,
are expanding understanding of child development knowledge. Vygotsky believed
learning and development “take place in a cultural context, are mediated by language
and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their
historical development” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). Those researchers
utilizing a sociocultural orientation consider multiple layers within social and cultural
constructs as they seek fuller and deeper ways of knowing.

A sociocultural conceptual framework is beginning to be reflected within the
knowledge base of early childhood teacher education. In 1987, following a process of
deliberation involving early childhood educators throughout the United States,
NAEYC published a position statement with recommendations for programs of early
childhood education. Bredekamp (1996) identifies this position statement,
Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children
from Birth Through Age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987), as a part of the conceptual framework
for programs of early childhood teacher education. The revised edition,
Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Bredekamp &
Copple, 1997), describes three key aspects of a knowledge base for early childhood
educators: knowledge of child development and learning; knowledge of individual
children; and “knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live to
ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for the participating children and their families" (p. 9). Bredekamp (1997) emphasizes the importance of social and cultural contexts in informing the decision making processes of early childhood educators, discusses culture's impact on teaching and learning, and describes the potential negative effects of neglecting or misinterpreting the role of culture in the early childhood classroom. Bredekamp (1997) notes:

Early childhood programs exist in contexts. Those contexts are influenced by many factors—among them are parents' preferences, community values, societal expectations, demands of institutions at the next level of education, and broadly defined values of American culture, such as personal freedom and individual responsibility (p. 43).

Bredekamp & Copple (1997) acknowledge "the knowledge base informing early childhood practice has greatly increased in the last decade, building on the rich contributions of scholars and practitioners in the field" (p. vii). They challenge all early childhood professionals, including teacher educators and students of early childhood education, to continue to research, learn, and grow.

Early childhood education also informs the practices of field and laboratory experiences for preservice teachers. A brief historical review of field experiences will be used to establish the framework for the discussion of field experiences in early childhood teacher education and contemporary campus centers for young children.

Laboratory and Clinical Experiences in Teacher Education

A key aspect of program coherence described by Howey (1996) is laboratory preparation. Howey (1996) believes "ultimately preservice programs manifest their coherence in the type of pedagogy modeled for and engaged in by preservice students"
Howey (1996) describes the significance of continuity in programs of teacher education:

If a preservice student is to internalize fully and employ often complex understandings and pedagogical strategies embedded in a particular conception, then opportunities for understanding and use need to extend beyond a course and be manifested thematically throughout the program. The effects of discontinuity across courses relative to teacher development are unclear, but it would seem reasonable that they contribute to fragmentation and superficiality in practice and thought (p. 156).

A number of authors describe the continuity between campus-based programs of teacher education and clinical and/or laboratory experiences in programs of teacher education, including those in early childhood. McIntyre, Byrd and Foxx (1996) describe laboratory experiences as "occasions during which students can practice specific instructional behaviors and skills in a controlled environment . . . designed to support the methods and models espoused by the teacher education profession and to serve as a valuable link between methods courses and field experiences" (pp. 180-181). Howey (1996) notes:

It is not enough that prospective teachers have repeated opportunities to encounter key understandings and 'core' concepts in a spiral curriculum. They must have that content represented for them in pedagogically powerful ways, and, in turn, must represent it in multiple ways themselves, ways that are responsive to the abilities and interests of others (p. 166).

Berliner (1985) suggests the research base in teacher education be used in pedagogical laboratories. Berliner (1985) envisioned teaching laboratories where there are "students to whom one can teach concepts, where expert teachers can provide critiques of the lessons, and where the peers of the novice teacher and the children themselves can join in the analysis of the teaching activities that have just
occurred" (p. 6). Howey (1996) perceives the strength of a well-conceived laboratory program in teacher education to be "its ability to promote critical analysis and reflection. The seeds for the disposition to inquire into one's practice on a continuing basis and to support and guide increasingly that practice with decisions that are data based, theoretically grounded, and morally oriented are nurtured in laboratory settings" (p. 166).

Howey (1996) describes the nature of teaching laboratories as including portfolio development, observations of children, observation and analysis of videotaped teaching and learning, microteaching, simulations, and case study analysis. McIntyre et al. (1996) also mention video technology including interactive computer-based simulations. Howey (1996) calls for teacher educators "to get on with this task of laboratory development, whether or not sophisticated technology is available" (p. 168).

Clinical schools, or professional development schools (PDSs), "link faculties in elementary and secondary schools, colleges of education, and colleges of arts and science to provide the best possible learning environment for teacher preparation" (Stallings & Kowalski, 1990, p. 255). A PDS seeks to provide exemplary education for teachers in preparation, continuing professional development, and research in teaching and learning within the atmosphere of an established, long-term relationship between school systems and colleges of education (Holmes Group, 1990).

Clinical experiences in programs of teacher education refer to what is generally termed field experiences or student teaching. Zimpher and Sherrill (1996) note
historically, the clinical faculty role has consisted primarily, if not solely, of supervising student teachers” (p. 293). Specific guidelines related to the nature of field experiences in programs of early childhood teacher education are identified in the Guidelines for Preparation of Early Childhood Professionals (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996). The guidelines call for field-experiences to be of a high quality. Sites are to be selected and evaluated by standards established by the program of teacher education as well as “reflect the best possible current practices in early childhood education (NAEYC et al., p. 6). There is a guideline specifically addressing the continuity between the program of teacher education and field experiences: “Field experiences are consistent with the conceptual framework, are well planned and sequenced, are of high quality, and provide ample opportunity for candidates to integrate theory and practice” (NAEYC et al., p. 6). The guidelines also address the nature of the field experiences. Students are to have early and ongoing experiences with young children and their families that are supervised and evaluated by program faculty. Field experiences are to provide students with:

Opportunities to study and practice in a variety of settings, with children of different ages and their families, in diverse types of settings, with children and families who are cultural and linguistically diverse, and with children with disabilities or special learning and developmental needs (NAEYC et al., p.6).

The NAEYC/DEC/CEC/NBPTS (1996) guidelines advise that field experiences in programs of early childhood teacher education offer students the opportunity for professional socialization into the field through collaborations with staff and other interdisciplinary professionals at the field site. It is also recommended that student teachers also have opportunities to “reflect on their practice in
collaborative relationships" (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, & NBPTS, 1996, p. 6). Finally, the guidelines for four- and five-year institutions contain a uncommon recommendation for field experiences, clearly reflecting the nature of early childhood education. Teachers in preparation in these institutions must complete student teaching with “two different age groups (infant/toddler, preprimary, or primary-school age)” (NAEYC, et al., 1996, p. 20). A unique aspect of early childhood teacher education is the emergence of campus centers for young children as field and laboratory sites. The relationship between campus childcare centers and programs of early childhood teacher education is described in the following section.

**Contemporary Campus Centers for Young Children as Field and Laboratory Sites**

According to Kelley (1970) student teaching was mandatory in many of the 19th century European institutes where prospective teachers studied, including the teaching training institutes established by both Pestalozzi and Froebel. Teacher preparation schools in Prussia, the basis for the formation of normal schools in the United States, mandated student teaching and laboratory experiences. The first normal schools in America “provided for demonstration and practice teaching experiences for its students” (Kelley, p. 6). Practice schools offered “direct experience for teachers in training [and] was intended to develop mechanical methods of teaching each subject” (Kelley, 1970, p. 19). Model schools “were intended to show the best standards of instructional materials, equipment, schoolroom facilities, teaching methods, and discipline” (Kelley, 1970, p. 20). By 1915 there were approximately 215 practice schools affiliated with normal schools with the purpose of providing field and
laboratory experiences. Another 60 public schools functioned as model schools (Kelley, 1970).

Kelley (1970) relates that in 1926 the American Association of Teachers Colleges adopted standards that included the mandate of maintaining a training school as a laboratory for observation and demonstration as well as for supervised student teaching. Following World War II the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, formerly the American Association of Teachers Colleges, revised the standards relating to laboratory schools. While laboratory schools were still mandated, other options for field and laboratory experiences within the local community were also recommended (Kelley, 1970). These standards led to the increased use of public schools in the community for student teaching. In the early 1960s there were approximately 187 college or university laboratory schools (Kelley, 1970) but by the 1970s most of these schools had been closed, primarily because of budgetary constraints. Some programs for young children continued on campuses, while others were transformed into campus childcare programs (Bauch, 1988).

Alger (1991) remarks “programs for very young children have existed on college campuses during most of the twentieth century as laboratory schools used for training and research, and as parent cooperative nursery schools for the children of faculty and students” (p. 70). Townley and Zeece (1991) remind their readers:

The history of programs for young children on university campuses spans nearly a century, beginning with the establishment in 1896 of the first university children’s program at the University of Chicago. ... From this origin, children’s programs on campuses evolved in the form of nursery school programs in places like Teachers College, Bank Street College, Merrill-Palmer
Institute, and the University of Iowa... These first children's programs on campuses became firmly established in the 1920s as laboratory schools (p. 19).

The past 25 years have seen a tremendous growth of full-day campus childcare programs. The number of female college students has increased, many of the college students who need child care are women, and working parents are also enrolling in colleges and universities. Colleges and universities are increasingly interested in providing child care for students and employees, offering college students professional preparation opportunities for observation and field experiences, and providing faculty and students sites for research (Abdullah, 1997; Alger, 1991; Barbour & Bersani, 1991; Horn-Wingerd & Cohen, 1991; Townley & Zeece, 1991).

Thomas (1996) reports a 1995 survey conducted by the National Coalition for Campus Care found over half of the campus child care centers responding to their study were combining laboratory school and child care services in their programs. Almost two-thirds of two-year institutions responding to the survey stated they combined a laboratory school and campus childcare while less than half of four-year colleges had such combinations. It is interesting to note only 11% of either type of campus had laboratory schools alone. Burton and Boulton (1991) perceive the campus child care community as a vehicle for providing leadership in the growing professionalization of the field of early childhood education through research, teaching, and service. Mann (1988) notes "the mission of the campus child care center is unique in that not only must quality child care be provided but also the academic needs of students and faculty must be met" (p. 171).
Campus programs for young children provide research sites for both faculty and students. Fernie and Kantor (1994) describe the multiple demands of teaching, research, and university and community service for professors of early childhood at a research university. They have established a professional association with each other, integrating teaching and research through their ethnographic studies in the university laboratory preschool.

Campus childcare programs can serve as resources for programs of teacher education. Barbour and Bersani (1991) propose additional linkages of campus childcare programs to the academic community through the utilization of campus children's programs as professional development schools for colleges of education. They present a model from Kent State University in which the campus childcare center has served as a professional development school for the college of education. Barbour and Bersani (1991) state:

In the professional development school model, college faculty and classroom teachers engage in dialogue as they build a collaborative team dedicated not only to professional preparation, but also to the generation of new knowledge about how children learn and develop, and how to facilitate optimum educational experiences (pp. 48-49).

Barbour and Bersani (1991) suggest campus child care centers can serve as professional development schools by providing opportunities for: (a) research and practice by students, faculty, and early childhood educators, (b) experimentation in different types of practice and program structures, (c) systematic inquiry through various types of research, and (d) student diversity through the enrollment of children representing the broader social community.
The field of early childhood education offers multiple levels of professional development, a practice impacting many aspects of programs of teacher education. A description of a model of professional categories in early childhood and the implications of multiple levels of professional development are discussed in the next section.

Multiple Levels of Early Childhood Professional Development

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the history of early childhood education has roots in both social welfare programs for young children as well as in education. While the current literature emphasizes the difficulty in separating care and education for young children, “public perceptions presume distinct differences” (Willer, 1994, p. 6). Morgan et al. (1993) point out “there does not seem to be a word or phrase in the English language that evokes a common image of high-quality early care and education” (p. v).

The population of children served by early childhood programs includes infants, toddlers, preschool children and school-age children. Today, there are four broad types of programs for young children before kindergarten: (a) public school prekindergarten classrooms, (b) Head Start programs, (c) childcare centers, and (d) home based care. Funding for programs for young children is both public and private. Definitions of programs and job titles within the profession of early childhood education vary and “preparation programs for those working with young children are as disparate as the services themselves” (Willer, 1994, p. 8).
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) supports the use of the term early childhood professional to describe individuals in early childhood education who are involved in a variety of professional development activities, including coursework in community colleges and schools and colleges of education (Wilier, 1994). A professional development position statement developed by NAEYC reflects a continuum of levels of professional development (Wilier, 1994). The categories offered in the NAEYC position statement (Wilier, 1994) on professional development are summarized in Table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I — Supervised while working with young children and participating in CDA training or college coursework in the field</th>
<th>Level II — One-year early childhood certificate OR Child Development Associate (CDA) credential</th>
<th>Level III — Associate degree in the field OR an associate degree in a related field plus course work and supervised field experience in early childhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level IV — Baccalaureate degree in the field OR state certification in early childhood OR baccalaureate degree in another field plus course work and supervised field experience in early childhood</td>
<td>Level V — Master’s Degree in the field of early childhood education</td>
<td>Level VI — Earned doctorate in the field of early childhood education</td>
</tr>
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Table 2.2: NAEYC Early Childhood Professional Categories
In the position statement on professional development, these levels are conceptualized as a part of a career lattice, a symbol used “to communicate the necessary combination of diversity and uniqueness” (Willer, 1994, p. 11). The NAEYC position statement explains the construct of career lattice, the field of early childhood, and the profession of early childhood:

A career lattice provides for the multiple roles and settings within the early childhood profession (vertical strands), each allowing for steps of greater preparation tied to increased responsibility and compensation within that role/setting (horizontal levels), and allows for movement across roles (diagonals). Each strand of the lattice is interconnected; all strands are a part of the larger entity (the early childhood profession). The lattice distinguishes the early childhood field from the early childhood profession. The field includes anyone engaged in the provision of early childhood services; the profession denotes those who have acquired some professional knowledge and are on a professional path (Willer, 1994, p. 11).

The NAEYC professional development position statement notes “a defining characteristic of any profession is a specialized body of knowledge and competencies shared by all of its members that are not shared by others” (Willer, 1994, p. 11). The position statement defines a broad core of professional knowledge and skills which distinguishes the early childhood professional. It is expected that the breadth and depth of professional knowledge and skills, as well as knowledge and skills related to subjects affiliated to the core, will increase with professional levels. Table 2.3 summarizes the early childhood core of professional knowledge identified in the NAEYC position statement (Willer, 1994).
Table 2.3: NAEYC Position Statement: Early Childhood Core of Professional Knowledge

The field of early childhood education informs the practices of teacher education and field experiences of preservice teachers through the programmatic theme of child development knowledge, use of campus programs for young children as field and laboratory sites, and the articulation of multiple levels of professional development within the field.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed what makes a coherent, high quality program of teacher education, including programs of early childhood teacher education. I reviewed the historical context of programs of teacher education as well as the specific context of early childhood teacher education. To assist in the understanding of the concepts of coherence and quality, I described structural models of teacher education as well as conceptual orientations. I have described coherent and high quality
programs of teacher education and especially early childhood teacher education. I have also described programmatic themes specific to the field of early childhood teacher education.

Howey and Zimpher (1994), in their discussion of nontraditional contexts for learning to teach, discuss a number of significant issues for teacher educators. Two of these issues are specifically addressed in this dissertation. The first significant issue noted by Howey and Zimpher (1994) is the need to focus on improving the quality of teacher education. Howey and Zimpher (1989) have studied six exemplary programs of teacher education and identified aspects of coherence and quality. Howey and Zimpher (1994) concluded they "believe that the first major implication, given these tentative understanding, is that further case studies should be conducted" (p. 255). They also called for case studies that extend "beyond the preparation of elementary teachers and . . . look more closely at context differences across different types of institutions" (Howey & Zimpher, 1989, p. 256). Aspects of quality and coherence in programs of teacher education, including early childhood teacher education, have been identified but there is still a need for research to guide teacher educators in developing and improving the quality and coherence of programs of teacher education. This study seeks to identify characteristics of quality and coherence in associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education.

The second issue highlighted by Howey and Zimpher (1994) is the need to develop "closer links between changes and improvements in the education of teacher and needed changes and improvement in PK-12 schools" (p. 156). It is clear that
coherent and quality programs of teacher education establish and maintain continuity between laboratory and field experiences and the schools. That change in the education of teachers is linked to the changes in schools is clearly evident in Howey and Zimpher's (1994) construct of schools as “PK-12”, that is prekindergarten to grade 12. Classrooms for young, prekindergarten children are increasingly found in schools and, as a result, programs of teacher education are being modified to include teacher education for prekindergarten children. The changing context of these programs of early childhood teacher education is addressed in this study of associate degree programs.
CHAPTER 3

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

To conduct any inquiry one must have both an idea of what one is attempting to accomplish and an idea of how to proceed (Wolcott, 1992, p. 41).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the qualitative research methodology and specific design of this research. This chapter describes the characteristics of qualitative research and examines particular aspects of the research design of this study. Answers to specific questions raised by the research design of this study are examined. What is the research problem and what research questions emerge from this problem? How was the sampling decision determined? What characteristics of qualitative case study design applied to this study? What did an instrumental collective case study entail? How were data collected, analyzed and interpreted? What conceptual frameworks guided the study? What are the limitations of this research? Following the discussion raised by these questions, this chapter concludes with a summary of the issues related to qualitative methodology, research design, and the development of this study.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research is more easily described than defined because, as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (1994a), “the very term qualitative research means different
things to many different people” (p. xi). Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) offer an “initial, generic” (p. 2) description of qualitative research as “multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (p. 2). Creswell (1997) describes qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

The purposes of qualitative research are variously described in the literature. Each of the following authors details an aspect of qualitative research applicable to this study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) believe the purpose of qualitative research is to study and interpret the perspectives of those who are being studied. This research focused on the emic perspective of selected persons involved in programs of early childhood teacher education at two community colleges in Ohio. Patton (1990) writes qualitative research should be used to “inform action, enhance decision making, and apply knowledge to solve human and societal problems” (p. 12). This study sought to increase understanding of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education within the fields of early childhood education as well as teacher education. While associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education have been distinctly identified as a level of professional development within the field of early childhood education (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996), specific knowledge related to these programs is needed to inform the development of articulation agreements between associate degree programs and baccalaureate/masters degree granting institutions (American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS) &
National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), 1994; NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996). Stake (1995) concludes the goal of qualitative research is to comprehend a particular case "not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it" (p. 43). Due to repeated calls for such research, this study focused on developing a holistic view of two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education. In the next section I will describe a number of characteristics of qualitative research.

**Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is seen as a process in which questions related to an aspect of society are studied as a whole to enable understanding. Qualitative research is based upon assumptions that reality is complex, contextually bound, socially constructed, and best understood from the emic or insider’s point of view (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). It is important for both researcher and reader to understand the characteristics of qualitative research so I will describe and discuss a number of characteristics of qualitative research utilized in this study.

A key characteristic of qualitative research is its naturalistic nature. Qualitative studies are focused in the field, the actual physical place where the social actions comprising the research topic are occurring (Eisner, 1991). Qualitative studies are also described as naturalistic inquiry because the researcher does not manipulate any aspect of the research surroundings but studies a setting as it naturally occurs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was conducted in the field, at two community colleges in Ohio, and no manipulations were undertaken.
A second characteristic of qualitative methodologies is their reflection of the interpretive paradigm. Eisner (1991) identifies two meanings of interpretive in qualitative research. The first meaning “pertains to the ability to explain why something is taking place” (Eisner, 1991, p. 35). Eisner (1991) depicts the second meaning of interpretive as explaining what the experience means for those in the study. McCutcheon (1995) points out Eisner’s first description of interpretive is the etic or outsider view of interpretation while the second is the emic or insider meaning. In this study the etic presence was reflected in the researcher’s questions and preliminary research design. The goal of the research was to seek the emic, or insider’s, understanding of persons involved in programs of early childhood teacher education at two community colleges in Ohio utilizing the conceptual frameworks of program quality and coherence (Howey & Zimpher, 1989) and the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978).

A third characteristic of qualitative research is a focus on the unique. Stake (1995) explains qualitative research focuses on the unique aspects of individuals and situations rather than the characteristics of a population. Eisner (1991) terms this aspect of qualitative research as “attention to particulars” (p. 38) including a focus on aesthetic features and the uniqueness of situations. Each of the selected sites and participants in this study offered unique features, which were studied holistically.

A fourth characteristic of qualitative research is the use of a variety of research methods to inform understanding. Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) view the use of multiple methods or triangulation as a reflection of the researcher’s “attempt to secure
an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 2). In this study, I sought an in-depth understanding through prolonged engagement and the collection of a variety of data through interviews, observations, and documents. This permitted triangulation.

The researcher in qualitative research is the research instrument, a fifth characteristic of qualitative methodologies. Patton (1990) explains ‘the researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under study’ (p. 40). It is through the qualitative researchers’ own experiences and insights as they observe, interview, and review documents that understanding of the phenomenon being studied is developed. Eisner (1991) states, ‘the self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it’ (p. 34). Eisner (1991) describes the qualitative researcher as utilizing what he calls the enlightened eye, knowing what to neglect while at the same time ‘having a sense for the significant and possessing a framework that make the search for the significant efficient’ (p. 34). I was the research instrument in this study. As an experienced early childhood teacher educator, I brought my professional knowledge base and experience to the study. At the same time, because I am an early childhood teacher educator, I took particular care throughout the research to bracket, or focus, myself on what I was learning about the programs and not to presume I already had knowledge about these programs. Eisner (1991) points out antecedent knowledge can enhance new understandings as well as limit perceptions. Throughout this research I utilized my professional knowledge and experience to develop an understanding of these programs. As an on-going process
throughout the research, I carefully noted in my research log and during interviews, my concentration on understanding these programs from the participants’ point of view.

A sixth characteristic of qualitative research is emergent design. The design of qualitative research emerges in response to the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Qualitative researchers engage in the routine adjustment of “inquiry plans and strategies in response to what they are learning in the field site” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 34). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the rationale undergirding emergent design in qualitative research. They believe “it is inconceivable that enough could be known ahead of time about the many multiple realities to devise the design adequately; because what emerges as a function of the interaction between inquirer and phenomenon is largely unpredictable in advance” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 41). An outline of the basic research plan of this study was submitted to both the Ohio State University Human Subjects Review and my dissertation committee. Within this research design, specific aspects of the research were later modified during the course of the study. Preliminary sites became research sites as entrée was achieved. The formal interview questions became increasingly semi-structured as interviews were conducted during the research process. After gatekeepers were identified, the technique of snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) was used to identify additional persons to interview at each site.

Distinctive types of data are a seventh characteristic of qualitative research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) note “the term data refers to the rough materials researchers
collect from the world they are studying; they are the particulars that form the basis of analysis" (p. 106). Descriptive qualitative data consist of field notes from observations and interviews. Transcriptions of interviews, artifacts, photographs, and documents related to the study are also forms of qualitative data. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) point out "some qualitative studies rely exclusively on one type of data ... but most use a variety of data sources" (p. 106). Multiple forms of qualitative data were collected during this study including interview data, documentary data, photographs, and both formal and informal observational data.

The issue of criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research is an eighth characteristic of qualitative research. Eisner (1991) believes "qualitative research becomes believable because of its coherence, insight, and instrumental utility" (p. 39). Eisner's (1991) construct of coherence questions the fit and match between the study and the analysis by asking if the research makes sense. McCutcheon (1995) points out Eisner (1991) doesn't describe his use of the term insight but believes "he means educational significance — the importance of the studies" (p. 212). Eisner (1991) describes instrumental utility, or usefulness, as "the most important test of any qualitative study." Eisner (1991) describes usefulness as assisting understanding and future decision making. This study is important because it fills a gap in the literature concerning associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Many scholars in the field of both teacher education and early childhood education have called for knowledge about these programs. Such knowledge may be useful for: (a) informing deliberations concerning the development of associate degree programs of
early childhood teacher education, (b) evaluating associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, and (c) developing articulation agreements between associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education and other programs of early childhood teacher education and preparation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer four criteria for evaluating and establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba’s first criteria for establishing trustworthiness is credibility, which they describe as:

Activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation); an activity that provides an external check on the inquiry process (peer debriefing); an activity aimed at refining working hypotheses as more and more information becomes available (negative case analysis); and activity that makes possible checking preliminary findings and interpretations against archived ‘raw data’ (referential adequacy)’ and an activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come – the constructors of the multiple realities being studied (member checking) (1985, p. 301).

Lincoln and Guba’s second criterion for establishing trustworthiness is termed transferability. Transferability is the process through which qualitative researchers provide thick, descriptive data concerning the study “so readers can engage in reasonable but modest speculation whether findings are applicable to other cases with similar circumstances” (Schwandt, 1997, p.58-59). Thick descriptions are concerned with the quality of the data, not the quantity. Schwandt (1997) states:

To thickly describe social action is actually to begin to interpret it by recording the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode. It is this interpretive characteristic of description rather than detail per se that makes it thick (p. 161).
Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out it is "not the naturalist’s task to provide an index of transferability; it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of possible applicers" (p. 316).

Dependability is the third criteria for establishing trustworthiness described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Dependability focuses “on the processes of the inquiry and the inquirer’s responsibility for ensuring that the process was logical, traceable, and documented” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 164). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the use of an audit trail to establish dependability. Schwandt (1997) describes an audit trail as:

An organized collection of materials that includes the data generated in a study; a statement of the theoretical framework that shaped the study at the outset; explanations of concepts, models, and the like that were developed as part of the effort to make sense of the data (often the product of memoing); a description of the procedures used to generate data and analyze them; a statement of the findings or conclusions of the investigation; notes about the process of conducting the study; personal notes; and copies of instruments used to guide the generation and analysis of data. An audit trail is a systematically maintained documentation system (p. 6).

The final criterion for establishing trustworthiness described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is confirmability. Schwandt (1997) describes confirmability as “concerned with establishing the fact that the data and interpretations of an inquiry were not merely figments of the inquirer’s imagination. It called for linking assertions, findings, interpretations, and so on to the data themselves in readily discernable ways” (p. 164). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose audit trails, member checks, and peer debriefing as appropriate techniques for establishing confirmability.

I used a variety of methods to establishing the trustworthiness of this study. First, I spent four to five months in the field at each site establishing rapport,
observing, interviewing, and collecting documents until the data being collected became redundant. Second, I triangulated data by using multiple sources and methods. Three faculty members at each site were interviewed. Observations included the general ambience at each site, ECE classes, the campus program of early education and care at each site, dedicated classrooms, and ECE program resource rooms. Multiple documents were collected at each site. Third, I utilized the process of peer debriefing, described by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as “exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). Peer debriefing began as research was initiated in this study and continued through data analysis and writing. Peer debriefing offered a valuable opportunity to describe and discuss many aspects of the study including methodology, ethics, techniques, themes, specific findings, and theory. Fourth, I used an on-going process of searching for negative cases, a process of actively seeking “instances and cases that do not fit within the pattern” (Patton, 1990, p. 463). These exceptions are clearly identified within each case. Finally, after initial data analysis, I returned to each site and reviewed the major findings at each site with the participants, a process termed ‘member checking’ by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The application of qualitative research methodology to the research design of this study is described in the next section.
Research Design

In this section the research design of this study is described. The research problem and research questions are identified, and the selection of the research sample is explained.

The unique context of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education was clearly described in the second chapter of this dissertation. The multiple professional categories in the field of early childhood education were reviewed (Willer, 1994). The constructivist, developmental conceptual framework in early childhood education and early childhood teacher education was extrapolated from the two statements on developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Guidelines for professional development, including associate degree programs of teacher education, developed by National Association for the Education of Young Children in conjunction with the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NAEYC, DEC/CEC/ NBPTS, 1996), were reviewed as they related to issues of program coherence and quality. Scholars have clearly identified the need for research related to associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education (Bredekamp, 1996; Ott, Zeichner, & Price, 1990; Powell & Dunn, 1990; Saracho, 1993;Spodek & Saracho, 1990). This gap in the literature led to the identification of the research problem of this study.
**The Research Problem**

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of quality and coherence in programs of early childhood teacher education in prekindergarten associate degree programs in community colleges in Ohio. In this state there are 24 prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, eight of which are found in community colleges. There is little if any research about these, or any of the almost 700 (Morgan et al., 1993) associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education found in community colleges nationwide. The literature clearly identifies the lack of research related to associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education and many researchers have indicated the necessity for research in this area (Bredekamp, 1996; Ott, Zeichner, & Price, 1990; Powell & Dunn, 1990; Saracho, 1993; Spodek & Saracho, 1990). I selected associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges because such programs were clearly identified in the literature as in need of study. Case study research of associate degree programs of early childhood education would lead to increased understanding regarding these particular types of programs of teacher education. The specific research questions guiding this study are identified in the next section.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the structural and conceptual orientation of prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education in at least two community colleges in Ohio?
2. What is the nature of the curriculum in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education? How is the curriculum organized?

3. What is the role of faculty in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

4. What are characteristics of prekindergarten associate degree early childhood education students?

5. What social, cultural, and/or environmental contexts contribute to understanding these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

6. What aspects of a high-quality, coherent program of teacher education as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) are present in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

7. How are the programmatic aspects of quality and coherence, identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), represented in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

8. What unique elements are contained in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

The sampling decisions utilized in this study is described and discussed in the next section.

**Sampling Decision**

When selecting a case to research, Stake (1995) suggests “the first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn. Given our purposes, which cases are likely
to lead us to understandings, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of
generalizations?” (p. 4). Patton (1990) urges the researcher to use a strategy he terms
the purposeful sample to choose the site for the study. “The logic and power of
purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth.
Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of
central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 161). The primary
selection criterion used in this study was to select the sample or samples with the
greatest potential to be an information-rich case.

Patton (1990) believes “reasons for site selections or individual case samples
need to be carefully articulated and made explicit” (p. 181). Merriam (1998) suggests
the researcher determine “what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people
or sites to be studied” (p. 61). I determined the essential criterion to be
prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in
Ohio. At this time Ohio is the only state to offer a prekindergarten associate
certification for teachers with an associate degree. The State of Ohio Department of
Education must validate associate degree programs of early childhood teacher
education offering course work towards the prekindergarten associate teaching
certificate. An essential criterion for site selection in this study was for the associate
degree program of early childhood teacher education to have the prekindergarten
validation of the State of Ohio Department of Education. I believed this offered an
external professional standard. Associate degrees are most commonly granted in
community colleges. There were eight community colleges in Ohio who met the
initial criterion of validation by the State of Ohio Department of Education. There
were, however, a number of additional criteria I then considered in making the
sampling decision for this study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe the researcher must make “every effort to
become thoroughly acquainted with the field sites in which the study is to take place”
(p. 251). They note Cosaro calls this process “prior ethnography” (Lincoln & Guba,
1985, p. 251). As an early childhood professional, I had varying degrees of familiarity
with the eight community college prekindergarten associate degree programs of early
childhood education in Ohio. I had visited many of their campuses and had met some
of their faculty. To increase my knowledge of each of these eight potential field sites,
I first utilized the College Edge (1997) web site. The College Edge (1997) offers
detailed information about colleges and universities including school descriptions,
admissions criteria, curriculum, students, faculty, and costs. From the College Edge
(1997) web site, I downloaded a complete profile of each of the eight community
colleges in Ohio meeting my initial selection criterion. To deepen my knowledge of
each of these sites, I then conducted an Internet search of each of these eight
community colleges, exploring their Web pages and reviewing information about each
college and their early childhood education program, when such information was
available.

The eight community colleges offering prekindergarten associate degree
programs of teacher education all met the initial selection criterion I had established
for the research. Patton (1990) notes “in describing a program or its participants to
people not familiar with the program it can be helpful to provide a qualitative profile of one or more ‘typical’ cases” (p. 173). Because of the stated clear lack of knowledge about such programs in the literature, I then determined that selecting typical programs of prekindergarten associate degree programs would be an important selection criterion. Prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education with a single full-time faculty member became the final element of the selection criteria utilized in the sampling decision as Katz & Goffin (1990) point out “many departments of early childhood education in colleges and universities consist of only one person” (p. 205). Four associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education met all of the selection criteria and were now possible sites for the study. While the nature of qualitative inquiry precludes presuming an exact sample size previous to a study, Patton (1990) recommends the researcher “specify minimum samples based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study and stakeholder interest” (p. 186). I determined two programs of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education to be the minimum sample. Merriam (1998) explains “some dimension of convenience almost always figures into sample selection” (p. 63). Two of the four possible research sites were within reasonable driving distance from my home: Beachline Community College and Mapleview Community College. These two institutions met all of my selection criteria. They were both associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education with the prekindergarten validation of the State of Ohio Department of Education. Beachline Community College and Mapleview Community
College both had a single full-time faculty member in their programs of early childhood teacher education. Both of these community colleges were within reasonable driving distance from my home. These were the two sites where I sought entrée. In the following section I describe specific aspects of case study research methodology used in this study.

**Case Study Research Methodology**

It is important for the qualitative researcher to carefully consider and select methodological approaches or traditions through which their research problem can best be studied. Creswell (1997) explores the relationship between the design of a qualitative research study and the kind of qualitative research. Researchers who have an understanding of the different kinds, or traditions, of qualitative research can make informed decisions regarding the qualitative approach to use in a study which helps to develop better research designs (Creswell, 1997).

Wolcott (1992) is convinced “that qualitative inquiry is better served not only by acknowledging the research techniques shared in common among qualitative approaches but also by recognizing how the techniques are variously employed, adapted, and combined to achieve different purposes” (p. 27). Wolcott (1992) uses the metaphor of a tree to show different approaches to educational qualitative research. Wolcott’s (1992) metaphorical tree is rooted in experience, inquiry, and examination. The trunk encompasses four major research strategies: (a) archival strategies, the examination of written documents, including literature reviews and inquiry into historical contexts; (b) interview strategies including investigative journalism and oral
histories; (c) participant observation strategies characterized by participation and prolonged engagement of the researcher in the field, encompassing educational ethnography and phenomenology; and (d) participant observation strategies in which the observer is recognized but not involved, embodying connoisseurship and educational criticism (Wolcott, 1992). Wolcott (1992) regards case studies as the product of all strategies in qualitative research. The particular characteristics of the qualitative case study are detailed in the next section.

**Qualitative Case Study**

Merriam (1998) states "a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii). The central purpose or focus of a case study is to investigate the case or system (Creswell, 1997; Stake, 1994). The bounded phenomena in this research were prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. In qualitative case study research the context of the case is reviewed and multiple data sources are utilized to provide an extensive view of the case (Creswell, 1997; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994; Stake 1995). Stake (1994) believes case studies are "not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. We choose to study the case. . . . As a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used (p. 236).

Stake (1995) views a case as "a bounded system" constrained by a particular time and place. According to Stake (1994) a case is:

An integrated system. The parts do not have to be working well, but it is a system. Its behavior is patterned. Consistency and sequentialness are
prominent. It is common to recognize that certain features are within the system, within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside. Some are significant as context (pp. 236-237).

"Programs clearly are prospective cases" according to Stake (1995, p. 2). Stake (1994) characterizes the nature of every case study as both complex and unique. He believes case studies include aspects of the history inherent within the case, the physical environments surrounding the case, the participants central to the case, and the political, economic, and social factors impacting the case (Stake, 1994). In this study the conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum, the subject matter, the milieu, the teacher, and the students (Schwab, 1978), ensured these key elements identified by Stake would be fully examined in this research.

**Instrumental Collective Case Study**

While there are many types of cases, Stake (1994) identifies three types of case studies that reflect the "variation in the concern for and methodological orientation to the case" (p. 238). The three types of case studies identified by Stake (1995) are: (a) the intrinsic case study; (b) the instrumental case study; (c) and the collective case study. Elements of each of these types of case study are to be found in this research.

Stake (1994) characterizes the first type of case study as an intrinsic case study. The purpose of an intrinsic case study is not theory building or the development of "some abstract construct or generic phenomenon" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The researcher chooses the intrinsic case study "because one wants better understanding of this particular case" (p. 237). A significant aspect of this research concerned presenting intrinsic aspects of the programs being studied due to the lack of
knowledge concerning associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education noted repeatedly in the literature.

The second type of case study is described by Stake (1994) as an instrumental case study. The researcher chooses the instrumental case study when "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). In the instrumental case study the case "plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). When researchers utilize an instrumental case study "the choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). To increase the significance of this research and build upon knowledge in the field, I chose to utilize the conceptual framework of program characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). By studying these aspects of quality and coherence in associate degree programs of early childhood education the understanding of these program characteristics of quality and coherence will be increased.

The third type of research case study depicted by Stake (1994) is the collective case study in which the "instrumental study [is] extended to several cases" (p. 237). The cases included in the collective case study "are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). This research is purposefully a collective case study to enable better understanding of associate degree programs of
early childhood teacher education by expanding the research to include a minimum of two cases.

Stake (1994) acknowledges the three constructs of intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and collective case study can not be divided by any clear demarcation but are separated only by “a zone of combined purpose” (p. 237). Stake (1995) makes the distinctions between different types of case study “because the methods we will use will be different, depending on intrinsic and instrumental interests” (p. 4). In this study, I utilized particular data gathering techniques for the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of the case. I fully explored the intrinsic elements of each case by asking specific interview questions, gathering documents, and conducting observations. Because I am an early childhood teacher educator, I took particular care to bracket or focus myself on what I was learning about the programs and not to presume I already had knowledge about these program. To assist in the development of the instrumental elements of this case, specific interview questions were utilized related to the conceptual framework of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). Additional structural aspects of case study research employed in this study and are described and discussed in the following section.

Structural Aspects of Case Study Research

A number of authors describe particular structural aspects of case study research that have been applied in this study. First, Stake (1995) points out it is important for the researcher to understand the goal of case study research: the development of an in-depth understanding of the case. This research sought to
advance the understanding of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Merriam (1998) terms this aspect of qualitative case study research "particularistic" meaning the case focuses "on a particular situation, events, program or phenomenon" (p. 29).

A second structural aspect of the qualitative case study is the utilization of multiple sources of data. Creswell (1997), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1994, 1995), all point out case studies require extensive data from multiple sources to provide the detailed, in-depth picture of the case. Merriam states, "understanding the case in its totality, as well as the intensive, holistic description and analysis characteristic of a case study, mandates both breadth and depth of data collection" (p. 134). Data sources for case studies can include observations, interviews, documents, reports, artifacts, and video and audiotapes (Creswell, 1997). Data sources for this study included multiple interviews, the collection of documents and reports, observations, and photographs.

A third aspect of qualitative case study research is the analysis and interpretation of the research data to develop an understanding of the case. Case study researchers use analytical techniques to analyze both the whole case as well as specific aspects of the case. Stake (1994) states "the whole story exceeds anyone’s knowing, anyone’s telling. . . what is necessary for an understanding of the case will be decided by the researcher" (p. 240).

The fourth structural aspect is the representation of the case. Stake (1994) believes case study research offers readers a dual opportunity to learn through the
telling of the case by the researcher as well as the learning discoveries readers will make on their own. Merriam (1998) characterizes representations of case studies as descriptive and heuristic. "Descriptive means that that the end product of a case study is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). The descriptive aspect of the representation of the case enables the researcher to "illustrate the complexities of a situation - the fact that not one but many factors contribute to it" (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). Programs of teacher education are complex and the data representation in this case offers the reader a rich description of the case. Merriam (1998) depicts the heuristic aspect of representation of the case as the researcher's way to "illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known." (p. 30). Specific aspects of data collection in this research are detailed in the next section.

**Data Collection**

In this section the data collection techniques utilized in this study are described and discussed. First I describe and discuss the overall aspects of the field methodology used in the study. Second, the ethical considerations impacting this research are explained. Third, the selection and utilization of the research techniques of interviewing, document collection, and observations within this study are detailed.

**Field Methodology**

After determining the research sample, I decided to study one site at a time in order to maintain a clear focus on each case. The research at Beachline Community
College was conducted first and took approximately four months. The research then continued at Mapleview and took an additional five months. The basic field methodology was similar at both sites. I determined the gatekeeper and primary informant for each site to be the single full-time early childhood education faculty member. I contacted each of these early childhood education faculty members by telephone and requested an appointment to discuss the possibility of researching the early childhood program. At each site both faculty members were enthusiastic and interested in participating in the research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) advise using an overt, cooperative approach in gaining entrée and beginning fieldwork.

Eisner (1991) believes “providing information to those working in the setting is critical” (p. 172). At the initial appointment with every participant I reviewed a detailed explanation of the research, my role as researcher, and the expected role of the individual participant. I utilized the suggestions developed by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) to develop this verbal introduction of this study and myself. In my verbal introduction to each participant, I explained I was a doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development at The Ohio State University, researching program of early childhood teacher education in prekindergarten associate degree program in community colleges in Ohio. I related the research process was qualitative and I was seeking to develop an understanding of the program similar to the understanding held by different persons in the program. Each participant was told I was studying associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education because there was nothing in the literature describing such programs. I explained that I would
use the results of the research to write my dissertation. Participants were told they were selected because they were involved with prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in a community college in Ohio and the literature indicated they were typical programs with a single full-time faculty member. I explained the benefits to participants might be a greater understanding of the program. I pointed out participants would be asked to review transcripts and drafts of the written descriptions of the program. I indicated the possible risks of participating in this research might be the uncovering of information that was risky to hold for the participants. To ensure participants understood what types of knowledge could be dangerous I used the example of knowing your supervisor was stealing money. I explained I would keep all data and reporting confidential and the participants and the site would be masked in all writing about this research. I indicated all notes, computer disks, transcripts, and audiotapes would be kept at my home. I encouraged the participants to select pseudonyms for themselves and the site, which many of them did. I explained I would need to interview participants a number of times and that each interview could last between one and two hours. I also indicated I would like to observe classes and when I observed I would observe the entire class period. I explained I would be collecting public documents related to the program such as catalogs and course syllabi. I requested permission to audiotape interviews, to audiotape and/or videotape class sessions and to take notes during observations and interviews. I clearly stated all of this data would belong to me, the researcher. I clarified that as a researcher I would be at the site to develop an understanding of this
particular program of early childhood teacher education and I was not present to judge or evaluate. I emphasized there were no right or wrong answers to my questions and I believed the participants to be the experts about the program.

I found the process of using the verbal introduction I developed for this research helpful in establishing and maintaining rapport at each site. I also exchanged telephone numbers and email addresses, when available, with all participants at the initial meeting. Both telephone and email communications were valuable for confirming and/or changing interview appointments with participants with relative ease. Participants in this study had busy and full professional lives and, when they need to change interview appointments, were reassured by me that this research followed their schedule. This flexibility in scheduling also assisted in maintaining rapport.

As Merriam (1998) notes “data collection in a case study is a recursive, interactive process in which engaging in one strategy incorporates or may lead to subsequent sources of data” (p. 134). I had planned to incorporate multiple sources of data, including interviews, documents, and observations, as sources of rich description for the case as well as a method of triangulation or confirmation of data. Due to the emergent nature of the design of the study, I was unable to determine in advance the exact nature of the data collection process. I interviewed each of the faculty members and utilized a snowball sampling technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) for further informants by requesting that each of the primary informants suggest two other persons who could help me learn about the program. As relevant documents were
referred to during the interviews, I requested to borrow and/or receive copies. At each site I was voluntarily offered books from personal professional libraries, textbooks, college reports, and personal professional information relating to individual faculty members. I observed classes, classroom facilities, libraries, early childhood education resource rooms, and campus programs of early education and care for young children at both sites.

I recorded information in a variety of ways. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by myself. While transcription was a time consuming task, I believe this enabled me establish and maintain a closeness to the data. I had decided to utilize a data analysis software program, QSR NUD*IST 4, and one of the things I had found when previously using the program was the software seemed to distance me somewhat from the data. Having personally transcribed all of the interview data in this research enabled me to establish a closeness to the data I was able to maintain throughout data analysis. In most cases I was able to transcribe the audiotape from one interview before I conducted a second interview. This assisted me in identifying unclear data, which enabled me to begin subsequent interviews with follow-up questions. I also used the transcription process as a research log, noting and/or highlighting preliminary points of analysis, asking questions, and adding descriptors to more fully describe a tone of voice or mannerism of speech. When observing classes, classroom facilities, libraries, early childhood education resource rooms, and campus programs of early education and care for young children at both sites I took field notes. The field notes from ECE class observations were transcribed and annotated. A data collection
technique emerging from the study was the use of photographs. As I was attempting to describe the dedicated college classroom, resource room and childcare center at Mapleview Community College in my field notes it occurred to me to request permission to photograph them for purposes of data collection. I photographed the dedicated classroom and childcare center when no students or children were present. These photographs were such a valuable source of data for providing rich descriptions of the milieu at Mapleview that I returned to Beachline Community College and secured permission to photograph there as well.

**Ethical Considerations**

Stake (1995) points out the researcher "has an obligation to think through the ethics of the situation and to take the necessary steps prior to requesting access and permissions" (p. 58). The first step I took regarding ethical considerations in this research was to submit an application for exemption from a Human Subject Committee review at the Ohio State University. This exemption was granted because the research was going to be conducted in a normal educational setting, researching normal educational practices, while utilizing interviews and observation procedures. This exemption still obligated me to ensure the research methods in the study fully reflected ethical considerations.

A primary ethical consideration in this study was informed consent. My verbal introduction with the detailed explanation of the purpose of this research, and the roles of myself as researcher and the participants described above, helped each participant in the study develop a clear understanding of the purpose of the study. This clear
understanding had two benefits to this research. First, participants understood what I was trying to learn and made every effort through their responses to interview questions and the offerings of documentation to help me understand and learn about their programs of early childhood teacher education. Second, the clear ethical parameters instituted through my introduction assisted the establishment and maintenance of rapport.

My verbal introduction to the study deliberately covered the ethical considerations I considered important for this research. After reviewing my verbal introduction with each participant, I asked each person if they had any questions and answered those questions. I then asked each participant to read and sign the standard “Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research” form used by The Ohio State University. I pointed out to each participant they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, but any data that had been collected would belong to me. Each participant in this research signed a consent form prior to being interviewed and received a copy of the consent form. To clarify the overt nature of the study, at each of the community colleges I requested and received a signed consent form from each of the appropriate program deans to ensure each faculty member’s supervisor was aware of their participation in the study. In the following sections, the utilization of the research techniques of interviewing, document collection, and observation are detailed.
Interviews

Fontana & Frey (1994) describe interviewing as “one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings” (p. 361). Patton (1990) explains, “the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind, ... to access the perspective of the person being interviewed” (p. 278). Interviewing was the primary method of data collection in this study because it was the best source of information needed for the study. The programs of prekindergarten early childhood teacher education in this research had been developed and taught previous to the advent of this study. Interviews of participants offered them the opportunity to reconstruct their past experiences in the program and to describe and discuss their thoughts and feelings regarding particular aspects of the program. Merriam (1998) concludes, “interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (p. 72).

Because this was an instrumental collective case study building upon the conceptual framework of Howey and Zimpher’s (1989) characteristics of quality and coherence, I determined to utilize a semi-structured interview protocol. Merriam (1998) describes the semi-structured interview as a “mix of more- and less-structured questions” (p. 72). I developed an interview guide of 30 questions based upon the research questions developed by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education (see Appendix A for the
complete list of interview questions). These questions varied from closed questions requesting specific information about the program to more open questions asking for participant's opinions and/or feeling about particular aspects of the program. The questions fell into the general categories of Schwab's (1978) commonplaces: the teachers, the students, the subject matter, and the milieu. While all participants were asked the same questions, these questions often served as springboards for more unstructured conversations. As a data collection method, the format of the semi-structured interview offered the opportunity to collect the information needed to inform the research questions regarding the characteristics of these two prekindergarten associate degree programs. Additionally, the semi-structured interview protocol assisted me in acquiring new understandings and information related to these programs.

I requested and received permission from all participants to audiotape the interviews. Merriam (1998) notes tape recording is the most typical manner of recording interview data. At each interview I used a high quality tape recorder/transcriber with an excellent microphone that clearly recorded both myself and the participants during all of the interviews. This quality of recording was important to the transcription process because the high quality of the sound provided me the opportunity to have a more accurate transcript of the interview. All interviews were conducted in a quiet location, such as the participant's office or an empty classroom. Telephone calls and student stopping by to talk to participants were infrequent distractions. Interview sessions averaged two hours in length.
I found a number of advantages to audiotaping the interviews. First, it enabled me to focus on participants answers, stories, and comments. Eisner (1991) points out "what is significant does not announce itself for all to hear. It does not carry an identification badge" (p. 188). If I had been attempting to listen and take notes at the same time, I don’t believe I would have developed the level of understanding I achieved through the taping/transcription process utilized in this study. Second, the ability to focus and listen enhanced my ability to ask probing questions. I utilized the interviewing technique of asking probing questions to request additional information and/or clarification throughout all of the interviews. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) point out “probes may take numerous forms” (p. 85) from patient silence to complex questions regarding clarification. I used such a variety of probes throughout the interviews. Third, I personally transcribed all of the research interviews, a process which assisted me in getting close to and familiar with the data. Merriam (1998) describes this type of verbatim transcripts as “the best database for analysis” (p. 88) while Eisner (1991) cautions “if we try to record everything, we are likely to see nothing” (p. 188). I found transcribing the interviews a key to helping me get a sense of the whole case before I began coding. I imported the text of the transcribed interviews into the QRS NUD*IST 4 database where I began what Wolcott (1994) calls processing the data. The full transcript was also important to this study due to my limitations as a novice researcher who had to attend to the details of actually conducting the research while researching.
I used individual tapes at each interview identified with each participant's name, the date, and the number of the interview within the interviewing sequence. As tapes were transcribed, I highlighted each side of the tape as a reminder the transcription process was complete. When an entire tape with transcribed, the title cover in the cassette tape holder was highlighted as an indicator the entire tape had been transcribed. Each transcription was saved on both hard and floppy disk. A hard copy of each transcript was also printed and filed with the documentary data relating to each site. I found the transcription of the interviews to be a valuable process. In most instances I was able to transcribe an interview and develop any follow-up questions before the next interview. I also found the process of listening to the interviews valuable for data analysis. Early tentative themes were identified by memoing within the transcripts. These memos were frequent sources of probing questions which, in turn, led to my deeper understanding of the programs. These memos also were used to develop coding nodes after transcripts of the interview data were imported into the qualitative analysis computer program NUD*IST 4.

The fourth advantage to audiotaping the interviews was listening to the interviews enabled me to improve my questioning techniques. In early interviews I noted questions that frequently required clarification and reworded them slightly to be more understandable to later participants in the study. I also learned to more comfortably pace the interview for both myself and the participants by relaxing and slowing the pace of the interviews. I believe improved questioning techniques and
pacing assisted in the establishment of rapport, which resulted in the prolonged engagement necessary for increasing the credibility of the study.

**Documents**

The second data collection technique utilized in this study was the collection of relevant documents. The term documents, as used in this study, refers “to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (Merriam, 1998, p. 112). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider documents “a rich source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent” (p. 277). Merriam (1998) believes “documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated” (p. 126). During this research I used documentary data in two ways: (a) as a primary source of data related to characteristics of the associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, (b) as a source of triangulation for confirming understandings developed through interviews and/or observations.

There were five broad types of data collected in this study.

The first category of documents collected in this study were public, customary documents specific to the milieu of both prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. These documents included: each college’s academic catalog; schedules of classes for multiple terms at both institutions; and copies of each program’s Prekindergarten Associate Certificate Proposal, developed for the State of Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten validation team.
Prekindergarten licensure proposal requirements are mandated by the State of Ohio Department of Education and proved a valuable source of data relative to each program. The following documents within each of the Prekindergarten Associate Certificate Proposals were reviewed for this study: (a) a rationale for the prekindergarten program of teacher education, (b) a description of the library holdings and specific resources available to the prekindergarten program of teacher education, (c) rosters of ECE program advisory committee members and minutes of ECE program advisory committee minutes, (d) a listing of learned society and professional organizations informing the development of the program, (e) a detailed review of each program’s outcomes in terms of students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, (f) the planned program sequence and appropriate course descriptions from the college catalog, (g) an individual syllabus for each course within both programs, (h) vitae of each of the full-time ECE faculty members at each site as well as adjunct faculty members, (i) copies of practicum handbooks, and (j) ECE program handbooks. Each program’s Prekindergarten Associate Certificate Proposal was 700 to 800 pages in length.

The second category of documents collected in this study were unique public documents related to particular aspects of each program. Documentary data unique to each specific site included: (a) promotional brochures for the community college, the early childhood education programs, the campus childcare programs, and field and laboratory sites within the community, (b) the recent Early Childhood Education Program Review report at Beachline, (c) specific textbooks and professional
development materials referenced by participants, (d) the job description for the Lab Assistant position at Beachline, (e) copies of particular ECE course materials mentioned by participants, (f) textbook, course and/or instructor evaluation forms, (g) Beachline’s commencement program, (h) articulation agreements, and (i) materials related to particular student organizations and/or activities.

The third category of documents collected in this study were on-line documents related to each site downloaded from the World Wide Web. Merriam (1998) believes “on-line data collection offers an electronic extension of familiar research techniques, widening the scope of data available to the researcher” (p. 128). I utilized three different types of on-line documents during the course of this study. First, during the site selection portion of this research, I had downloaded and printed web pages relevant to both Beachline and Mapleview. The college’s own relevant web pages, as well as the College Edge (1997) profiles of both institutions, were included in the documents for each site. Second, an on-line library search of the more current early childhood resources was conducted at each site. Through the OhioLINK central catalog I logged into the library at both Beachline and Mapleview. I conducted an on-line search of the words “early childhood”, limiting the search to items from the year 1990 to the present. The search was then sorted by year of acquisition as an indication of how regularly early childhood resources were acquired at each site. Each of these library searches was printed out for later data analysis. Third, I used email communication to ask a small number of clarification questions of the two full-time
faculty members at each institution during the process of data analysis. Email responses were printed and coded as external documents in the NUD*IST 4 database.

The fourth and fifth categories of documents collected in this study were the type of documents described by Merriam (1998) as researcher-generated documents, "prepared by the researcher or for the researcher by participants after the study has begun" (p. 119). The fourth category of documents used in this study was photographs. I had not planned to utilize photographs in this research and did not even consider photographs as a data source until I began researching at Mapleview. After an initial observation of the ECD Resource Room, ECD dedicated classroom, and the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center, I requested and received permission to photograph these rooms at my next visit simply to help me remember what I had observed. I did not photograph any children or adults at either site. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) point out researcher produced photographs are "most often used as a means of remembering and studying detail that might be overlooked if a photographic image were not available for reflection" (p. 143). I found the photographs taken at Mapleview such a valuable tool for enhancing my understanding of the milieu at that site that I returned to Beachline and took photographs there. Photographs from both sites were used in conjunction with field notes to assist the development of my understanding of relevance of the physical contexts at each site.

The fifth and final category of document collected in this research was the survey data developed and collected by one of the participants specifically to inform this study. At the interview session following our conversation concerning the
characteristics of students in the ECE program at Beachline, Sue Ralough, the full-time ECE faculty member, explained our conversation during the previous interview had piqued her interest concerning characteristics of students in the program. She developed and administered a short survey to 26 students in two of her ECE classes to gather data relating to their job experiences in ECE as well as the use of job sites for practicum placement. This data was used to inform this study regarding the characteristics of community college early childhood education students.

All documentary data was carefully reviewed and data relevant to the research question was imported into my NUD*IST 4 database as an external document. The external document feature of NUD*IST 4 is actually a process of categorizing, notation, and memoing concerning documents the researcher is unable to actually import into the database. The ability to utilize this feature of the NUD*IST 4 software facilitated the use of valuable documentary sources of data for analysis and interpretation.

**Observations**

The third source of data utilized in this research was observations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out interview data is not bounded by time and can represent past, present and future events and circumstances within the context of a study, while observations are confined to a particular place and time. The term participant observer evolved from ethnography and refers to researchers who observe while actively participating in a setting for a period of time (Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 1997). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992) view participant
observation as a continuum focusing on observation at one end and on participation in the group at the other end. Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Wolcott (1992) both describe nonparticipant observation as observing without becoming involved as participants at the research site and participant observation as observing while, at the same time, becoming a part of the group being observed. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Bogden and Biklen (1992) my participant observations were towards the observation end of the continuum. Using the descriptors of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Wolcott (1992), I observed at both sites as a nonparticipant observer, present but not involved. My presence was overt. Participants knew that I was on site, took me on tours of their campuses, and noted particular places to observe during interview sessions. I used wait-time before interviews and observations to make field notes regarding specific aspects of the environment at all sites as well as interactions among participants at the sites. I specifically arranged to observe two classes at each site seeking data to complement aspects of the interview data. At both sites I observed practicum seminars at the suggestion of the ECE faculty member, taking field notes as I observed. I also observed and photographed three specific physical sites at each site: the child care centers associated with each ECE program, the ECE resource rooms within each campus library, and the specific classrooms used by each ECE program. All field notes from my observations were transcribed and imported into my NUD*IST 4 database or were included in the NUD*IST 4 database as an external documents.
Data Analysis

Conceptual Framework

There is no clear concurrence in the literature regarding the definition, precise use of terminology, or utilization of conceptual frameworks in qualitative research. Wolcott (1992) believes all research begins “with an idea that reflects human judgment” (p. 7). Eisner (1991) points out it is impossible to have what he terms “immaculate perception,” the “impossibility of knowing the world in its pristine state” (p. 46). Eisner believes “perception of the world is influenced by skill, point of view, focus, language, and framework” (1991, p. 46). Wolcott (1992) describes concepts as “ideas of all shapes and sizes” (p. 11). Hills and Gibson (1992) depict concepts as “the mental categories with which we discriminate entities (acts, objects, events, and situations) from one another and within which we associate them with similar objects and events” (p. 7). A number of words and phrases are used interchangeably in the literature to describe conceptual framework. Schultz (1988) says “a few of the terms used somewhat synonymously with ‘conceptual framework’ are frame of reference, theoretical orientation, conceptual approach, theoretical perspective, conceptual model, and paradigm” (p. 31). Wolcott (1992) concludes “qualitative researchers position themselves by identifying the underlying ideas and assumptions that drive their work” (p. 7).

Conceptual frameworks influence the selection of method in all types of research and other facets of research design as well. Many authors encourage the qualitative researcher to use a pragmatic approach to conceptual frameworks. Wolcott
(1992) advises the qualitative researcher to go “shopping” among the expanse of conceptual and theoretical orientations for conceptual frameworks with a “likelihood they will work for you and adequately address your problem” (p. 18). Patton (1990) promotes a clearly pragmatic purpose for what he terms strategic frameworks which he views as “a framework for action” and “basic direction” (p. 36). Eisner (1991) describes the application and importance of conceptual framework to the qualitative researcher, the instrument of qualitative research:

Researchers must see what is to be seen, given some frame of reference and some set of intentions. . . . it is not a matter of checking behaviors, but rather of perceiving their presence and interpreting their significance. . . . The expert knows what to neglect. Knowing what to neglect means having a sense for the significant and possessing a framework that makes the search for the significant efficient (pp. 33-34).

The interpretive conceptual framework, which has its roots in the complex philosophy of phenomenology, informed the conceptual framework of this study. Phenomenologists make deductions about inner experiences from external indicators, seeking to portray what Willis (1979) terms “general phenomenological patterns” (p. 66) and making them known. Bernstein (1976) describes the phenomenological paradigm as “one that aims at elucidating the essential structures of this life world, structures which are themselves constituted by intentional consciousness” (p. 134). Phenomenologists are concerned with individuals and how changes in people’s thoughts and knowledge can become clearer. Phenomenologists maintain that understanding, verstehen, is “a complex process by which all of us in our everyday life
interpret the meaning of our own actions and those of others with whom we interact” (Bernstein, 1976, p. 139).

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, a characteristic of qualitative methodologies, including this research, is their reflection of an interpretive paradigm. Greene (1994) relates a goal of an interpretive conceptual framework is working to understand the question “How is the program experienced by various stakeholders?”(p. 532). Greene (1994) believes a preferred research method for qualitative research with an interpretive conceptual framework is a case study utilizing data collection methods of interviews, observation and document review. Stake (1995) explicates the conceptual framework of case study research and states “in qualitative case study, we seek greater understanding of Θ, the case. We want to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of Θ, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts” (p. 16). Eisner (1991) explains the “interpretive character” of qualitative studies and states the “meaning of interpretation pertains to what experience holds for those in the situation studied” (p. 35). The goal of this research, to study the unique understandings of persons involved in programs of early childhood teacher education at two community colleges in Ohio, fits the interpretive qualitative case study conceptual framework detailed in this chapter.

**Data Analysis Methodology**

The on-going process of data analysis began as I started collecting data, utilizing a method of constant comparative analysis, described by Glaser & Strauss (1967) as a data analysis technique “concerned with generating and plausibly
suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems” (p. 104). Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out comparative analysis is a “general method, just as are the experimental and statistical methods” (p. 21), since all use the logic of comparison.

As I began to interview participants, data initially fell into two broad patterns (Cole, 1994): (a) data I expected to find because it was in the literature or in what Eisner (1991) terms antecedent knowledge, my experiential and theoretical knowledge base, and (b) data that was unexpected, that I didn’t know I would find. With the data I expected to find I actively sought throughout data analysis to utilize the technique of “deliberately making the familiar strange” (Erickson, 1984, p. 62). During interviews this resulted in a process of probing questions as I continually reminded participants I did not want to presume I already knew about their programs of teacher education. Erickson (1984) advises the researcher to continually question, “Why is this __________ (act, person, status, concept) the way it is and not different?” Erickson (1984) also suggests the researcher question not only what is happening, but also question what is not happening. I used these data analysis techniques during the course of this research to assist me in developing an understanding of why, in this study, a program of prekindergarten teacher education is “the way it is and not different” (Erickson, 1984, p. 62). Strauss & Corbin (1994) describe this aspect of data analysis as elaborating and modifying existing theories by “meticulously” (p. 273) comparing data against them. Howey and Zimpher’s (1989) conceptual framework of characteristics of quality and coherence in programs of teacher
education was the basis for careful and thorough analysis. Data that was unexpected was "grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" through the "continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273).

Stake (1995) describes categorical aggregation and direct interpretation as specific techniques for case study data analysis. Categorical aggregation is the development of themes or categories from the data (Creswell, 1997; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) points out the case study researcher also uses direct interpretation to look "at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances" (Creswell, 1997, p. 153-154). Direct interpretation is an important aspect of case study research because, as Stake (1995) explains, "some important features appear only once" (p. 74). Wolcott (1994) offers the qualitative researcher similar advice as he advises using different lenses in data analysis, zooming in to look at details and zooming out to look at the broad picture.

Meaningful data, leading to direct interpretation and categorical aggregation in these case studies, could have been buried in the volume of raw data gathered in this study. The approaches I used in data analysis assisted me in developing an understanding of the meanings of these cases. Eisner (1991) explains "with an emergent focus, however, significance is determined by selecting out of the interactions those that count, given the frame of reference, theory, conceptual system, or set of values the observer brings to the scene" (p. 188). Stake (1995) reminds the case study researcher "the case and the key issues need to be kept in focus. The search
for meaning, the analysis, should roam out and return to those foci over and over” (p. 84). The development of the significant themes of this study is detailed next.

**Themes**

Eisner (1991) notes the qualitative researcher encounters the crucial problem of “finding a focus and selecting and organizing what they have to say” (p. 189). He suggests “one format that is used for this purpose is the formulation of themes, those recurring messages construed from the events observed. The identification of themes requires researchers to distill the material they have put together” (Eisner, 1991, p. 189). Eisner (1991) indicates the qualitative researcher’s findings “can be used more or less inductively to generate thematic categories” (p. 189). Eisner (1991) views themes as providing “structures for the interpretation and appraisal of the events described” (p. 190). “The thematic structures derived inductively from the material researchers have put together and from the observations they have made can provide the conceptual hubs around which the story can be told” (Eisner, 1991, pp. 190-191).

In the constant comparative method, the researcher begins by coding data “into as many categories of analysis as possible, as categories emerge or as data emerge that fit an existing category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105). Glaser and Strauss (1967) believe themes or categories emerging from data analysis must “readily, not forcibly” (p. 3) fit the data. As I began to identify themes for the data, I decided to use a data analysis software program. The process of selecting and utilizing NUD*IST 4 as a tool for data analysis in this study is described in the next section.
**QSR NUD*IST 4**

A hallmark of qualitative research is the quantity of data collected by the researcher. Once I had finished my initial research at Mapleview Community College, the first case study of this dissertation, I concluded a qualitative data analysis program would be a valuable tool to assist me in the management of my data and in data analysis. A variety of data analysis programs is available to the qualitative researcher and I used a number of strategies to determine the program best suited to my research. I had classroom experiences with both the HyperRESEARCH and NUD*IST 3.0 qualitative analysis programs, so I began my search for a data analysis program by reviewing Wietzman and Miles (1995) detailed examinations of HyperRESEARCH and NUD*IST 3.0, as well as my class notes. I studied Barry's (1998) careful reviews of the strengths and limitations of Atlas/ti and NUD*IST. I emailed persons I knew who had used either HyperRESEARCH or NUD*IST 3.0 for their personal, practical insights into both programs. I searched World Wide Web sites for qualitative data analysis programs and downloaded and explored demonstration programs for the newly released NUD*IST 4 and The Ethnograph.

I choose to purchase and use the QSR NUD*IST 4 qualitative data analysis software for several reasons. First, QSR NUD*IST 4 was available in a Windows environment, a familiar operating system for me. Previous versions of NUD*IST had only been available in DOS or Macintosh systems. Second, I found many reviews of data analysis software presumed the researcher knew exactly how they would approach data analysis in their research and which features of data analysis software...
would best meet their needs. As indicated earlier, I had begun data analysis at the beginning of this research, but at the time I was reviewing software I was unclear as to the exact features I would need from a data analysis program. I knew I had a quantity of complex data. After careful review of many data analysis software programs, I believed NUD*IST 4 offered the most options for managing the different types of qualitative data I had collected. Interview transcripts, field notes, and memos could be imported directly into the NUD*IST database and then coded. Documents, such as the eight hundred page Prekindergarten applications from each site, as well as photographs, could be imported into the NUD*IST database as external documents and then coded. At the time of software selection, I was not clear as to what other analytical tools I would use, but NUD*IST 4 offered both flexibility and a variety of program resources for data analysis. The disadvantage of choosing the NUD*IST 4 software was its complexity. It did take time to learn to use the program. I made full use of resources for learning to use the NUD*IST software including the tutorial program included with NUD*IST 4, the user guide to the program (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd., 1997), Gahan and Hannibal’s (1998) Doing qualitative research using QSR NUD*IST, and the QRS NUD*IST web site (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd., 1999) for teaching materials, frequently asked questions, and errata information related to the user guide.

Qualitative data analysis programs such as NUD*IST 4 do not analyze data. The qualitative researcher analyzes data using the selected tools offered by the program. The selection of tools is, in itself, a part of the analysis. As I developed and
planned this study, I used the conceptual framework of Schwab's (1978) commonplaces, the student, the teacher, the subject matter and the milieu, described earlier in Chapter Two of this dissertation. Howey and Zimpher (1989) related they had developed their interview questions to focus on the curriculum, the faculty, the students, and the program. I adapted these interview questions to broadly fall under the categories reflecting Schwab’s commonplaces of the teacher, the student, the subject matter, and the milieu. I imported each of the interview transcripts, one at a time, into the NUD*IST database. When I began the initial process of coding themes I established four root nodes, or categories: students, teachers, subject matter, and milieu. As I began to code the transcripts of each interview, there were areas that clearly fit into the four root nodes. It was a simple process to create subcategories for each of the four root nodes as they emerged from the data. There was also an area in the NUD*IST 4 program called “Free Nodes” where I could code data if I was not clear about where it fit.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest the researcher clarify the features of the themes as a part of the analysis. I used a feature of the NUD*ST 4 program entitled “Definition” which allowed me to define each of the thematic nodes I developed. This process of defining each node forced me to clarify my emergent understanding of each category and served as a way of memoing my ideas about the emergent themes. Writing definitions also provided a record of the analysis. I frequently referred to my node definitions during data analysis to ensure consistency in interpreting the category. This became an important part of the data analysis as I compared node
definitions to clarify and refine analysis of the data. These definitions were revised to clarify and refine emerging themes in the data. Definitions were added as new nodes were created, or revised as nodes were combined, to more clearly reflect a theme. As I began to compare data with the properties of the categories, the node revisions I made reflected the stage of data analysis described by Glaser and Straus (1967) as integrating categories and their properties.

The constant comparison method of data analysis compels the researcher to an ongoing process of comparison while coding data. Glaser and Straus (1967) explain, "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). The constant comparative method required me to study the data, code the data, and, as an on-going process, constantly compare codes and data. The process of data analysis developed in this study is described next.

Data Analysis

Creswell (1997) describes the process of analyzing qualitative data as one in which the researcher moves "in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach" (p. 142). The data analysis process I utilized in this research is described in a linear fashion but, analytically, occurred as a fluid process with a great deal of intellectual movement between the broad procedures described in this section. I have utilized Creswell's (1997) conceptual framework of data analysis processes to describe the data analysis procedures I used in this study. These procedures are (a)
data managing, (b) reading and memoing, (c) describing, analyzing, and interpreting, and (d) representation.

Data managing. Wolcott (1994) terms the procedures used by qualitative researchers to manage their data "processing" the data. QRS NUD*IST 4 was the tool I used to initially process the data I had collected in this study. I established each case study as an individual project file in the NUD*IST 4 database with a file name representing the pseudonyms of each community college. I next converted each of the transcriptions of all of the individual interviews at Mapleview and Beachline from Word97 files to ASCII text with line breaks, then imported each of these files into the appropriate NUD*IST 4 project. I determined the unit of analysis in NUD*IST 4 to be a line of text. I believed this allowed me the greatest flexibility for coding the data. Each interview was imported individually and file names were assigned in NUD*IST 4 using the pseudonym of each participant and a number representing each participant's first, second, third, fourth or fifth interview.

A challenging prospect for data management in this study was the 700 to 800 page Prekindergarten application document developed by each program for review by the State of Ohio Department of Education. The NUD*IST 4 software had a feature which permitted the importing of what is termed an external document. External documents, in the NUD*IST 4 system, are considered types of data which, for practical reasons, can’t be imported into the database as a text document. I imported applicable portions of the Prekindergarten application documents of each program in this study as external documents. After coding external documents the data is then
accessed by page number. Other smaller documents gathered in the course of this research, such as catalogs, handbooks, and brochures, were not imported in the NUD*IST 4 database, but marked and filed in an alphabetical system that permitted quick access to relevant data.

After importing the interview transcripts and applicable external documents, I began the process of coding the data. I found the NUD*IST 4 program offered me a great deal of flexibility in processing and coding the data. As described earlier, for each case study I established four basic or root coding categories based upon Schwab's (1978) commonplaces of the curriculum, one of the conceptual frameworks of this study. My index tree root categories were (a) students, (b) faculty, (c) subject matter, and the (d) milieu. These were the only categories I established before I began coding the data. I did not establish coding categories based upon the second conceptual framework in this study, the 14 characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). I choose to have those characteristics emerge from the data and be coded as they occurred.

As I began coding I created what are called nodes, or subcategories, under each of the four index tree root categories. NUD*IST 4 is quite flexible about coding the same data in multiple ways as well as creating, deleting, and merging codes as data analysis proceeds and understandings related to the data increase. In NUD*IST 4 I also created a fifth category called "Free Nodes." where I coded and stored data that appeared to pertain to more than one of the index tree categories.
During the process of coding the data from the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program at Mapleview Community College I created 90 individual coding categories. I kept a listing of categories and their identification numbers within the NUD*IST 4 database. When I coded the data from the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at Beachline Community College, I used the same identification numbers, when appropriate, to facilitate comparative analysis of the cases. 72 individual coding categories were created for the ECE program at Beachline due to my increased understanding of how to merge codes and the simpler nature of the institutional and program milieus.

After coding the data from each of the case studies in this dissertation, I used the NUD*IST 4 program to create reports for each of the coding categories for both programs. Reports were filed in numerical order by their assigned numerical code into the root category sections of free nodes, faculty, students, milieu, and subject matter. Individual categories were labeled for easy access and the reports for each case study were placed in individual notebooks.

**Reading and memoing.** As described earlier, personally transcribing each interview had assisted me in developing a closeness to the data and as well as helped me get a sense of the whole interview process with each informant. As I transcribed the interview data I wrote memos within the transcript, reflecting and analyzing some of the data as I transcribed. Some of these memos were used to form the initial coding categories in the NUD*IST 4 database while other memos were actually coded as a part of the analysis. A process of direct interpretation and categorical aggregation,
viewing with a zoom lens and a wide-angle lens, was used throughout this portion of
the data analysis. The process of reading and memoing continued as I coded and
analyzed the data in this study.

**Describing, analyzing, and interpreting.** Wolcott (1994) offers a useful
framework for description, analysis, and interpretation in qualitative studies. He
suggests the qualitative research use description to allow the data to speak for itself
while addressing the question "What is going on here?" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12). I used
the reports in NUD*IST 4, based upon each of the nodes created during my initial
analysis of the data, to begin described the case. As much as possible I selected the
participants' voices to describe their programs.

Wolcott (1994) believes the process of analyzing data to be an inquiry into
"How do things work here?" (p. 12) to ascertain essential components and their
associations. Data analysis in this study was continuous throughout the study. After
creating reports, I reread and studied the data in each of my data reports notebooks,
highlighting data and memoing in the margins. I considered different interpretations
of the data as I continued to study the data and look for patterns. I consciously looked
for connections between each program's structure, learning activities, and outcomes
while actively seeking disconfirming evidence. If I needed additional data or
clarification I emailed the appropriate faculty member in each program for additional
data.

Interpretation is the researcher's answer to the question, "What does it all
mean?" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12). For the intrinsic aspects of the case I sought data to
support a greater understanding of the faculty, students, milieu, and subject matter in two associate degree prekindergarten program of early childhood teacher education. For the instrumental portions of the two case studies I sought data to support the 14 characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) as well as characteristics unique to the programs. Prolonged engagement, triangulating findings, the search for disconfirming evidence, and member checking contributed to the trustworthiness of the interpretations in this study.

**Representation of data.** While there is no standard format for the representation of a qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995), many qualitative researchers offer suggestions for data representation. Due to the very nature of qualitative studies, Eisner (1991) points out, “the point of using qualitative means to render and interpret the education world is that it enables researchers to say what cannot be said through numbers” (p. 187). Eisner (1991) also suggests the qualitative researcher focus on “the situation they have experienced” to describe “the features and significance of the situation studied” (p. 189). “This narrative should be supported by evidence, structurally corroborated and coherent” (Eisner, 1991, p. 190). Strauss and Corbin (1994) indicate, “interpretations *must* include the perspectives and voices of the people whom we study” (p. 274).

Wolcott (1994) reminds qualitative researchers “description must have a purpose and related to the purpose of the research” (p. 15). The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education.
While there are no specific guidelines for writing qualitative case studies, there are suggestions noted in the literature. Stake (1995) believes the representation of the case "needs to be organized with readers in mind" (p. 122). Merriam (1998) also suggests asking who the readers will be as well as "what that audience would want to know about the study. The answer to that question can help structure the content of the report and determine the style of presentation" (p. 221).

I have organized the case studies in this research for the reader who seeks a greater understanding of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. I believe readers could be seeking an understanding of what is an prekindergarten associate degree program of early childhood teacher education, including the characteristics of quality and coherence of such programs. As detailed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the lack of knowledge regarding associate degree programs of prekindergarten early childhood teacher education was noted repeatedly in the literature. Readers inquiring into the nature of associate degree programs could include teacher educators in baccalaureate or graduate programs seeking information to inform articulation agreements, persons working to establish a prekindergarten associate degree program of early childhood teacher education, as well as early childhood professional looking for a greater personal and/or professional understanding of quality, coherent associate degree programs.

Each of the associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in this dissertation is presented as an individual case study. Chapter Four is a case study of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview
Community College. Chapter Five is a case study of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College. In keeping with the holistic nature qualitative case study research, the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of each case are interwoven throughout each case.

The case studies in this dissertation were organized by conceptual framework, a methodology suggested by both Stake (1995) and Wolcott (1994). The conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978), the faculty, the milieu, the students, and the subject matter became the four primary headings for each case. Within each of these four chapter headings, I first introduced data supporting the intrinsic aspects of the case to enable understanding on the part of the reader.

After presenting the intrinsic aspects of the case in each section, I then offered findings related to the instrumental portions of the case, the characteristics of quality and coherence as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). I divided these 14 characteristics among the four sections of each case study. In the faculty section I placed the following characteristics of quality and coherence: (a) faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program, (b) faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning, and (c) programs link with research and development in teacher education. For the section on the milieu I put these characteristics of quality and coherence: (a) program goals are clear and reasonable, (b) programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories, (c) program have curriculum articulation with the schools. Within the student section I located the characteristics of (a) students identify with a cohort group and (b) students recognize a milestone or
benchmark point in the program. Finally, in the subject matter, I placed the remaining six characteristics of quality and coherence: (a) program curriculum is thematic, (b) the relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced, (c) program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum (d) programs are rigorous and academically challenging, (e) program have adequate time within the structure of the program and (f) programs are systematically evaluated.

To assist the reader, I established a pattern for the representation of the instrumental aspects of each case. Based upon Chenail's (1995) taxonomy of connecting data and discussion, I established a pattern of presenting the finding, introducing data on the finding, displaying the data related to the finding, and commenting on the finding for each of the 14 characteristics of quality coherence discussed in each case study in Chapter Four and Five of this dissertation. In Chapter Six a comparative analysis of the data relating to the faculty, the students, the milieu and the subject matter and a comparative analysis of the data supporting the program characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) found in the associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education are detailed.

Limitations of the Study

Understanding the limitations of a study is helpful to understanding the study itself. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) point out, "limitations are consistent with the always partial state of your knowing in social research" (p. 147). The limitations of this study included the antecedent knowledge of the researcher, the limitation of
interviews to faculty and program staff, and the modest number of classroom
observations. Each of these limitations is discussed below.

**Antecedent Knowledge**

Eisner (1991) defines educational connoisseurship as "the ability to make fine-
grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities" (p. 63). The educational
connoisseur brings an experiential and theoretical knowledge base to research which
Eisner (1991) terms "antecedent knowledge." As the research instrument of this
study, I used my antecedent knowledge and my awareness of this knowledge during
the course of this inquiry. I acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of my
antecedent knowledge throughout the study. All of the persons involved in this study
knew, or learned during the course of the research, that I was an experienced early
childhood teacher educator. Many of the faculty members I interviewed were familiar
with my previous research in programs of early childhood teacher education (Connolly
& Dotson, 1996). The advantage of my antecedent knowledge was the ability to
readily understand concepts and theoretical frameworks in the field of early childhood
teacher education. The participants in this study and I were aware that we all had an
individual knowledge and understanding of concepts such as associate prekindergarten
teacher certification, NAEYC, constructivism, and developmentally appropriate
practice. It was advantageous to have some common ground of understanding with
participants. I found this led to opportunities for probing questions, which enabled
greater understanding and depth regarding particular aspects of this study.
My antecedent knowledge also had clear disadvantages. I had to regularly work to "made the familiar strange" (Erickson, 1984, p. 62). Participants frequently interjected the phrase, "You know", in response to interview questions. I often reminded participants that I was continually trying not to presume I knew the answers to particular questions and wanted to learn their understanding about particular aspects of their programs. Eisner (1991) reminds the researcher "what we see is frequently influenced by what we know" (p. 67). I attempted to balance the advantage of my antecedent knowledge with its disadvantages. I believe my experiential and theoretical knowledge regarding programs of teacher education enabled me to understand many of the "complex and subtle qualities" (Eisner, 1991, p. 63) of the programs in this study. I believe the disadvantages of my antecedent knowledge to be:

(a) participants may have offered a different understanding of their programs to a researcher whom they perceived as not knowledgeable in the field of early childhood teacher education, (b) a researcher with a different conceptual framework could have provided opportunities for different understandings regarding many aspects of this study.

**Limited Interviews**

Interviews in this study were limited. The Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education program faculty members served as the primary informants in this study. One program graduate, who held a unique staff position in the ECE program at Beachline Community College, was also interviewed. In future studies of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher
education it could be valuable to consider the understandings of others involved in such programs including current early childhood students, program graduates, the staff of campus programs of early education and care for young children, directors and cooperating teachers at practicum sites, academic librarians, and college administrators.

**Classroom Observations**

Observations of Early Childhood Development classes at Mapleview Community College and Early Childhood Education classes at Beachline Community College were limited to practicum seminars at each site. Observations of actual instruction in other early childhood courses as well as in programs of early education and care used as practicum sites could facilitate increased understanding of how the intended curriculum (Eisner, 1994), the written explicit curriculum in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, is used in the classroom.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the qualitative research methodology and specific design of this research was situated within the broad traditions of qualitative research. An instrumental collective case study was selected as the research method best fitted to help develop an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in two prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. Specific aspects of the research methodology including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation were detailed. Finally, the conceptual frameworks
guiding this study were explicated and the limitations of this research described and
discussed. As indicated by the quote at the very beginning this chapter, the process of
detailing both the purposes of a study and the processes used to accomplish those
purposes is the heart of research.
CHAPTER 4

THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OF TEACHER EDUCATION OF MAPLEVIEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"We're aimed at making a whole teacher, a life-long teacher, a learning individual."
Jean Schmidt, an adjunct Early Childhood Development faculty member
at Mapleview Community College

Introducing the Case

The Setting

Traveling to Mapleview Community College for the first time took me along
country roads and two-lane state highways. Traffic was light and the speed limit
slower than larger highway systems, leaving time to observe fields and older
farmhouses, woods and weathered barns. As I began this study, farmers were
preparing fields for spring planting. When I concluded my initial interviews at
Mapleview, corn was standing tall in the fields in preparation for the harvest. The
spacious Mapleview Community College campus was located on the edge of a small
town in a rural area of the state. Driving onto the campus for the first time I
immediately noticed large expanses of well-kept lawns, a pond, and mature trees. The
atmosphere was spacious and quiet. I was looking forward to my first meeting with
Chloe Evans, the single full-time Early Childhood Development faculty member at
Mapleview. It was through Chloe and other ECD faculty members that I would develop an understanding of the research questions guiding this study.

I traveled to Mapleview Community College with a number of research questions. What was the role of the faculty in the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College? What types of students were enrolled in the program? What aspects of the college and the surrounding community affected the program? What was the associate degree prekindergarten program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College? Would I find characteristics of quality and coherence similar to those identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in this program of prekindergarten teacher education? I brought all of these questions with me as I began my research.

Chloe Evans, the single full-time Early Childhood Development faculty member at Mapleview Community College, welcomed me to her office, a small windowless room. Chloe’s desk took up one side of the office while a tall bookcase, crammed with professional books related to early childhood education as well as a collection of children’s books, filled the other. A line of shelves rimmed the perimeter of the room a few feet from the ceiling. These shelves also held professional books related to early childhood education. I began my research of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College in this office. Multiple interviews with Chloe and two part-time adjunct ECD faculty members, tours and observations in campus facilities, documents, and photographs comprised the data collected to develop an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence.
in the prekindergarten program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College. The representation of this data is presented as a case study in this chapter.

**An Overview of the Case**

In this case study of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program of early childhood teacher education at Mapleview Community College, the conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum, the subject matter, the milieu, the teacher, and the students (Schwab, 1978), ensured key elements of the case would be examined. The associate degree program of prekindergarten teacher education at Mapleview Community College was called Early Childhood Development (ECD). This case study of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College begins with a description of the ECD faculty to explore the research questions related to the role of faculty in a prekindergarten associate degree program of early childhood teacher education. The characteristics of quality and coherence associated with the ECD faculty are also examined. In their research of exemplary programs of primary teacher education, Howey and Zimpher (1989) found three characteristics of quality and coherence associated with the faculty of these programs: (a) faculty identified with distinctive aspects of the program, (b) faculty possessed clear conceptions of teaching and learning, and (c) faculty clearly linked their programs with research and development in teacher education. At Mapleview Community College similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found. Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member at Mapleview, as well as the adjunct ECD faculty members, identified with multiple aspects of the ECD program. Both full and part-time ECD
faculty members expressed clear conceptions of teaching and learning. In addition, all
ECD faculty members interviewed at Mapleview described on-going professional
development activities in the field of early childhood education, which linked them
with research and development in early childhood education. Two unique aspects of
quality and coherence among the ECD faculty at Mapleview were the professional
cohort group among the early childhood professionals in the community and the quest
for conceptual and curricular coherence among the entire ECD faculty.

The milieu of Mapleview Community College's prekindergarten program of
teacher education is examined in the second section of this chapter. The milieu,
specific social, cultural, and/or environmental contexts, was investigated to examine
the particular interrelated conditions in which the Mapleview Community College
Early Childhood Development program occurred. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found
three characteristics of quality and coherence related to the milieu of the programs of
teacher education they studied: (a) program goals were clear and reasonable, (b)
programs had adequate resources including materials and laboratories, and (c)
programs had curriculum articulation with the schools. At Mapleview Community
College, similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found. Within the ECD
program at Mapleview, multiple standards were utilized to establish clear and
professional goals for the ECD program. The Early Childhood Development Program
Resource Center and the Campus Childcare Center provided satisfactory to more than
adequate resources for ECD faculty and students. A variety of community childcare
programs of education and care were used as practicum sites for the ECD program.
Curriculum articulation between these sites and the ECD program at Mapleview continued to grow and evolve as greater numbers of ECD program graduates assumed professional roles within the community.

In the third section of this chapter, characteristics of the Early Childhood Development students enrolled in the prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College are considered in response to the research question concerning student characteristics. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified two characteristics of quality and coherence related to students in their study: (a) students identify with a cohort group, and (b) students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program. At Mapleview, the ECD faculty had structured the ECD program to accommodate the diverse characteristics and needs of ECD students. Due to the fluid nature of enrollment of many of the students, formal cohort groups were not practical. More informal types of student cohorts did exist at Mapleview. The activities of the students within the ECD Club and the Area Association for the Education of Young Children were one such cohort. Students who were enrolled in the practicum course not only viewed themselves as a cohort group, they also perceived the practicum course as the milestone or benchmark of the program. Finally, the dedicated ECD classroom, described in this chapter as a part of the milieu of the ECD program, was a site where ECD students at Mapleview frequently congregated, utilizing this space for study and informal gatherings. This space was viewed by ECD faculty as specifically facilitating the development of cohort groups among ECD students.
In the fourth section of this chapter, in response to the research questions in this study concerning the associate degree program of teacher education, the subject matter of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College is examined. Both the specific nature of the curriculum as well as its organization are examined to determine the structural and conceptual orientations of the program. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of elementary teacher education in their study to have the following characteristics of quality and coherence: (a) the programs were rigorous and academically challenging, (b) the curriculum was thematic, (c) there was a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience, (d) the program structure enabled interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, (e) the programs had adequate time within the structure of the program, and (f) the programs were systematically evaluated. Similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found at Mapleview Community College. The ECD faculty and Mapleview Community College described the ECD program as academically challenging at an associate degree level. The ECD program had two clearly articulated program themes: (a) constructivism and (b) problem solving/decision making. The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and experience was carefully balanced in the ECD program as well as within the professional knowledge and experiential base of the ECD faculty. The ECD program at Mapleview was specifically structured to enable interdisciplinary approaches to early childhood education. The entire ECD faculty interviewed in this study described time as a challenge to the structure of the program. This chapter
concludes with a summary and discussion of the findings in this case study of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College.

The Faculty

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) faculty at Mapleview Community College included one full-time faculty and six part-time faculty. Three of the Early Childhood Development faculty members, Chloe Evans, Jean Schmidt, and Jayne Winn, were interviewed for this study. All names of the Mapleview faculty members are pseudonyms and their identities have been masked.

Schwab (1978) considered professional knowledge about the teachers one of the commonplaces in curriculum development. He believed such knowledge included information about "what these teachers are likely to know and how flexible and ready they are likely to be to learn new materials and new ways of teaching" (Schwab, 1978, p. 367). One research question in this study was "What is the role of faculty in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?" At Mapleview Community College I found the role of Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member, to be both professionally full and complex. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study identified with distinctive aspects of the program. Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member at Mapleview Community College, not only identified with all aspects of the ECD program, she was viewed by adjunct faculty members as the single person who had full knowledge and understanding about the ECD program.
Chloe Evans: The Single Full-Time ECD Faculty Member

As noted earlier in Chapter Two, “many departments of early childhood education in colleges and universities consist of only one person” (Katz & Goffin, 1990, p. 205). Chloe Evans, the primary informant in this case study, was the single full-time faculty member for the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College. Chloe’s undergraduate degree was in elementary education and she had taught kindergarten and first and second grade classrooms, including one year in a primary school outside of the continental United States. Chloe earned a Master’s Degree in educational administration from a nationally ranked university in the field. She had eight years of teaching experience in prekindergarten classrooms and held an Ohio teaching certificate that included prekindergarten certification.

Chloe’s preschool teaching experiences began shortly after she completed her Master’s degree in educational administration. At this time she believed she was “ready to be a full-time professional” but was unsuccessful in finding a job to fulfill her career goal to become an elementary school principal. At that time a local agency advertised for a preschool director and preschool teacher, and Chloe applied for the job. Chloe explained her first position as a prekindergarten early childhood educator: “Well, you ran the program and you taught the program. You were the program! And you got paid by the number of children who were in the program. So, you were everything!” Chloe found teaching preschool age children, especially three-year-olds, quite different from her kindergarten and elementary education teaching experiences,
so she “decided I needed to learn about three-year-olds. And then when I started learning about three-year-olds, someone said look at NAEYC [the National Association for the Education of Young Children]. So I went the next fall to the NAEYC [national conference] in Chicago, and, boy, I got turned on to early childhood!” Chloe taught at the agency preschool for four years and then was offered the position of early childhood education teacher at the local Joint Vocation School (JVS).

Chloe completed 12 credit hours in vocational education at a private college and became certified by the Ohio Department of Education to teach at the Joint Vocational School. During the five years Chloe taught at the JVS she ran a preschool program half a day and taught high school students that other half of the day. Chloe described her teaching at the JVS as having “lots of things to do and problems to solve. And that was great! I loved my job!” While Chloe was teaching at the JVS she was approached by an administrator at Mapleview Community College who told Chloe they were beginning an Early Childhood Development program. Chloe was asked to be on the newly formed Mapleview Early Childhood Development program advisory committee where she served for three years. An administrator at Mapleview Community College then asked Chloe if she was interested in applying for the ECD faculty position when it became available. Chloe had taught at the JVS for five years and felt “I’d done everything I could do.” She applied for and was hired as a faculty member at Mapleview Community College. Chloe explained, “I took a pay cut to come here. I made much more money over there [at the JVS].”
When Chloe was hired as the single full-time ECD faculty member at Mapleview, she had a master’s degree in educational administration and nine years experience in teaching preschool. Chloe recalled that after she was hired, a Mapleview administrator suggested her work experience was great, but “we’d love for you to be just a little more credible in early childhood.” The Mapleview administrator explained to Chloe the college would pay for her to take 12 to 15 credit hours in early childhood education. Chloe explained, “Well, if you’re going to take 15 hours you might as well take 40. So I got my second master’s [degree] in early childhood.”

**ECD program responsibilities.** Chloe Evans was an assistant professor at Mapleview with a teaching load of 15 hours in each of the two semesters in the academic year. She also served as the ECD program administrator as well as the director of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. As ECD program administrator she had the following responsibilities: (a) orientation of students to the ECD program, (b) maintain all required student documentation including required forms, verification of field and laboratory experience hours, and evaluations, (c) conduct all Prekindergarten student interviews, (d) determine student’s eligibility for admission to the ECD program, (e) perform all ECD student graduation checks, (f) advise all ECD students in the program, (f) recommend students to the Ohio Department of Education for Prekindergarten certification.

There were clear indications that Chloe’s job responsibilities were demanding. Jayne Winn, a adjunct ECD faculty member, thought, “Chloe could use some help. I think it’s a one-man show. As the only full-time faculty person she has enormous
responsibilities and could use some help.” Jayne suggested some type of assistant could help Chloe by taking on job responsibilities such as answering the telephone, keeping an appointment calendar, and completing required paperwork. Jayne believed “having someone like that would then free her to do all the many things that she can do that no one else could do.”

Jean Schmidt, another adjunct ECD faculty member, described Chloe as having “that whole global picture” of the ECD program. Jean believed Chloe has “been the formative influence in this whole [ECD] program. And has done a wonderful job. It’s been a big job.” Jean described Chloe as “the mainstay” of the ECD program at Mapleview and as “the mover and the shaker. She has a wonderful mind. She really does guide, direct, see possibilities – all of that, really well.” Jean indicated the adjunct ECD faculty had discussed Chloe’s job responsibilities among themselves and concurred, because it was a “one-person” program, “she’s just overloaded. She can’t do all that.”

The adjunct ECD faculty identified Chloe with all aspects of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. Chloe described her theory of action, her personal beliefs and identification with the entire ECD program, in very specific terms.

**Personal theory of action.** Chloe’s voice is heard throughout this case study of Mapleview Community College. At one point toward the end of the interviews, Chloe described a letter she had received from a former student describing the impact of her voice. The student wrote that she was feeding her baby small pieces of food when her baby began to choke. The student related in her letter that she began to
panic and when the baby’s face started to change color, she realized she and the baby were in serious trouble. Chloe recalled the student wrote, “and from out of nowhere came your voice, telling me to turn that baby over on my knee and pump her on the back.” The student wrote in her letter to Chloe that she turned the baby over and the food had come right out. This student was now living out of state, but felt moved to write, “Mrs. Evans, I’m writing to you to tell you, thank you for making me do it over and over and over. I think I have my baby today because I could hear your voice.”

Following this story, Chloe comments indicated her beliefs concerning the power of her voice:

What you say is really important. Somebody hears it. You’ve got to be careful what you say. It’s all about that inner desire to do, and then having a knowledge base to do that on. That I can send you away, hopefully you’ll never stop hearing my voice. And that’s a terrible thing! If I’m not in the program, what will the program be? I don’t know. It will be a strong as the next person who comes to the program. It will be better than I am if that person knows more, has more experience, and is able to impart things differently in a better way than I can. I think lots of times, jobs and programs are built on the people who are in them. And I don’t know that we’re wonderful. I just know that I have to impart what I have to impart and that I’m constantly changing. So I hope that’s a good way to be.”

Chloe believed quality programs of early care and education made a difference in the lives of young children. She sought to motivate ECD students to also strive for quality. Chloe used the analogy of a revival preacher to describe her personal beliefs regarding early childhood education: “I get up on my chair and put my arms out like the pastor at your church, at the revival, that says, go into the world and change it, please, PLEASE, PLEASE! Strive to do your best!” Chloe related she asked students, “Can you make it your mission to go out and make the world a better place for
children to be?” She emphasized, “I’m really, really, sincere about that. That I send them away with a burning desire to do the best they can do.” Chloe also believed she had a “responsibility as an advocate to send students away from here who will advocate for children and families. Who will want good things for children and families and for themselves as early childhood professionals.”

Chloe believed in setting high standards of quality and striving to meet that goal. She related an instance when she was at a meeting of early childhood professionals who were planning job positions for an early childhood program. The group approached the task of defining the positions by discussing what were the absolute minimum job requirements. Chloe related, “I though they were approaching that backwards!” She explained to the other committee members that she believed they should be seeking the best for those positions and should begin by describing the ideal. “If you’re ever going to grow and be good,” Chloe explained to the group, “You have to say what the ideal is and work from there. You can’t set this little standard way down here and be satisfied with that.”

Chloe believed change and challenge were job advantages. She explained, “this is an interesting job because there’s always something to do that’s different. That makes it a challenging job for me. And I think that’s kind of what keeps me working in the same job. The challenge is always there.” In addition to her regular job responsibilities, Chloe was involved in a number of professional committees.

**Professional committees.** Chloe had worked on a number of professional committees at the local and state levels that she believed helped her have a broader
picture of early education and care in the state. Chloe utilized her experiences and knowledge from the professional committees in her classes. She explained, "I try to share with them what's coming from the outside so they see me as somebody bigger than just this place. We try really hard to let them see there's a big world that we want them to be involved in. And, I think they see that I'm a part of that."

Chloe served on a number of boards with groups and agencies in the local community. Chloe viewed this both as a part of her work to increase quality in local programs of early education and care as well as professional modeling for ECD students. Chloe related she expected her students “to go out and be involved” and she thought, “they need to know what I do, too.” She recalled that in one ECD class a guest speaker had told the class, “Chloe is on our board.” One of the students in the class had replied to the speaker, “Chloe’s on everybody’s board!”

Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member at Mapleview Community College, filled a professionally full and complex role within the program. As ECD Program Administrator and Director of the Campus Childcare Center she had numerous job responsibilities. Chloe’s personal beliefs regarding quality programs of care and education for young children were reflected in her work with many professional committees. Chloe not only identified with all aspects of the ECD program, she was viewed by the adjunct ECD faculty members as the single person who had full knowledge and understanding regarding the ECD program.
**Adjunct Faculty in the Early Childhood Development Program**

Understanding the role of part-time ECD faculty is important to understanding the role of faculty in the Mapleview prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education. Adjunct faculty taught approximately 40% of the ECD courses at Mapleview Community College. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found faculty in the programs they studied identified with distinctive aspects of the program. Adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview clearly identified with the aspects of the program with which they had both a professional knowledge base and experience. Howey and Zimpher (1989) reported the programs of teacher education in their study had a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience. Within the ECD program Mapleview, the quality characteristic of balance among knowledge and experience, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was reflected in adjunct ECD faculty. Adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview had earned advanced degrees in early childhood education, or a related field, and had professional experience with the subject matter in the ECD courses they taught. Two of the part-time adjunct ECD faculty members, Jean Schmidt and Jayne Winn, were interviewed in this study. Their roles, as well as the roles of other adjunct ECD faculty, are described in this section.

Once she was hired as the single full-time ECD faculty member at Mapleview, Chloe began recruiting adjunct ECD faculty through a process of professional networking within the Area Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC), the local NAEYC affiliate. Chloe recalled,
I didn’t pick and choose. I don’t have that many out there that I can pick and choose from! The AAEYC connection was an easy way to know who was the developmentally appropriate practice person because they joined. And so we immediately had a common ground there.

All of the ECD adjunct faculty members were described by Chloe as active members of AAEYC. ECD adjunct faculty members were frequent presenters at both the yearly AAEYC fall conference as well as selected professional development workshops during monthly AAEYC meetings throughout the year.

At the time of this study, seven part-time adjunct faculty members were associated with the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. All of the ECD adjunct faculty members had earned a master’s degrees in early childhood education or a related field such as counseling or special education. Adjunct ECD faculty taught in areas in which they had professional knowledge, experience, and licensure and/or certification. For example, the three ECD adjunct faculty members with master’s degrees in early childhood education as well as experience teaching young children taught courses specifically related to early childhood curriculum and teaching. The adjunct faculty member with a bachelor’s degree in nursing, a master’s degree in counseling, and certification as a school nurse, taught ECD courses related to health, safety, and nutrition. An adjunct faculty member with an undergraduate degree in child development and certification in special education was a public school preschool teacher for children with special needs. She taught the ECD course on children with disabilities. Many of the ECD adjunct faculty members at Mapleview had previous college teaching experience, having served as part-time faculty at four-year colleges and universities.
Chloe enthusiastically described a number of the ECD adjunct faculty members. For example, Jean Schmidt, who had a master’s degree in early childhood education and a master’s degree in international children’s literature, taught the ECD course on language development. Chloe described Jean as “a real book person” and described students who studied language development with Jean as becoming quite excited about children’s literature. Chloe described the ECD course on children with special needs as “wonderful” because the adjunct faculty member who taught that course was a public school preschool teacher for children with disabilities and had knowledge related to many different types of programs for young children with special needs. Finally, Chloe related an adjunct faculty member who taught the ECD elective on the Reggio Emilia approach was teaching kindergarten in a school using the Reggio approach and had traveled to Italy to study in the schools of Reggio Emilia.

Chloe described a number of ways adjunct faculty came together to network as a faculty. Chloe, as the single full-time ECD faculty member, sought opportunities to work with the ECD adjunct faculty because, “I had a real need to have some support, to know that there are people on your team.” During one recent academic year Chloe and the ECD adjunct faculty met over the course of two semesters as a “book club” to discuss the works of Lev Vygotsky and the impact of social constructivism on children’s learning. During the Mapleview conversion from a quarter to semester academic calendar, a process more fully described later in this chapter in the section on the milieu of the ECD program, Chloe and the ECD adjunct faculty met biweekly throughout a summer to deliberate about the revision of the ECD program curriculum.
Chloe and the ECD adjuncts had also met to discuss ECD class policies such as grading scales and late assignments, a process discussed in the section of this chapter describing program coherence. During all of these meetings Chloe said, "There was a lot of give and take. There were no arguments. We found common ground very easily."

Chloe and the other ECD faculty members interviewed in this study found the positive personal and professional relationships among the ECD faculty to be advantageous to the program. Jean Schmidt, one of the adjunct faculty, said, "We have lots of conversations about research, about writers, about who’s heard who."

Jean explained that at the time of the research at Mapleview, most of the ECD faculty had read Katz and Chard’s *Engaging children’s minds: The project approach* (1989) in preparation for a weeklong conference on The Project Approach at the University of Illinois during the upcoming summer. Jean explained, “We strongly connect with each other, by ones and twos we all network.” Chloe recognized the importance of the positive personal and professional relationships among ECD faculty. She believed:

> Our program could be a model because our adjuncts come together in a way that other programs don’t. To talk to each other and know each other and celebrate. And we really do try to celebrate each other in the program and students.

Chloe concluded one of the reasons the ECD faculty group at Mapleview worked so well together was because “we all basically have the same concern. And I think that concern is that programs [for young children] in our counties need to be better. That early childhood professionals need training and good education.”
Part-time ECD faculty perceived a number of specific challenges associated with being an adjunct faculty member. Most of the ECD adjunct faculty worked during the day, which meant the courses they taught could be offered only in the late afternoon or evening. Jean Schmidt, an adjunct ECD faculty member who had taught the practicum course, explained she no longer taught practicum because “I finally sat down and figured up all the hours I was spending, and it was amazing!” Jean believed the number of hours necessary for adequate observation and consultation with both student teachers and supervising teachers could not be compensated adequately.

Adjunct ECD faculty mentioned other issues related to their part-time status. Some adjuncts spent their own money for course materials. One adjunct described teaching her course out of two big boxes because she didn’t have an office. Another ECD adjunct explained she didn’t have much extra time to spend at Mapleview because of other personal and professional responsibilities. One adjunct indicated she could only teach in the summer when her job responsibilities were lighter.

Adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview clearly identified with aspects of the program with which they had a professional knowledge base and experience. The balance between professional knowledge and experience, as reflected in the ECD faculty, was of high quality. Adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview had earned advanced degrees in early childhood education or a related field and had professional experience in the areas of the ECD program in which they were teaching. A professional early childhood cohort existed within the three-county area served by Mapleview Community College, and the ECD faculty were active members of that group. Chloe
recognized the difficulties associated with being the single early childhood professional at Mapleview and had used the vehicle of the local NAEYC affiliate to recruit adjunct faculty who shared her belief in quality, developmentally appropriate programs of early education and care for young children. Specific characteristics related to the ECD faculty's beliefs about teaching and learning are described and discussed in the next section of this chapter.

**The ECD Faculty Beliefs About Teaching and Learning**

In their research on exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified two characteristics of quality and coherence related to faculty beliefs about teaching and learning: (a) faculty possessed clear conceptions of teaching and learning, and (b) programs linked with research and development in teacher education. Within the ECD program of prekindergarten teacher education at Mapleview Community College, the faculty clearly identified constructivism as the conceptual framework for teaching and learning as it related to both community college students and young children. Unlike the programs of elementary teacher education studied by Howey and Zimpher (1989), the Mapleview ECD faculty expressed a clear linkage with research and development in the field of early childhood education, rather than research and development in teacher education.

**ECD faculty’s conception of teaching and learning.** The ECD faculty interviewed in this study identified constructivism as their conception of teaching and learning for both ECD students and young children. Chloe explained constructivism was reflected in the Mapleview Community College belief “that active learning is the
best method, the best strategy to use.” Chloe believed “students always have to be involved in some way. I think active learning is important. I think individual differences have to be looked at.” Jean Schmidt, an ECD adjunct faculty member expanded upon the idea of the importance of the individual learner:

The real basic concept is that sacred respect for the individual. We try to instill that sacred respect for the child by modeling it in our relationships with our students. So that we’re respecting their opinions, we’re valuing their input, we’re listening. We’re responding to concerns. And then we’re trying to give some real hands-on examples both through fieldwork and through our classroom instruction about how you value that.

For ECD students at Mapleview, the development of conceptions of teaching and learning began in the Introduction to Early Childhood Development course as they studied maturationists, behaviorists and constructivists. Chloe explained, “And so that gives us a ground work for saying, ‘Who do you want to be?’ And, hopefully what we find is that sometimes you’re a behaviorist, sometimes you’re a maturationists, and most of the time you’re a constructivist.” Chloe believed students had a right to their individual beliefs regarding teaching and learning but hoped the ECD program would lead them to believe in constructivist approaches. Chloe said,

I can say our program is based on constructivism, but I think you still have the right to go away from this program as a behaviorist. I’m not saying that there’s only one way to do it. What I want you to do is to decide that the best way, because of what you believe about children and how they learn, the best way is the constructivist way.

Chloe reflected consistency with her beliefs regarding constructivism as a vehicle for teaching and learning when she further explained how she believed students learned constructivism as a conceptual framework. Chloe explained:
It's kind of trying to find out where they are and then leading them to a way that would allow them to allow children to be active learners, to discover, to say that I'm going to let you construct your own learning, your own knowledge.

Chloe indicated her understandings of constructivism were initially based on the work of Jean Piaget. In the past few years, however, she has "added Vygotsky to that because it brings the teacher back in." As explained earlier in this section, many of the ECD faculty had formed a book club during a recent school year to read and discuss Vygotsky's theory and its influence on teaching and learning.

Jayne Winn, and ECD adjunct faculty member, also related constructivist beliefs regarding teaching and learning. Jayne said, "I think there's a strong awareness of appropriate teaching and awareness of the learning strategies of adults as well as children." Jayne believed, "It's very important to vary your strategies, to have hands-on activities, and to recognize that sitting and listening and taking notes for long periods of time, that's not the way adults learn best, either." Jean Schmidt, one of the adjunct ECD faculty members, summarized her beliefs regarding teaching and learning as, "We're aimed at making a whole teacher, a life-long teacher, a learning individual."

**Faculty link with research and development in early childhood education.**

As discussed in Chapter Two, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has issued two statements of developmentally appropriate practice for young children (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Developmentally appropriate practices in programs for young children, as described in the latest statement (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), consist of practices that are age appropriate,
individually appropriate, and appropriate to the social and cultural contexts of children.

The NAEYC statement of developmentally appropriate practice (1997) was the foundation for beliefs regarding teaching, learning, and young children within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. Students read the statement in their first course, Introduction to Early Childhood Development. Chloe explained the integration of developmentally appropriate practices in the ECD program: “We don’t teach an academic program. We teach more a play-based program. We definitely teach developmentally appropriate planning, meeting children’s needs, child-centered, teacher/child directed, facilitation.”

Developmentally appropriate practice, as a belief system for teaching and learning for young children, was clearly identified by adjunct faculty members as the foundation for the ECD program at Mapleview. Jayne, one of the adjunct ECD faculty members, described developmentally appropriate practices as “permeating everything that is done there [the Mapleview ECD program]. It’s reflected in the students and the work that they do.” Jean, another ECD adjunct faculty member, suggested, “I suppose we would have taken Bredekamp’s work in developmentally appropriate practice as our Bible, and our real basis for informing whatever it is that we do.”

The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College possessed a clear conception of teaching and learning. The entire ECD faculty in this study identified constructivism as the basis for teaching and learning for both ECD students and young
children. The ECD faculty in this study expressed strong linkages with research and development, not in the area of teacher education as found in the Howey and Zimpher (1989) study, but in the field of early childhood education. The ECD faculty especially pointed out their knowledge and understanding of the NAEYC statement (1997) on developmentally appropriate practices and the integration of this statement into their teaching.

The ECD faculty interviewed in this study expressed particular interest in supporting student learning and interacting with students, both in class and outside of the classroom. Supporting learning and positive interactions with students are both important components of the role faculty in a community college. These aspects of ECD faculty are described and discussed in the following sections.

**ECD Faculty Support of Student Learning**

Multiple indicators of ECD faculty support for student learning were evident at Mapleview Community College. The dedicated ECD classroom, the Campus Childcare Center and the ECD Resource Center located in the campus library were all a part of the ECD program milieu, which is discussed later in this chapter. Each of the ECD faculty members interviewed in this study viewed the concept of support of student learning in individual ways based on their individual perceptions of their roles as they related to students.

Chloe Evans, the ECD full-time faculty member, perceived support of student learning through learning resources available on campus. Chloe explained one of the ways in which she supported student learning was by referring students to the...
Mapleview Community College Student Learning Center which offered a variety of learning assistance services including learning style inventories and information regarding learning strategies. Chloe indicated the entire Mapleview campus was encouraged by the administration to “involve students more in their own learning. And that’s what we’ve really tried to do.” Chloe explained that not all ECD students were comfortable with an active role. “Some of them just don’t want to be responsible for themselves. And they certainly don’t want to be responsible for their own learning.” Chloe said this was not a situation unique to ECD students and many Mapleview faculty were struggling with this issue campus wide. Chloe explained a number of professional development activities for Mapleview faculty had been scheduled during the current academic year related to this issue.

Jayne Winn, an adjunct ECD faculty member, viewed herself as supporting student learning through her role as center director of a practicum site. Jayne believed it was important that she “make sure that they [the ECD student teachers] have opportunities to do all the things that they need to do as a part of their practicum.” Jayne related midterm evaluations were particularly important for ECD practicum students and “we take that very seriously, to see if everything is being covered that needs to be covered or if there is any area that needs improvement. We address that immediately and provide some strategies and opportunities for the students to do that.”

Jean Schmidt, another adjunct ECD faculty member, perceived a number of ways in which she supported student learning. Jean believed she was an important role model for student learning. “I can demonstrate caring about that and I can
demonstrate a seeking of knowledge myself. I can bring an enthusiasm to my course that says, "Yes! This is the most important stuff in the entire world! We have to know about that!" Jean also supported student learning by giving students books to build their professional libraries. Jean related:

I try to support their learning by gaining new knowledge myself, by not presenting the same old stuff, year after year. By being on the lookout for new ways, effective teaching tools, new pieces of information. I've just finished reading Leo Lionni's autobiography [Between worlds: the autobiography of Leo Lionni, 1997], and then Vivian Paley has written The girl with the brown crayon [1997]. And, I haven't read that yet, but I have it. In Paley's class they used Lionni's books as a resource all year. And, I have enough of Lionni's books that each student [in the Language Development class] can have one of those books to keep. One of my aims is for them to build a professional library. I can support that piece of learning by providing some little, tiny building blocks in their professional library.

Jean also offered students some unique opportunities to interact with people involved in the development of children's books. Jean related that during the previous semester she had been teaching the ECD Language Development course. One of the students in the class mentioned a particular illustrator of children's books was going to be at a bookstore in a nearby mall. Jean told her class that illustrator was a friend of hers and she subsequently invited her to come and interact with the students in the Language Development class. Jean concluded she believed she supported student learning:

By caring about them as people. By hearing what they have to say. It's important. By being enthusiastic about what they produce. Whether it's a book about their family or a story that they've written. I can beat the drum for them, and let them know that they have a real important contribution to make.

ECD faculty at Mapleview supported student learning through a variety of methods. Chloe, the full-time ECD faculty member, viewed herself as supporting
student learning primarily through campus resources for students. Jayne, an adjunct faculty member, viewed herself as supporting learning through her role as director of a practicum site. Jean, another adjunct faculty member, believed she supported learning in her Language Development course by helping students build a professional library, introducing them to professionals in the field, seeking and utilizing current knowledge in the field, and enthusiastically supporting individual student’s efforts. The ECD faculty also described their interactions with students in unique and individual ways.

**ECD faculty interactions with students.** The entire ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College interviewed in this study believed faculty interactions with students to be important. Chloe mentioned she always tried to be in the classroom before class to have informal conversations with her students. She acknowledged that, due to other professional commitments, coming early to class “doesn’t always work, but that’s a good time to hear what’s going on.” Chloe described her interactions with ECD students as being “the consultant” or “the facilitator.” In her consultant/facilitator role, Chloe guided students to appropriate campus and community resources and used questioning techniques to facilitate learning. Chloe related that some of her interactions with ECD students were challenging. She is the person ECD students sought when they wanted to dispute grades or the classroom policies and procedures of ECD faculty members. Chloe described those interactions as “hard.”
Jayne perceived her interactions with ECD students through her role as director of a center used as a practicum site. Jayne said when the ECD students come to the center for practicum, they're considered a member of the teaching team. They attend all teacher meetings, they attend in-services, and they attend the lunches we have together. Every day is an opportunity to have an exchange of ideas. They participate in parent/teacher conferences, parent meetings, any special events or programs. They just immediately become a part of the school.

Jean, the other adjunct ECD faculty member interviewed in this study, related, “I have watched faculty interact with students. There are warm, personable relationships in which there is a real genuine appreciation for those personalities! A real genuine response [that includes] laughs, and smiles, and hugs!” Jean believed modeling to be an important vehicle for teaching interaction techniques. “We’re [the ECD faculty] going to have to show respect and value in order to teach respect and value for the children they’re going to be working with.”

Jean also believed that sometimes faculty interactions with students could be detrimental. Jean explained she perceived ECD faculty members to be too quick to acquiesce to students’ personal problems when these life challenges interfered with class attendance and/or completion of course work. Jean related that she and other ECD faculty members often “go to bat” for students when they should be calling the student “to accountability when that’s the time to call them to accountability” and “understanding when understanding is called for.” Jean smiled as she related the ECD faculty had “begun to ask ourselves, how many times can one’s grandmother die?” Jean believed she had been “probably more conciliatory than is always good for their
learning base” and she hoped to “tighten up a little bit.” She concluded, “I want to call them to accountability while still being caring about who they are.”

The ECD faculty believed positive interactions with students to be an important aspect of their professional roles as ECD faculty. While some of the faculty/student interactions could be challenging, most faculty perceived positive interactions with students as providing the emotional support necessary for learning. The ECD faculty also expressed multiple indicators of professional commitment to early childhood education. These characteristics of faculty commitment to the profession are described in the following section.

**The ECD Faculty’s Commitment to the Profession**

Chloe and the other ECD faculty at Mapleview described exemplary commitment to the early childhood profession. Chloe was awarded a special certificate by a local chapter of a national service organization for her activities within the local early childhood community. Chloe viewed herself as an advocate for young children and actively sought ways to advance professional development and program quality in the early childhood community within the Mapleview Community College service area. She explained she often led workshops for childcare centers for small stipends or volunteered her time for professional development activities in local programs of education and care for young children. Chloe believed there were multiple benefits to becoming involved with local childcare programs. She explained, “it’s good for me because, I really need to be in the field more.” Chloe also believed her community outreach helped to build the ECD program at Mapleview because, “I
become visible in their center. We’re friends. They see me.” Chloe also used her professional outreach opportunities in local childcare programs to “push” the AAEYC, the local National Association for the Education of Young Children affiliate. Chloe recalled, “I tell them that’s a great source for professional development. Especially the fall conference.”

The adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview also expressed an extraordinary commitment to the early childhood profession. Jayne Winn described her commitment as “absolute, total, and complete.” During her career as an early childhood professional, Jayne said she had led “hundreds and hundreds” of workshops, many of them for no pay. She said, “when someone asks me I usually check my calendar first. That’s more important than whether I get paid or not.” Jayne explained she believed this to be “typical” of early childhood professionals:

They do it. It’s not only a matter of not being paid, it’s their time. We’ll give weekends or evenings or days. It’s just being so committed and so understanding of the importance of early childhood education and what a difference it can make in the lives of children. I just think it’s phenomenal. I really do.

Jayne explained the entire ECD faculty at Mapleview demonstrated this commitment to the profession. She said:

They do the same things that I said I did. Giving freely of their time and expertise. By the very nature of the people who are drawn to the field, there is a nurturing aspect where you want to nurture not only children, but your colleagues and others around you.”

Members of the ECD faculty were committed to all aspects of professional development in the field of early childhood education. Chloe frequently sought and used grants to fund professional development activities both within the local
community and the ECD program. Chloe’s grant writing activities are described in the following section.

**Grantwriting.** Since coming to Mapleview, Chloe had successfully sought and utilized multiple types of grants to fund activities related to quality for both the ECD program at Mapleview Community College as well as local programs of early education and care for young children. Grants authored by Chloe and funded by a variety of local and state sources had been used to remodel the Campus Childcare Center, offer a summer school age childcare program on campus, purchase equipment for the Campus Childcare Center playground, and develop an extensive collection of prop boxes for ECD students and community use.

Chloe had also assisted other local early childhood professionals in writing grant proposals. She related one instance when a student in the ECD Introduction course approached her for advice in applying for a state grant for new materials and equipment. This ECD student was a director who was interested in increasing the quality of her program of early education and care. Chloe assisted this student in writing a grant for new equipment and guided her to request additional funds if there was grant money remaining. Chloe described how she used this student’s grantwriting experience to lead a discussion in the ECD Introduction class related to quality programs for young children. She asked her class “How do you think that equipment in this classroom will make a difference? Will adding equipment to a classroom make it a better place?” After a lively discussion the students in the class determined the answer was “No, not unless the teachers knew what to do with the equipment.” After
class Chloe approached the ECD student who was working on the grant application and asked her what she had found from that discussion. The student replied, “How am I going to make a change in my teachers?” Chloe responded by asking her how she believed her teachers could change. The student answered, “I guess I do it through training.” Chloe suggested the student add a request for tuition for ECD courses at Mapleview into her grant application. After the grant was funded, nine staff members from this childcare center took an ECD course at Mapleview together, five of them for credit. Chloe was committed to professional development for all early childhood professionals, including herself. Chloe’s ongoing professional development is described in the next section.

Professional development. Chloe actively sought ways to increase her personal professional development. She described herself as “a real NAEYC person. I think that the most valuable parts of my education come from the national conference.” Chloe was a part of a professional cohort of five or six early childhood educators, from both the local community and other nearby areas, who frequently attended professional development activities, such as the NAEYC national conference, together. Chloe described the activities of this professional cohort group as “really fun because we would sit up late at night and talk about what are the buzzwords this year.” Chloe believed the national NAYC conference offered her the opportunity to learn the most up-to-date information. She said, “Everything there is new. I can’t go take a class right now and find that stuff. NAEYC provides that.”
Chloe’s on-going professional development activities were clearly recognized by the other ECD faculty members. Jayne Winn, one of the ECD adjunct faculty members, described Chloe as the professional who:

Always seems to know, before anyone else, what’s new or what’s coming up out there. So I think she’s very much aware of what’s new in early childhood education and looks to see how it can be used appropriately at Mapleview. So, I think there’s a constant self-examination and willingness and desire to improve.

The ECD faculty at Mapleview was involved in many educational organizations at the local, state, and national levels. This was one of many vehicles Chloe utilized to help the ECD faculty work together.

**How the ECD Faculty Worked Together**

Chloe and the other ECD faculty member actively sought both formal and informal ways to work together. Chloe explained that during the Mapleview Community College yearly in-service meeting for adjunct faculty, she always planned a dinner meeting for the ECD faculty. The entire ECD faculty interviewed in this study mentioned the small size of the ECD program was advantageous to communication and working together. Chloe explained, “you have lots of opportunities to communicate.” Adjunct ECD faculty members called Chloe when they had questions related to their teaching. Chloe said, “they feel like the door’s open, that they can ask, which I always think is good.” Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member, related, “there are many opportunities to work together in teams, or in small groups.” Jean, another adjunct ECD faculty member, said, “we brainstorm together as an outgrowth of being together.”
Chloe believed the ECD faculty would like additional opportunities for working together, but time was an ever-present barrier. Jean wished the ECD faculty had more opportunities to meet as a group but recognized these meetings would place more work on Chloe's shoulders, which she described as "overloaded". The ECD faculty interviewed in this study concurred that they would like to participate in another series of summer meetings similar to those held to develop the consistent, coherent ECD class policies and syllabi described later in this chapter. They all indicated an interest in sharing successful college teaching techniques at future ECD faculty meetings. Chloe indicated she was working on developing such a meeting schedule because, "that would be a good thing for us to do."

**The Faculty: Summary**

The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College expressed an extraordinary commitment to the early childhood profession. This commitment was demonstrated by the countless hours the faculty had spent volunteering in workshops and other activities related to professional development in the field of early childhood education, including the significant number of hours they all willingly spent being interviewed for this research. One of the ways Chloe expressed her professional commitment was by securing a series of grants to improve both the quality of the ECD program as well as the quality of care and education for young children in the local community. The ECD faculty utilized both formal and informal opportunities to work together, in spite of time constraints from personal and professional commitments.
The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College demonstrated all of the characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. Like the faculty researched by Howey and Zimpher (1989), the ECD faculty clearly identified with distinctive aspects of the program. All ECD faculty members taught courses in areas in which they had advanced degrees as well a professional experience. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study to possess a clear conception of teaching and learning. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College distinctly identified constructivism and developmentally appropriate practices as the conceptual framework for teaching both adults and young children. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study linked with research and development in the field of teacher education. The ECD faculty at Mapleview, however, clearly linked with research and development in the field of early childhood education, primarily through the publications and activities of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

In this section the role of the ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College was explained and characteristics of quality and coherence related to the ECD faculty were described. In the following section important aspects of the milieu, the physical and social environment in which the ECD program existed, are examined.

The Milieu

Schwab (1978) pointed out the importance of the commonplace of the milieu in curriculum development and noted multiple contexts may impact one another as
well as the development of the curriculum. These contexts can include: the school, the classroom, the students' interpersonal relationships with one another, the interpersonal relationships of adults, the organizational structures of the school and classroom, "the family, the community, the particular groupings of religious, class or ethnic genus" (Schwab, 1978, p. 367). In this section, the milieu of Mapleview Community College's prekindergarten program of teacher education is examined to identify the cultural and/or environmental contexts that contributed to understanding the Mapleview Community College Early Childhood Development program.

The milieu of Mapleview Community College's prekindergarten program of teacher education included multiple contexts impacting each another as well as the development of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program curriculum. The institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College and specific aspects of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program itself were also important areas of the milieu identified in this study. Each of these aspects of the milieu of the prekindergarten program of early childhood teacher education at Mapleview Community College is described and discussed in the following sections.

**The Institutional Milieu of Mapleview Community College**

Four important aspects of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College influenced the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program of prekindergarten teacher education. The first was the general physical and administrative composition of the college. The second was Mapleview Community College's change from a quarter schedule of classes to a semester academic calendar.
The third was the integration of the Mapleviw Community College’s statement entitled “Core Values” into the ECD curriculum. The fourth aspect of the institutional milieu was the statement of the ECD program’s goals. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the goals of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study to be clear and reasonable. Multiple external standards were utilized to establish clear, reasonable, and professional goals for the ECD program at Mapleviw Community College. Each of these relevant aspects of the institutional milieu at Mapleviw Community College is described below.

**The general physical and administrative composition of Mapleviw Community College.** The Mapleviw Community College catalog, other documents gathered at the college, relevant web pages concerning Mapleviw Community College, interviews, and observations were used to garner information concerning the general physical and administrative composition of the college. Mapleviw Community College was established in the early 1970s as a public, state-supported, two-year institution of higher education. At the time of its charter by the Ohio Board of Regents, approximately 300 students were enrolled in the college. By 1998, Mapleviw Community College enrolled over 3,000 students. The 130-acre Mapleviw Community College campus included large expanses of well-kept lawns, a pond, and mature trees. The atmosphere was spacious and quiet.

Three large interconnected buildings formed the main campus. These three buildings housed classrooms, college administrative offices, faculty offices, the bookstore, the library, the Campus Childcare Center, a convocation
center/gymnasium, a cafeteria, and one large lecture hall/theater. The buildings were clean and in excellent condition. The architectural style was modern with a light brick alfresco, cinder block interior walls, and exterior expanses of glass meeting at sharp angles. Two of the buildings were designed with classrooms around the perimeter of the buildings with an interior core of rooms around a center corridor. The interior rooms contained faculty offices, and additional classrooms. An office of Student Services was located at the main entrance to the campus offering information regarding admissions, academic advising, career development, disability services, personal counseling, and financial aid. Mapleview students also had the opportunity to utilize the facilities at the Tutoring Center, which offered free individual tutoring and a computer lab.

A brochure extolling Mapleview Community College as a great choice for higher education mentioned quality, price, and transferability as the primary reasons for student to choose Mapleview. The Mapleview Community College brochure broadly described two types of programs at the college. The first were technical preparation programs, such as Early Childhood Development, which were designed to lead to employment in a selected career field. Mapleview offered five associate degrees in areas of technical training and professional development. All technical programs of study at Mapleview had advisory committees. The second type of program at Mapleview was the university transfer program, which was designed to meet all or part of the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. The university transfer programs consisted primarily of general education courses. According to the
college catalog, Mapleview was approved by the Ohio Board of Regents and accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Mapleview was an open-enrollment institution.

Mapleview Community College was located in a predominantly rural area of the state comprised of small communities and farmland. According to data submitted to Ohio Board of Regents, Mapleview was established to serve a three-county area with a population of fewer than 200,000. There were no dominant employers or technologies in Mapleview's three-county service area. Mapleview maintained a satellite campus, approximately thirty miles from the main campus, in one of the adjacent service-area counties.

Mapleview's Mission Statement, as submitted to the Ohio Board of Regents, expressed the institution's commitment to serving as the single site for higher education in a three-county area. The college was committed to student learning, helping individuals achieve their potential, and meeting students' needs. The composition of the Board of Trustees of Mapleview Community College evenly represented the three-county area of service, according to an analysis of trustee's home communities printed in the college catalog. 43 full-time faculty and 150 part-time faculty were listed on the Mapleview web pages in 1998.

Chloe Evans, the single full-time Early Childhood Development (ECD) program faculty member, described a unique, interdisciplinary divisional structure at Mapleview based upon interrelated academic disciplines. Division One included engineering, Division Two encompassed business and math, while Division Three
consisted of Early Childhood Development, human services, nursing, and academic disciplines supporting these programs such as psychology and sociology. This governance structure was established after Mapleview’s major reorganization change from a quarter to semester system of academic scheduling. This change from quarters to semesters is the aspect of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College described in the next section.

The change from quarters to semesters. In 1994 Mapleview Community College changed from a quarterly to a semester academic calendar. The administration of the college had two reasons for the altering the academic calendar: (a) a semester of 15 weeks would offer students a longer period of time to learn, and (b) administrative costs to the college would be reduced by reducing registration from four or five to three times a year. Chloe Evans, the single full-time Early Childhood Development (ECD) faculty member at Mapleview, had taught at the college for two years when the conversion occurred. The change in academic calendar systems offered Chloe and a small group of part-time ECD faculty members an opportunity to rewrite the entire program of prekindergarten teacher education. Chloe described this change process as “whopping because we had to lump things together and figure out a new way of doing things.” Chloe utilized this quarter to semester conversion as an opportunity for curriculum revision to prepare the ECD program for prekindergarten approval from the State of Ohio Department of Education.

The first resource Chloe consulted to initiate the curriculum revisions mandated by the change from quarters to semesters was the National Association for
the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement entitled Guidelines for early childhood education programs in associate degree granting institutions (NAEYC, 1985). These guidelines were adopted by NAEYC in 1985 to establish standards for associate degree programs within the field of early childhood education. The NAEYC guidelines (1985) assumed: (a) the process of teacher education is developmental, (b) programs of teacher education would adapt the basic guidelines to meet student and community needs, and (c) learning is life long. The two stated goals of the standards were: (a) to enable graduates of associate degree programs in the field of early childhood education to enter the field as early childhood professionals, and (b) to prepare students to continue education at a baccalaureate institution. The program objectives and standards contained in the NAEYC guidelines (1985) were divided into nine components as summarized in Table 4.1.

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<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Instructional Methods</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Quality field experiences</td>
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<td>Professional Studies</td>
<td>Offer models of teaching</td>
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<td>Field Experiences</td>
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<td>Faculty Qualifications</td>
<td>Experienced in ECE</td>
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<td>Professionally skilled</td>
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<td>Academic credentials in ECE</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
<td>Model professional ethics</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Model professional behavior</td>
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<td>Cultural Diversity</td>
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<td>of teacher education</td>
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<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Enable student success</td>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding of diversity</td>
<td>Focus on quality</td>
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<td>Meets needs of pre-service</td>
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<td>and in-service students</td>
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<td>Basis of program revision</td>
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<th>Administrative Structure</th>
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<td>Identifies ECE as a program</td>
<td>Focus on quality</td>
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<td>Involvement in institutional processes</td>
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<td>Basis of program revision</td>
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Table 4.1: NAEYC (1985) Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Program in Associate Degree granting Institutions
Chloe related she used these NAEYC (1985) standards as documentation of one of the learned societies informing the ECD program as required in the Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten program approval process.

Using the NAEYC associate degree program standards (NAEYC, 1985) and the State of Ohio Teacher Education and Licensure Standards for Prekindergarten Associate Programs, Chloe invited a group of six or seven Early Childhood Development (ECD) part-time faculty members to meet with her to deliberate about the ECD curriculum changes every week to two weeks throughout a summer. Chloe explained, “I didn’t want to make those semester conversion decisions alone.” She described the ECD part-time faculty as “really experts in the courses that they teach.” and recalled:

We talked about what should classroom policies look like? What should the curriculum look like? Because I am the only person, sometimes it doesn’t feel good to make all the decisions by myself. And I found that getting the adjuncts together was wonderful. So nice to feel that support and to know that there are people on your team.

These early childhood professionals engaged in a process of curriculum development that included a process of group deliberation in which problems were identified and alternatives examined. Jean Schmidt, one of the ECD part-time faculty members, related, “all the teachers met together to say, ‘What do we want to do?’ ‘What have we done well?’ ‘How does this need to be restructured?’” Part-time faculty members received a small stipend for participating in the curriculum group meetings. Part-time faculty members who wrote a course syllabus received additional compensation.
There were a number of major issues faced by the ECD curriculum deliberation group. First, under the quarter academic calendar, the Early Childhood Development program had offered five individual courses related to curriculum development for young children: (a) art, (b) play, (c) music and movement, (d) math and science, and (e) social studies. Chloe explained, “Well, we couldn’t have five courses on semesters. We had to clump them together in some way.” Chloe indicated she determined the manner in which these courses could be synthesized:

I chose to clump them by cognitive development and creativity. So we have a Cognitive Development class that’s a four-hour course. Then we have a Creativity class in early childhood that is a four-hour course. Three hours of class work then two hours a week in the child-care center that is field experience, clinical experience.

Integrating field and laboratory experiences into the revised ECD program was the second major issue of the quarter to semester conversion. Chloe said, “We gave up three practicums and had one.” Chloe explained the single practicum was one of the changes that didn’t work in the revised ECD semester program curriculum. Chloe related, “not all the decisions that we made have turned out to be the best way to do it. So, we’ve made those changes. Every year we’ve gone to the [Mapleview Community College] curriculum committee with something.”

The administration of Mapleview had mandated all courses within the new semester system be three credit hours and, initially, all of the ECD courses were three semester hours. Chloe explained, however, she and the other part-time ECD faculty members quickly determined there was not enough opportunity for “hands-on” experiences for students in the newly revised ECD semester curriculum. Field-based
and clinical-based experiences were added, through the addition of a one-credit-hour field experience, to the Creative Activities course, the Cognitive Development course, and the Language and Literacy course. These three courses all became four-credit hours soon after the quarter to semester change. Students enrolled in the ECD courses with the one-credit hour field experience had to complete thirty clock hours of field experience for the additional one semester of credit. Chloe explained the college curriculum committee approved the additional one-credit hour for these courses to enable the ECD program to meet the Ohio Department of Education Associate Prekindergarten Program requirements for supervised field experience hours.

The final issue of the quarter to semester conversion for the ECD program faculty was integrating the Ohio Department of Education Associate Prekindergarten Program requirements into the revised ECD program. Chloe had been in contact with the Ohio Department of Education and had been advised to complete the quarter to semester conversion before applying for program approval. Chloe stated, “And so, Pre-K would have a big impact on program change, also.” The ECD faculty reviewed the State of Ohio Department of Education guidelines for associate degree programs and determined the revised ECD program met all of the Ohio Department of Education requirements except for a required course related to young children with special needs. Such a class existed, but had been an elective course under the quarter system. To comply with Ohio Department of Education requirements, the ECD special needs class became a required course under the new semester program. Chloe
concluded, "So, those things in connection with each other, the semester conversion and then the Pre-K application seemed to get us in pretty good shape."

The change from a quarter to semester academic calendar was an important aspect of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College because it resulted in a complete revision of the ECD associate degree program of teacher education. The third aspect of the institutional milieu, the integration of the Mapleview Community College statement of "Core Values" into the ECE program, is described in the following section.

The integration of Mapleview’s "Core Values" into the ECD curriculum.

The third significant aspect of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College was the integration of the Mapleview Community College statement of "Core Values" into the ECD curriculum. The Mapleview catalog described the Core Values as:

A set of principles which guide Mapleview Community College in creating its educational programs and environments. They will be reflected in every aspect of the College. Students' educational experiences will incorporate the core values at all levels, so that a student who completes a degree program at Mapleview Community College will not only have been introduced to each value, but will have had them reinforced and refined at every opportunity.

The Core Values of Mapleview Community College are summarized in Table 4.2.
Communication
Listening, speaking, and writing for understanding

Ethics
Decisions and behaviors based on values

Critical Thinking
Application of clarity, relevance, analysis, organization, recognition, evaluation, accuracy, depth, and breadth to thought

Human Diversity
The coexistence of many cultures in society while overcoming racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination

Inquiry/Respect for Learning
Learn and apply information gathering processes

Interpersonal Skills/Teamwork
Personal effectiveness when interacting with others

Table 4.2: Mapleview Community College’s Core Values

Jean Schmidt, one of the ECD faculty members, described the impact of Mapleview’s Core Values on the ECD curriculum deliberations. Jean explained:

We all met as they were changing courses. And we tried to assign each of the Mapleview Core Values. Then we tried to decide which of those were in our courses. So that we, indeed, were teaching all of that, or were addressing all of those Core Values.

Chloe related “across the college people haven’t just jumped in and welcomed the Core Values”, but Chloe believed, “our program’s been easy because diversity, critical thinking, interpersonal relations, those kinds of things, those are things that we just do.”

ECD program goals. The fourth significant aspect of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College was the ECD program goals. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the goals of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study 207
to be clear, reasonable, and professional. The goals of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College were clear and professional. The ECD program goals included knowledge, skills, attitudes and values related to (a) general education, (b) planning, implementing and evaluating developmentally appropriate curriculum, (c) practical experiences in early childhood education in a variety of settings, (d) guidance and discipline of young children, (e) historical and social foundations of early childhood education, (f) inclusion, (g) community resources, (h) cultural diversity and anti-bias practices, and (i) life-long professional growth.

Multiple external standards had been utilized to develop the ECD program goals including the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Human Resources, and NAEYC’s Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Program in Associate Degree Granting Institutions (1985). In addition to those standards, Chloe explained she had also consulted the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards for Programs in Early Childhood Education (NAEYC, 1994) even though NCATE does not accredit associate degree programs of teacher education.

The general physical and administrative composition of Mapleview Community College, the change from a quarterly to semester academic calendar, the integration of Mapleview’s statement of Core Values, and the clear, reasonable, and professional ECD program goals were four significant aspects of the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College shaping the ECD program. Specific aspects of the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program itself also influenced the
ECD curriculum. These aspects of the milieu of the ECD program itself are detailed in the following section.

The Milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the quality programs of elementary teacher education they researched all had adequate resources including materials and laboratories. Three important features of the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College demonstrated the availability of more than adequate materials and laboratories. These features included: (a) the dedicated Early Childhood Development classroom, (b) the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center, and (c) the Early Childhood Development Resource Center located in the Mapleview Community College library. Howey and Zimpher (1989) also found the exemplary programs in their study had clear curriculum articulation with the schools. Within the service area of the ECD program at Mapleview, a variety of community programs of education and care for young children were used for practicum sites. Curriculum articulation between these programs of early education and care and the ECD program was in a process of growth and development. Each of these aspects of the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program is detailed in the following sections.

The dedicated Early Childhood Development classroom. The first important aspect of the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College was the classroom specifically dedicated to the ECD program. The dedicated Early Childhood Development classroom and the Mapleview
Campus Childcare Center were located in the same building as Chloe’s office, just a short walk down the hall. Both rooms were in the same short corridor across from one another. The dedicated Early Childhood Development classroom was on the interior side of a short corridor and had no windows. Many elements in the classroom were those of the typical college classroom. Seven tables arranged in the shape of a “U” faced a long green chalkboard and a table with a traditional black college lectern sitting on top. A projector screen was hung diagonally from one corner of the ceiling and a black overhead projector was poised on a beige cart. A large two-door metal cabinet stood in the corner under the projection screen. The cinderblock walls were painted light beige and darker beige vinyl tiles covered the floor.

Many environmental factors indicated this was a dedicated Early Childhood Development classroom. On the wall outside the classroom door was a poster and sign-up sheet inviting Early Childhood Development students to a banquet being hosted by the Area Association for the Education of Young Children. Twenty students had signed up for the $7.00 dinner. Inside the classroom the walls were decorated with poster displays of student work. Display titles included: Qualities of a Successful Early Childhood Teacher; The Integrated Domains of Child Development; So What’s Your Curriculum?; Infants; Children Develop and Learn Best Where They Feel Safe and Valued; and Developmentally Appropriate Practices. Most of the displays included photographs of children.

Chloe Evans, the full-time ECD faculty member, explained she had developed opportunities during the past academic year for the Early Childhood Development
students to visually document their learning. Chloe showed me some of the ECD students’ documentation panels. All of these large, foam board panels displayed photographs of young children engaged in learning activities as well as written documentation of specific aspects of teaching and learning in early childhood education. Chloe commented the Early Childhood Development program supplied the camera and film processing for the ECD students to use in the development of their documentation. When film processing was necessary, it was Chloe who dropped off the film and later picked up the processed photographs for the students to use in their documentation panels.

On a wall directly opposite the door to the dedicated ECD classroom was a large bulletin board with the heading “ECD NEWSBREAK”. An eighteen-inch high colored cutout of the children’s literature character Arthur was in the lower right-hand corner of this bulletin board. Newspaper clippings were matted on red construction paper. Newspaper article topics included state, local, and national stories related to professional issues in early childhood education. For example, one story related information about keeping adults, children and the environment clean in group settings. Another article described Chloe’s recent award as a Woman of Excellence by a local community organization.

A second bulletin board, to the right of the chalkboard in the front of the room, had a large cutout of the Snoopy cartoon character wearing a purple sweater and holding a banner that said, “ECD COLLEGE CLUB”. This bulletin board had a copy of a green flyer with information about the ECD College Club for the 1997-1998
Two meetings of the ECD Club were scheduled each semester. The flyer related the ECD College Club was affiliated with the Area Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC) and the club members were “dedicated to improving the quality of care and education provided to young children.”

Membership fees, which include membership in the ECD college club, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC), and the local Area Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC), were $25.00 per year. Chloe mentioned the local Area Association for the Education of Young Children had only recently become interested in the Early Childhood Development students as members of the organization.

At an AAEYC fall conference a few years previously, Chloe had networked with AAEYC members who had indicated their interest in associating Mapleview’s ECD club with the local NAEYC affiliate. The AAEYC members were concerned about how the integration of the AAEYC and the ECD Club could be accomplished. They found a number of AAEYC activities lent themselves to student participation. Chloe described some examples of how Early Childhood Development students had participated in AAEYC activities during the past school year. Approximately ten ECD Club members helped with decorations, door signs, and served as room facilitators at the AAEYC annual Fall Conference. The registration fee was waived for those students who chose to assist with the AAEYC Fall Conference. Mapleview Community College hosted the AAEYC annual spring banquet and ECD Club
students prepared the decorations. Many of the ECD students were also observed carrying canvas tote bags to ECD classes with the AAEYC logo. In describing her goals for the ECD Club affiliations with the local professional affiliate organization Chloe said, "We try really hard to let them see there's a big world that we want them to be involved in, and I think they see that I'm a part of that."

A large green folder was opened and pinned to the ECD Club bulletin board. Two pages of sign-up sheets for ECD Club committees were pinned to the green folder. These sign-up sheets indicated participation in club activities. Volunteers were listed for: (a) the AAEYC Fall Conference Committee, whose activities were described above; (b) the Community Service Committee, who led a toy collection in November for distribution to family child care providers, child care centers, and the Salvation Army in December; and (c) the Week of the Young Child Committee, who worked with AAEYC to plan activities for Mapleview Community College to join in the celebration of the Week of the Young Child, a national activity promoted by NAEYC. On the sign-up sheet neither the Club Charter Committee or Hospitality Committee had volunteers. The Fund Raising Committee had one volunteer. The ten total volunteers who had volunteered for all of the ECD Club committees included the four officers of the ECD Club.

In addition to ECD Club information, the dedicated classroom contained a number of learning resources for the ECD students to utilize during particular ECD classes as well as outside of class times. The ECD dedicated classroom was one of the classrooms on campus described by Chloe as a "smart classroom". In 1997 the room
had been equipped with a computer station including an IBM computer, CD ROM drive, printer, and Internet access. The funding for this and other "smart classrooms" at Mapleview had been through an Ohio Board of Regents technology grant.

A double sink in the dedicated classroom was flanked by low shelves containing many different types of supplies for constructing learning materials for young children. On another wall, under the displays, was a brochure rack with locally produced flyers and brochures related to early childhood education, as well as national brochures from NAEYC. In the far corner was a large coffeepot.

The dedicated ECD classroom was considered an important part of the learning environment for the ECD students. Chloe described the dedicated classroom as the ECD students' "home" because "they can use the computer there. They can study there. They bring their lunch in between classes and eat lunch. They really feel like they belong here." Chloe explained the room arrangement facilitated group processes in the ECD classes because "they face each other in that horseshoe." Chloe believed the dedicated ECD classroom contributed to the development of cohort groups among the ECD students:

Bringing them together, the classroom, the fact that we have a classroom, does that also. If they have a class in the morning and then they don't have one, it ends at 12:15 and then the next class is at 6 o'clock, you'll find students who'll spend the whole afternoon in the classroom. And that's kind of their spot. And that has brought, that's brought different groups of students together.

Chloe explained her beliefs of how some students were socialized into the cohort of ECD students in the program. Speaking from the perspective of an ECD student, Chloe related this perception of how a student might feel: "Where I maybe
am kind of on the outside, but by hanging around in this room, two days a week, I kind of get on the inside, if that's, if there's a clique they want to get into.” Chloe concluded, “I can't think of a class that just really excluded anybody.”

The dedicated ECD classroom was one relevant aspect the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College. As described later in this chapter in the section describing the ECD students, the dedicated ECD classroom was frequently used by ECD students as a meeting place before and after classes. A second important aspect of the milieu of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College was the Campus Childcare Center.

**Mapleview Community College Campus Childcare Center.** The Mapleview Community College Campus Childcare Center was located across the hall from the ECD dedicated classroom. In the hall corridor was a large observation window into the center, just to the left of the doorway. Chloe pointed out the observation window was one of the improvements made to the Campus Childcare Center through grant funding. The Mapleview Community College Campus Childcare Center room was large, bright, and spacious. The flooring and walls were the same colors of beige as the ECD dedicated classroom. Numerous beige cabinets attached to the walls at an adult height lined the perimeter of the room. Upon entering the center, there was an adult height counter on the left for parents to sign-in. To the right of the door was a parent bulletin board brightly backed with yellow paper covered with photographs of children participating in center activities, center notices, and newspaper clippings. To the left of the bulletin board were two framed certificates:
the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center day care license from the Ohio Department of Human Services and the CDA (Child Development Associate) certificate of Virginia Garrison (a pseudonym), the Campus Childcare Center teacher.

The center was arranged in multiple learning centers including: (a) a manipulative center with small toys and puzzles, (b) a computer center, (c) an elevated wooden loft with children's books, soft pillows, and bean bag chairs, (d) a large dramatic play center, (e) a science center including a sand table, an aquarium, plants, magnifying glasses, and children's books, (f) a small gross motor center with large blocks, truck, and cars, and (g) an art center.

The far corner of the room was comprised entirely of wide, floor to ceiling windows overlooking a walkway, lawn, and wooded area of campus. A carpeted, two step raised platform formed a triangle in the corner of this window area. Baskets of children's books occupied both ends of the bottom step of the platform. Small casement windows were opened slightly outward for fresh air. Along the right side of the window area was the children's bird watching station. Immediately outside of this window was a tree with two bird feeders. Two small blue children's chairs faced those windows with binoculars, a clipboard, and pencils strategically placed on the wide windowsill for children's use. A clear container rested on the floor to the left of the chairs with an assortment of children's books relating to birds.

One wall of the center contained a typical kitchen stove, refrigerator, and microwave oven. The double doorway past the refrigerator opened into a utility space
for teachers, cot storage, and the toileting and handwashing space for children.

Children also had individual cubby space in this area for extra clothing and coats.

Chloe explained there was a Campus Childcare program at Mapleview Community College before there was an Early Childhood Development program. In the mid 1980s Mapleview began a Campus Family Services Program for students that included babysitting for students’ children while they were on campus. The Campus Family Services Program was administered through the Office of Student Services. Virginia Garrison, the present teacher in the Campus Childcare Center, was originally hired to be the childcare provider for the Campus Family Services babysitting program. This campus babysitting program was not licensed by the State of Ohio Department of Human Services. Children from the ages of two to ten were enrolled in the Campus Family Services babysitting program on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The babysitting program was housed in a single room on campus. Chloe believed the babysitting program sometimes had up to forty children in the same room. The college heavily subsidized this babysitting program. The cost to students was seventy-five cents an hour. Students, and later faculty and staff, purchased childcare punch cards at the Mapleview bookstore. Virginia Garrison, the childcare provider for the babysitting program, punched this card for each fifteen minutes of babysitting. Chloe explained the Family Services babysitting program was very popular and student evaluations for Virginia were glowing. Students frequently reported they couldn’t have gone to school without the care Virginia had given their children.
In 1989, four years after the advent of the Family Services campus babysitting program, the Early Childhood Development associate degree program began at Mapleview Community College. The need for childcare on Mapleview’s campus had grown and full daycare services became available through the Campus Family Services babysitting program. Around this time the babysitting program was moved from the auspices of Student Services and placed under the direction of the Early Childhood Development full-time faculty member. The program was also moved to its current physical location where it became known as the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center.

When Chloe interviewed for her present ECD faculty position in 1992, she knew one of her duties would be directing the Campus Childcare Center. She indicated to the interview committee her belief that the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center should meet the standards of and seek licensing from the Ohio Department of Human Services. Licensing was the first of what would be a number of steps taken by Chloe to improve the quality of the program in the Campus Childcare Center. Chloe stated, “I’ve worked really hard to bring money into the program, to make changes that were for the benefit of the children and their families.” In 1993, under Chloe’s direction, the Campus Childcare Center was licensed by the Ohio Department of Human Services for younger and older preschoolers ages three to five. Non-toilet trained infants and toddlers were no longer admitted to the program, in accordance with Ohio Department of Human Services rules for their separate physical space.
Chloe sought other venues to improve the quality of the Campus Childcare Center. When the State of Ohio offered grant monies to begin campus child care programs or to improve the quality of existing child care programs, Chloe submitted a grant application to improve the quality of the existing Campus Childcare Center. Mapleview Community College was awarded a $20,000 grant. Chloe viewed this grant project as the beginning of moving from a childcare center to a laboratory school for the Early Childhood Development Program. Chloe explained the grant money was used to install the observation window and remodel the center to “make it more a learning place. We were able to say, this is also a place where ECD students learn.” Chloe utilized the professional expertise of the Early Childhood Development Program Advisory Committee to guide the planned remodeling of the center.

Chloe’s use of the ECD Program Advisory Committee’s ideas for remodeling the Campus Childcare Center was done for a second reason, to limit the ongoing personal and professional conflicts between Virginia Garrison, the teacher in the Campus Childcare Center, and Chloe. In describing the remodeling changes in the Campus Childcare Center, Chloe said, “Those weren’t my ideas. They came from the experts in our field who said, ‘This is what we need’.”

Chloe and Virginia’s disagreements began before Chloe was even hired as the Early Childhood Development program faculty member. When Chloe interviewed for the faculty position at Mapleview in 1992, Virginia Garrison, the teacher in the Campus Childcare Center, was a member of the search committee. During the interview Chloe was asked what changes she would like to make in the program and
responded she would like seek licensing of the Campus Childcare Center by the Ohio Department of Human Services. Chloe said that after she was hired, other members of the search committee told her Virginia said the Campus Childcare Center program didn’t need to be licensed.

Virginia, the lead teacher in the Campus Childcare Center, had no college degree although Chloe commented she had “really pushed her to take college courses.” Chloe believed Virginia would “love to know what the students are studying” and had frequently requested copies of ECD textbooks and course syllabi. Virginia had worked and achieved her Child Development Associate (CDA), a national credential based upon demonstrated competencies as an early childhood educator. Taking college classes, however, made Virginia nervous, and she had been advised by her physician not to take classes. Chloe explained Virginia had audited a single ECD course, the Health, Safety, and Nutrition class. Chloe concluded this was indicative of Virginia’s level of professional interest when she stated, “But, see, that’s kind of where she is -- health, safety and nutrition.” Chloe described Virginia as a very creative person but remained puzzled that Virginia was not interested in auditing more ECD courses, especially the course related to creativity.

An example of the differences in Early Childhood professional belief systems between Virginia and Chloe was offered by Chloe. Virginia believed food should be eaten and not used for activities with young children such as printing with slices of fruits and/or vegetables or pouring dried beans in the sensory table. Chloe related that one day Virginia challenged her for bringing apples into the classroom for an art
activity, reminding Chloe of starving children all over the world. Chloe explained to Virginia the apples were sour apples from her own tree and they were unable to be eaten.

ECD students who had observed in the Campus Childcare Center frequently noted examples of such differences in belief systems between their course work and the practices in the Campus Childcare Center through their journals and classroom discussions. Chloe believed the positive aspect of these differences in personal theories offered the ECD students an opportunity to learn and develop their own professional belief systems. While Chloe perceived Virginia to have “wonderful nurturing qualities”, she considered Virginia’s modeling in the classroom and their differences in beliefs to have also limited learning opportunities for the ECD students by focusing on basic professional and childcare issues:

The modeling leads to a lot of good classroom discussion. The classroom discussion would be more about assessment and curriculum needs, developmental needs, if we could get past all that stuff. And that way, we would go to the next level, rather than talking about confidentiality. But, in the real world maybe that’s a discussion that needs to take place. So, I can’t discount it too much.

There were ongoing communications between Chloe and Virginia regarding their differences in beliefs and knowledge. Chloe explained, “But it’s a constant. We have to constantly work at it.” Chloe acknowledged the complexity of the changes of the ECD Program and the Campus Childcare Center in the past six years. Chloe believed Virginia “has been a champion to go through all that change, and still be with us.” Chloe concluded with these remarks concerning Virginia, “We’ve come a long way. We’ve come through some really hard times. But, we simply, you know,
manage. I haven’t tried to rock that boat, I’ve just tried to be supportive and make the boat a little sturdier.”

Chloe related more planned changes were being considered for the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. The focus of these proposed changes was to continue to increase the quality of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center program for the children, their families, and the ECD students. As a step towards increased conceptual coherence between the program of Early Childhood Development and the Campus Childcare Center, Chloe indicated she was writing a new philosophy statement for the Campus Childcare Center. At the time of the interview she said, “I haven’t flown this by anybody.” Chloe clearly articulated this philosophy statement, however, when she made this statement during an interview: “And the philosophy is going to be that the practice in our center, that we believe that all teacher decisions and activities need to be based on those three things: the development, the individual, and the cultural and social context.” Knowledge of child development, knowledge of individual children, and knowledge of children's social and cultural contexts are the precise statements of professional knowledge expressed as the basis of developmentally appropriate practice by NAEYC (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Chloe explained a second possible change for the Campus Childcare Center was to change the name of the center from Mapleview Campus Childcare Center to Mapleview Child Development Center. Chloe believed this would indicate to students and the community “something over there is happening!” She acknowledged it would “make a subtle difference in the meaning of developmentally appropriate practice.
Because, then we can look at our curriculum and say, we can do this. We don’t have a canned curriculum. It happens, weekly, daily, momentarily.”

A third planned change for the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center was to seek voluntary accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. This nationwide accreditation program is administered by the National Academy of Early Childhood Program through NAEYC (NAEYC, 1998a). The first step in the process for an early childhood program seeking this accreditation is to complete a comprehensive self-study of their program based upon quality criteria established by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1991). This self-study was in progress at the Mapleview Campus Childcare program at the time of this research. Participants in the self-study at the Mapleview Campus Childcare program included faculty, child care center staff, child care center student employees, and parents of children enrolled in the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center.

Chloe described the accreditation self-study process as “wonderful” and viewed the self-study as an opportunity for professional growth. Chloe related an incident during an accreditation self-study meeting that exemplified both professional growth on the part of the Campus Childcare Center staff as well as the on-going clarification of belief systems and perceptions occurring among the early childhood professionals at Mapleview. During an accreditation self-study meeting with Chloe, two Campus Childcare Center staff members, and five student workers, the question was raised concerning the issue of maintaining confidentiality about the children and
their families in the center. Chloe explained the question became, “Do we do this?” and the responses from the members of the group were quite different:

And the two head teachers say, “Yes, we do. We do it all the time.” And one of the student workers said, “You know, I really don’t think we’re very good at this. I think we do way too much. I think we share way too much about our children with everyone. I think that, if you’re not a paid employee of this center, you shouldn’t hear what the child’s background is, whether you’re a nurse who’s observing, or whether you’re an ECD student who’s observing.

Chloe had planned to address this professional issue of confidentiality with the Campus Childcare Center staff and was pleased the student worker felt comfortable and knowledgeable enough to express her beliefs at the self-study meeting.

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs accreditation process is lengthy and comprehensive. After the self-study is completed a team of validators will visit the center to observe the program and validate the self-study document. The validation team report and the center director’s responses to the report will then be reviewed by a three-person commission of early childhood professionals in Washington, DC. The commission evaluates the reports and determines if the early childhood program is in substantial compliance with the quality criteria of the Academy. Those early childhood programs that demonstrate such compliance are awarded NAEYC Early Childhood Program Accreditation for a period of three years. Nationally, about 6,000 early childhood programs have achieved accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC, 1998a). Although there were approximately 185 accredited programs in the state of Ohio (NAEYC, 1998b) at the time of this study, there were only three or four accredited programs within the three-county service area of Mapleview Community College.
The final planned change for the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center described by Chloe was to increase the enrollment of children in the center to offer ECD students increased opportunities for observation and participation. Chloe explained one of her teaching goals for the current academic year was to present students with more opportunities for active learning opportunities, including laboratory experiences. She related, “the students spent more time in the childcare center. But I haven’t worked out a system for me to be in there, for me to have feedback from that so that there’s this continual flow of information and evaluation and change.”

Enrollment in the center had dropped dramatically in the past few years and there were times during the past academic year when less than five or six children were present in the center. ECD students were also attempting to complete laboratory observation and/or participation assignments during naptime when the children were sleeping. At the time of the interview, Chloe had recently met with her assistant dean to discuss some options for offering a better laboratory experience for the ECD student. One idea was to attempt to enroll a small core group of children to attend the childcare program every morning for a semester. With the possibility of a consistent group of children, Chloe was considering scheduling all of the ECD classes in the afternoons and evenings to enable students to complete their field and laboratory experiences in the Campus Childcare center in the mornings. Chloe estimated this plan could take a year or more to effect. Chloe also indicated a willingness to inquire into having a Head Start classroom in the room but “that wouldn’t be our best way,
because it locks us into a model that we’re not locked into.” Head Start programs in the three-county Mapleview service area all use the High Scope model (Epstein, Schweinhart, & McAdoo, 1996). In her discussion of ECD class schedules and Campus Childcare Center enrollment Chloe concluded, “We’re still trying to find the best way. I don’t know if we’ll ever get it right.”

The milieu of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center offered clear examples of the complexity of this aspect of the case. Chloe described how the multiple beliefs systems, knowledge bases, and experiences among the faculty, staff and ECD students intersected in the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. Belief systems varied from the lead teacher’s focus on basic custodial care issues of health, safety, and nutrition for young children to Chloe’s commitment to meeting the extensive accreditation criteria of the National Academy of Early Childhood programs. Knowledge and experiential bases included ECD students’ knowledge and experience with their own children as well as their growing professional knowledge base, the lead teacher’s Child Development Associate Certificate, and ECD faculty professional experiences with young children and bachelor and master’s degrees in early childhood education and related fields. This complexity was increased by the application of multiple voluntary and mandated standards as well as the grant resources that have been used over the past six years to increase the quality of the Mapleview Campus Childcare program. These standards and resources included the State of Ohio Day Care Licensing Rules, the ECD Program Advisory Committee, Federal legislation including
the Americans With Disabilities Act, and the accreditation criteria of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

The Mapleview Campus Childcare Program offered one laboratory opportunity for Mapleview ECD students. Another campus laboratory for Mapleview ECD students was the Early Childhood Development Program Resource Center, which is described in the following section.

The Early Childhood Development Program Resource Center. The third relevant aspect of the milieu of the Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College was the Early Childhood Development Resource Center located in a room within the Mapleview Community College library. The Early Childhood Development Resource Center included a circulating collection of children's books, early childhood education teacher resource books, toys and games suitable for young children, children's records, tapes and musical instruments, and prop boxes. Resources such as scissors, markers, rulers, a laminating machine, a book binder, and a machine to produce die cast letters were also available in the room for students to use in creating learning materials for their ECD classes. A collection of early childhood education professional periodicals, journals, and books were housed in the ECD Resource Center for use in the library. Students could use the tables in the room for work or study space. All of the materials and resources in the ECD Resource Center were available for use by students, parents, and early childhood professionals within the three county area served by the college. Utilization of the ECD Resource
Center was actively promoted among parents and early childhood professionals through a local county early childhood resource directory.

As a part of the on-going plan to improve many different aspects of the quality of the ECD program, Chloe initiated a three-year plan to improve the quality and quantity of the materials and resources available in the ECD Resource Center during the 1992-1993 academic year. There was a focus on procuring materials and learning resources students could use directly with young children. Chloe wrote and was awarded grant funding from the Area Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC), the Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children (MWAEYC), and a local foundation. These multiple small grant awards, combined with monetary donations secured from local business and service clubs, enabled the quality improvements envisioned by Chloe for the ECD Resource Center. Once again Chloe utilized the ECD Advisory Committee’s professional expertise. An ECD Resource Center committee was formed from members of the ECD Advisory Committee to plan the expansion of the ECD Resource Center and to choose children’s books, teacher resources books, and toys and games suitable for young children.

One of the important resources developed by the ECD Resource Center committee were dozens of prop boxes. These prop boxes clearly expressed the constructivist/active learning conceptual framework identified by the entire faculty interviewed at Mapleview. When asked to describe the concept of teaching and learning in the ECD program, Chloe replied, “I can say our program is based on
constructivism.” Jean Schmidt, an ECD part-time faculty member related, “We’re trying to give some real, hands-on examples both through fieldwork and through our classroom instruction.” Jayne Winn, an ECD adjunct faculty member explained, “It’s very important to vary your strategies, to have hands-on activities, and to recognize that sitting and listening and taking notes for long periods of time, that’s not the way adults learn best.” There were dozens of brightly colored plastic prop boxes with lids stacked on shelves and on the floor in the ECD Resource Center. Each of the prop boxes was labeled and most of the boxes contained one or more children’s books related to the prop box theme.

The prop boxes fell into three general categories. The first category of prop boxes contained props for dramatic play themes such as ‘restaurant.’ A sample prop box from this category had real pizza boxes, menus, and napkins from a local pizza restaurant as well as a children’s book related to pizza. A second category of prop boxes contained props to enhance a conceptual theme such as dinosaurs. Dinosaurs is a popular early childhood theme and there were a number of dinosaur boxes. One dinosaur box consisted of large plastic dinosaurs and a dinosaur book. A third category of prop boxes contained story enhancers related to a particular storybook for young children. An example was the “Corduroy” prop box consisting of the children’s book Corduroy, by Don Freeman, a stuffed toy bear dressed like the character Corduroy, and a large hemmed piece of red corduroy fabric for the children to experience and perhaps even sit on while listening to the story.
The ECD Resource Center offered ECD students an exemplary resource for materials for ECD classes, including their practicum. Creating the prop box themes, securing appropriate materials, and putting the boxes together had been a group deliberation process by the ECD Resource Center committee. Chloe related the prop boxes had been particularly well received by students, early childhood professionals, and the community. For example, of students observed attending an ECD practicum seminar one evening, four had prop boxes from the ECD Resource Center. Chloe indicated the boxes are beginning to show some wear and tear and cleaning and sanitizing some articles presents a challenge. Some items have been damaged in use and other materials have not been returned and are missing. Chloe also mentioned each item in the each prop box each been catalogued by the library staff requiring all materials in the box to be counted when they are returned, a process perceived by the library staff as particularly time-consuming.

ECD students and faculty utilized the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center and the ECD Resource Center for field and laboratory experiences. Programs of education and care for young children within the three-county service area of Mapleview Community College were another important feature of the milieu of the ECD program. The ECD program relied on these programs of education and care for young children as practicum sites for ECD students. These community programs of care and education for young children used as practicum sites are described the following section.
Practicum sites: community programs of early education and care. Early Childhood Development (ECD) students at Mapleview completed a four credit hour practicum experience, which Chloe described as "really their last course." Practicum, usually taken in the student’s final semester, was completed at an early childhood program of education and care in Mapleview’s three-county service area. A variety of early childhood programs of education and care were available to use as practicum sites by the ECD program, including private independent schools, for-profit childcare centers, church related programs, Montessori schools, Head Start programs, and early intervention preschool classes.

Practicum field sites and cooperating teachers were selected in various ways. Chloe explained, “students want to pick their own. And, so we try to let those students feel like they did.” ECD students preferred to select their own practicum sites for a number of reasons. For some students it was important to have the geographic location of the practicum site close to their home and/or place of employment. Other students selected sites where they hoped to become employed. Still other sites were chosen because the student had visited a particular site for another ECD class and liked that particular program of early education and care.

Not all community programs of early education and care could be a practicum site. Chloe used the Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten requirements as the practicum site selection criteria and when she explained to students:

It has to be a teacher who’s taught for three years. It needs to be a developmentally appropriate practice site. They have to use the language, they have to believe in the approach, and prove to me, or the supervising teacher, that that is what they’re doing.
Jean Schmidt, a part-time faculty member who has been the ECD practicum supervisor, described these additional criteria for practicum sites:

We've looked for places we think will reflect good practice, places that can model for the student. Places that will allow a student to actually get in there and do more than wipe the table. We've had to address that a few times!

Either Chloe or the part-time faculty member teaching the ECD practicum course visited new sites before placing ECD practicum students. Chloe and the other part-time faculty members interviewed in this study all identified personal knowledge of the teachers and site on the part of ECD faculty as an essential criterion for practicum site selection. Jayne Winn, one of the part-time faculty members, indicated, "I know Chloe would never even consider placing a student at a site that she did not have personal knowledge of herself, a very thorough personal knowledge."

Formal contracts were signed between the college and the practicum sites in compliance with Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten requirements. Chloe explained the ECD program was building relationships in wider geographic areas as students requested practicum placement in different parts of the three-county service area of Mapleview Community College. The ECD program was also increasingly using sites operated by programs of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability (MRDD). Chloe said, "Those MRDD sites are turning out to be really good placements. The teachers are professional, they have good credentials, and MRDD is working to make them more developmentally appropriate."

Cooperating teachers were selected by Chloe, the ECD faculty practicum supervisor, or the practicum site director. Chloe explained, "We like to build a
relationship with the [cooperating] teacher so that we know exactly what she’s doing and she knows what our expectations are.” Jayne Winn, a part-time faculty member who was also a practicum site program director recalled:

I interview the [practicum] student and try to get an understanding about her personally. And, I’ll ask if they have a personal preference. Most often I can honor that personal preference. But, if, through the discussion and through the student’s background and experience, then I have the option of saying, ‘You’ve had all this experience with children of this age. But I really believe it would be helpful for you to work with another age group.’ So I do that.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the exemplary programs of elementary education in their study had clear curriculum articulation with the schools. A similar type of articulation appeared to be evolving at Mapleview as faculty addressed numerous issues related to practicum.

The ECD faculty members described six issues related to the ECD practicum sites. The first issue was the preparation of cooperating teachers. Chloe indicated, “we probably don’t do as much in-service [for cooperating teachers] as we should.” Jean Schmidt, a part-time faculty member, related, “probably you could do a wonderful two-week orientation, but we really don’t have that luxury.” The primary method used by the ECD program to prepare cooperating teachers was the ECD program practicum handbook. Jayne Winn, a part-time faculty member who was also the director of a practicum site, described this practicum handbook as “very, very comprehensive and very thorough.” According to the introduction, the 47-page ECD Practicum Handbook was prepared “to assist students and cooperating center/programs personnel in understanding the goals, policies, procedures, and requirements” for all ECD practicum students at Mapleview Community College.
The ECD Practicum Handbook included: (a) an overview of the ECD program, (b) the goals of the course, (c) a copy of the course syllabus, (d) sections detailing the roles and responsibilities of the practicum student, the cooperating teacher, and the ECD faculty practicum coordinator, (e) a grading rubric, and (f) copies of required forms. One of the forms was entitled the “Teaching Experiences Matrix”. Jean related that until the matrix had been developed she felt, “we were kind of throwing them out there. Everyone was floundering around wondering if they were doing the right thing. And so we tried to be a little more systematic about that.” Chloe explained the ECD faculty had developed the Teaching Experiences Matrix to give the cooperating teachers “an opportunity to see the kinds of things we were looking for. And it also has blank spots in it so that they could write other things in that they were doing.” The matrix enabled students, cooperating teacher, and the ECD faculty to see at a glance the types of activities in which the practicum students were involved as well as their level of involvement. Each week students filled in their matrix with letters indicating whether they observed, participated, led activities, or planned and led activities. Chloe related during practicum seminar, ECD practicum students shared their matrixes to:

   See how they are doing. And then, if we see that there’s a weakness some place it’s possible to talk with the teacher to say, ‘You know, we’re in week nine and she really has done very little independently. Tell me about this,’ while we still have an opportunity to fix it.

Telephone calls and meetings are two additional avenues used for training cooperating teachers. Jean commented, “Chloe does a pretty good conversation with people, on the phone, with directors, about what we’re looking for and what’s
expected." Jean also described meetings of cooperating teachers where "we meet each other. And they have a chance to dialogue, ask any questions, hear what's expected, look at the forms that we have that they can kind of go down through and check them off." Chloe had also hosted a dinner for cooperating teachers. As a part of that evening's program the cooperating teachers were asked to share "things that had happened in their center this year because of a student teacher – good, bad, or indifferent."

A second issue related to the milieu of the ECD practicum sites concerned compensation for cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers received no compensation for supervising an ECD practicum student. "We don't reward them in any way," said Chloe. "We don't give college credit or anything." In lieu of compensation, Chloe has offered cooperating teachers tokens of appreciation through a variety of methods including boxes of candy, Mapleviow Community College coffee mugs, and a dinner meeting.

A third issue within the milieu of the ECD practicum sites was the ongoing role definition of the student teacher at the practicum site. Jayne Winn, a part-time faculty member and practicum site director, explained her philosophy regarding the role of student teachers:

I think there's a tendency sometimes to think, 'They're just acting like kids. They're not responsible.' Well, my goodness, that's what they are! They are students. They are there to learn. And I think we have to be very careful that we don't place responsibilities on them that are beyond the scope of [the practicum]. I just think that we have to be very careful that we realize that they are there as students. That they're not staff. That they're not another pair of hands that we're going to put to work and get all the work we can out of them and save budget matters.
The limited number of quality programs of early education and care was the fourth issue related to the milieu of ECD practicum sites. Jean Schmidt, a part-time faculty member who had taught the ECD practicum course a number of times, explained, “We have a paucity of excellence. We simply do not have those wonderful sites in which to place teachers. We have some.” Jean also pointed out there were only three or four NAEYC accredited early childhood programs in the area.

The extensive time necessary for on-site observation by the ECD practicum supervisor was the fifth issue related to the milieu of ECD practicum sites. Practicum students can be placed at sites within a three-county area and Jean, who had taught the practicum course a number of times, used the adjectives “time consuming” and “very difficult” to describe the responsibility of observing as many as 12 to 16 practicum students three separate times during a semester. Driving time alone to some sites within the three county service area of Mapleview Community College could be a two-hour round trip. Jean said she finally sat down and “figured up the hours I was spending [as the ECD faculty practicum supervisor], and it was amazing. And it’s not that I had to do that for those dollars. But I thought that they [the ECD program] needed to look at that.” Because of the extensive time required for travel and observation, Jean no longer teaches practicum. Chloe has taught practicum and also found the time required for observation and travel to be quite extensive. The four-semester hour practicum can only comprise 25% of a full-time faculty load, which meant, for Chloe, teaching 11 to 12 additional semester hours or as many as four other courses.
A sixth issue of the milieu of ECD practicum sites identified by the ECD faculty was the evaluation of practicum students by cooperating teachers. Practicum students were evaluated on (a) personal qualities such as attendance, flexibility, and attitude, (b) working with children, and (c) working with other teachers, parents, and volunteers. The grading rubric on the ECD practicum final evaluation, as detailed in the Practicum Handbook, is summarized in Table 4.3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 = Excellent</th>
<th>4 = Good</th>
<th>3 = Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding, performing at superior levels, exceeds expectations</td>
<td>Above average, commendable work or performance</td>
<td>Performing at expected levels, typical to the norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Below Average</td>
<td>1 = Poor</td>
<td>N.A. = Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing improvement</td>
<td>Unacceptable performance, deficits noted</td>
<td>I.O. = Insufficient Observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: ECD Program Practicum Grading Rubric

Chloe indicated there could be considerable inconsistency on the part of cooperating teachers as they evaluated practicum students. She believed some cooperating teachers evaluated practicum students too low:

We have one center that says, 'None of them are master teachers and consequently, nobody gets a five. We only give fours, once in a while a five slips in.' And so, therefore, you have to convince that student that the three [on their evaluation form from the cooperating teacher] says 'average', that you're doing an average job. Five, this center is reading, if it's excellent, they're saying that's a master teacher. And not many student teachers come in and are master teachers.
Chloe also believed some centers evaluated practicum students too high, as she explained, “You might have somebody else who’s very satisfied with a very low quality of work. And their expectations are very low, but they still give all five’s.” Chloe regarded cooperating teacher evaluations “as just one of the criteria for grading.”

**The Milieu: Summary**

The milieu was the second of Schwab’s commonplaces of the curriculum examined in this case study. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College identified the general physical and administrative composition of the college, the change from a quarter to semester academic calendar, and the college’s statement of core values as important aspects of the institutional milieu. The goals of the ECD program, based on multiple national and state standards, were professional and clear, a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The dedicated ECD classroom, the ECD Resource Center, the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center, as well as community childcare programs of education and care used for practicum sites comprised important aspects of the ECD program milieu. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified adequate program resources including materials and laboratories as a characteristic of quality in the programs they studied. The ECD program resources, including the dedicated ECD classroom, the ECD Resource Center, and the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center, were more than adequate, serving as resources for ECD students, ECD faculty, and the community.
Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of teacher education in their study to have curriculum articulation with the schools. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College identified two issues related to curricular coherence with programs of care and education for young children used as field and laboratory sites. The first issue involved the evolving program for young children in the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. What began as a simple babysitting program for students became, under Chloe’s direction, a child care program licensed by the State of Ohio Department of Human Services. That licensure was the Campus Childcare Center’s first step to compliance with a set of external standards. To further the curricular coherence between the ECD program and the Campus Childcare Center, Chloe had initiated the process of self-study as a step toward seeking accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood programs. The second issue identified by ECD faculty related to curricular coherence between the ECD program and practicum sites. ECD faculty clearly indicated the goal of developmentally appropriate curriculum in the programs of early education and care used for practicum. While the ECD faculty identified the lack of practicum sites with developmentally appropriate programs for young children as a practicum issue, faculty also indicated that MRDD programs and sites with Mapleview ECD graduates were gradually increasing the pool of quality practicum sites.

The third commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) was the student. The characteristics of the Early Childhood Development students at Mapleview Community College are described in the following section.
The Students

The students were the third commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) as important to curriculum development. In this section the characteristics of the Early Childhood Development students enrolled in the prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College are considered. Schwab (1978) indicated knowledge of the learners should include specific knowledge about the students, “knowledge achieved by direct involvement with them” (p. 366). Schwab (1978) perceived knowledge of the students to include details of their career goals, families, friends, and neighbors, as well as their roles in “their political community, their ethnic or religious community” (p. 366).

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found two characteristics of quality and coherence related to the students enrolled in the programs of elementary education in their study: (a) students identified with a cohort group, and (b) students recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. In the ECD program at Mapleview Community College, similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found. ECD students formed informal cohort groups through the ECD club and within the dedicated ECD classroom. ECD students recognized the practicum course as the milestone or benchmark point in the program.

Each of the ECD faculty members interviewed in this study indicated there were multiple ways to describe the diversity of the ECD students at Mapleview Community College. Chloe explained, “so you get that whole gamut, which makes it a real rich classroom environment, because they all bring something different to the
class. The characteristics of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) students at Mapleview Community College included the different types of students enrolled in the ECD program, the reason students chose the ECD program, and the ways in which ECD students schedule and take classes. Each of these characteristics is described below.

**Types of Students Enrolled in the Early Childhood Development Program**

The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College was small. Chloe related the largest number of ECD graduates in any single year was fourteen. Each of the ECD faculty members interviewed in this study was asked to describe the types of students enrolled in the ECD program. ECD faculty interviewed in this study concurred that all ECD students were female. As far as any of the ECE faculty interviewed for this research could recall, there had never been a male ECD student. While ECD students were unvaryingly female, the ECD faculty members did, however, note numerous other differences among the ECD students including variances in age, economic status, family responsibilities, prior experiences with children, abilities, personal and professional goals, and cultures. Each of these differences is described in the following sections.

**Diversity in age.** All of the faculty members interviewed at Mapleview described ECD students as diverse in age. Chloe said, “We have age diversity, which is wonderful. People who come are young. People who come are older and very set in what they believe.” Jean Schmidt, a part-time ECD faculty member, described the diversity in age among ECD students:
We have these two separate groups. We have students right out of high school who have decided to make early childhood their career. We have a group of older students who may have worked in a childcare center and have now decided to have a degree in that. We have a group of older students, who may have been accountants but didn’t find that as satisfying, who have come back to say, ‘Yes, I really want to work with children.’

Jean believed the two different age groups of ECD students brought different “life issues” to the classroom:

I don’t think there’s a terrible affinity between the forty-year-old and the eighteen-year-old. They’re at different places with different interests. And while they may professionally discuss something, the life experience they bring to that discussion are so different. Those eighteen-year-olds can minimally think about appropriate practice. But majorly they need to think about Friday night! And do they have a date! Because that is their developmental level. And, it they’re going to have this dress or that dress for their wedding. And, a lot of them are getting married, and having first babies.

The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College described diversity in age as one characteristic of the students who enrolled in the ECD program. A second characteristic of ECD students was their diverse economic backgrounds.

**Economic diversity.** Chloe indicated there was “a nice range of economic diversity” among the ECD students. She explained, “We have some who are on full financial aid. We have some who pay their own way. And we have everybody in-between who’s getting something.” Chloe described a small number of students who took their ECD classes one at a time because of the lack of spousal support:

We have some who pay for it themselves, one class at a time. And those would be maybe middle-age women whose husbands don’t necessarily support going to school. And so they work a while, have a little pot of money, come to school, work a while, have a little pot of money, come to school. Which is really a struggle. And it’s a struggle for me because they’re probably people who could apply and receive financial aid. But, because they lack spousal support, they can’t do that. Or, they’re really, really good students who could
get a scholarship if they applied, but this one particular woman doesn’t think
her husband would be supportive of that, either.

The ECD faculty interviewed in this study concurred that most of the ECD
students were working. Chloe estimated approximately 80% of the ECD students
were employed. Chloe believed about half of the working ECD students were
working in the field of early childhood education and while the other half were
employed in retail or food industries such as department stores or fast food restaurants.
Jean Schmidt, an ECD part-time faculty member, described ECD students as
“probably on the ‘watching our pennies’ side rather than on the affluent side.” Chloe
depicted ECD students who were not working as “full time parents who were also full
time students.” The diverse family responsibilities of ECD students are described in
the next section.

**Multiple family responsibilities.** Many of the students in the ECD program
had multiple family responsibilities. Jean said, “We have a lot of moms of young
children.” Chloe explained the complexity of working with students with diverse
family responsibilities:

> I also have to know that they have a life outside of a two-year program. That
they’re mothers and wives and daughters and sisters and friends. And that, if
you come to me and tell me that your child is singing in the PTA program
tonight at 7 o’clock and our class is from 7 to 8:45, I feel a real need to have
you feel a need to make up what you missed and to inquire about what you
missed. But I feel a need to let you miss it. Because I think if we’re going to
say that children are important, and make them a priority, that we have to
demonstrate that by making it okay for you to go see your child do these
things. But I also believe that it’s up to you to make it up. And to get what
you need from your peer partner. I’ll do what I can, but I’m not going to teach
that class over again for you. So, you’ve got to get it through a video, through
reading something. I’ll have a conversation with you but I’m not going to do
the presentation over again. And I’m not going to give you credit for in-class
points for something that we do in class that you miss. If you propose that you
make that up on the outside then I can think about that. But, I think the
interaction in class, the active learning together, the peer learning is important.
And you just miss that.

Chloe explained it was also difficult for ECD students to participate in events
outside of the classroom. “If you’ve got a nontraditional, female student who is the
head of household or somebody’s spouse, she’s got twelve other things to do.” ECD
students’ multiple family responsibilities often resulted in their having prior
experiences with young children.

**Prior experiences with children.** Chloe believed “most of our students have
made some kind of personal connection with children in some way” and offered
examples of ECD students’ experiences as parents, grandparents, and aunts. Some,
but not all, of the ECD students came to the program with prior experiences with
groups of young children in programs of early education and care. Chloe believed
ECD students who were working with young children in early childhood programs,
“came here, I think, to learn why they’re doing what they’re doing.” Chloe believed,
“they know how to do things when they come. They came here, I think, to learn why
they’re doing what they’re doing.”

Jayne Winn, one of the part-time ECD faculty members, believed students’
experiences with their family had decided advantages for ECD students. Jayne
described students family responsibilities as “complicated” but then related,

Sometimes those very things that create these complications make them [ECD
students] have a sense of empathy, a sense of caring, a sense of understanding,
of nurturing, that make them deal wonderfully well with the children they work
with and the families of the children they work with.
Jean Schmidt, another part-time ECD faculty member, pointed out other ways ECD students have had prior experiences with children. Jean said, “They [ECD students] are doing school activities with their children. They’re sometimes doing volunteer work in the classroom of their children’s school. Many of my students are teaching Sunday school.”

The ECD faculty described multiple ways in which the ECD students were diverse. ECD students’ had varied abilities and goals, which are described in the following section.

**Abilities and goals.** Mapleview Community College is an open admissions institution, the single admissions requirement being a high school diploma or its equivalent. The Mapleview catalog points out, however, that admission to the college “does not guarantee admission to every course or program.” Chloe explained she voluntarily sought to have the ECD program comply with NCATE quality standards for programs of early childhood teacher education (NAEYC, 1994) even through NCATE does not accredit associate degree programs of teacher education. NCATE mandates specific academic requirements and an application process for formal admission to the program. To be formally admitted to the ECD program at Mapleview Community College, students must have: (a) completed an English, speech and mathematics course to provide evidence of written, oral and math skills, (b) completed nine credit hours of ECD courses, (c) maintained an overall 2.0 grade point average with a 2.5 grade point average in ECD courses to provide evidence of academic aptitude and achievement, (d) completed an entrance interview with the ECD
Coordinator as evidence of appropriate interpersonal relations and motivations, and (e) provided appropriate documentation required by the State of Ohio Department of Human Services including three completed letters of recommendation, a signed statement that the students has never been convicted of child abuse or crimes of violence, a signed medical form, and a copy of the student’s high school diploma. To obtain an ECD degree, all students must by formally admitted to the ECD program.

Chloe related ECD students exhibited a wide range of academic abilities. She said, “We have some really, really bright students and we have a lot of mediocre students, and we have some students who struggle.” ECD students’ diversity in ability was reflected in their expressions of personal and professional goals. Not all of the students enrolled in the ECD Program have earning an associate degree as their goal. Chloe discussed these students and said, “They didn’t need a degree. They came for something else.” Other ECD students are in the process of developing personal responsibility. Chloe recalled, “Some of them just don’t want to be responsible for themselves, and they certainly don’t want to be responsible for their own learning. So, that’s been a real task. But it’s one that, college-wide, everyone has kind of struggled with.” Chloe also described students who perceived ECD as easy and who thought they could “wing their way through it, even after they’ve failed the course and come back the second time, they still believe they can wing their way.”

The ECD faculty described many ways in which the ECD students were diverse. Cultural diversity was the final descriptor.
Cultural diversity. ECD faculty members interviewed in this study viewed cultural diversity among ECD students in different ways. Chloe stated, "We haven’t any racial diversity. They’re all Caucasian. I think that our [Mapleview Community College] demographics person told me I would have to struggle to find 3% in cultural diversity in the three county region". Jean Schmidt, a part-time ECD faculty member, related, "We have very little racial difference. I’ve had a student who had some African American children because she was married to an African American. But, pretty much, we’re homogeneous." Jayne Winn, another part-time ECD faculty member, described ECD students as reflecting the make-up of the three county service area of Mapleview. Jayne said, "We’ve had a number of people from farms, a number of people who live in towns. They seem to reflect the makeup of the geographical area. I think there’s just a good cross section of what you would find in this area." Chloe explained there were dialectical speakers among the ECD students:

We can almost pick the parts of our counties that students are from, from the way that they come to us speaking. Part of the English and Speech department would say, you can’t mess with that. The employability part of me says, you’ve got to mess with that. That we have centers where they will not hire you if you say ‘ain’t’. And there are other centers that would just take you right in!

Jean Schmidt, an adjunct ECD faculty member, perceived a clear relationship between family culture and the ECD program. Jean said, “Those students’ families have been their strongest teacher. And they’re bringing a family culture and their economic culture to a classroom.” Jean also described ECD students as coming “from a variety of backgrounds” including students from German-American and Appalachian cultures.
ECD faculty interviewed in this study described ECD students as diverse in age and economic background. ECD students had multiple family responsibilities and varying prior experiences with young children. Abilities and goals varied among the ECD students. The ECD students were all female Caucasians who reflected both local and regional geographic cultural diversity. The diversity used to describe the ECD students was reflected in their varied reasons for selecting the ECD program.

Selecting the ECD Program

The ECD faculty at Mapleview described a number of reasons why they believed students selected the ECD program. Some students chose to major in the Early Childhood Development program because they wanted to work with children, mistakenly believed the program prepared them to be kindergarten teachers, and/or sought to broaden their professional knowledge base in early childhood education.

The first reason for choosing the ECD program, as described by the ECD faculty interviewed in this study, were ECD students’ beliefs that they liked young children and wanted to work with them. Chloe said, “Oh, they tell you that they like children. I like kids! I love little kids! I want to work with them!” Jean Schmidt, a part-time ECD faculty member said, “I think there is a desire to work with young children and to think this is something that they would like to do and that they could do well.”

A second reason some students chose the ECD program was their belief that they could become kindergarten or first grade teachers with an ECD associate degree. In Ohio students need a minimum of a bachelor’s degree to seek licensure to teach
kindergarten. Chloe explained this was an advising issue and, in the Introduction to ECD course, “We try to dispel that immediately. Tell them they might be in the wrong place.”

A third reason ECD students chose the program was to further their professional knowledge base in the field of early childhood education. Chloe explain:

They found that they don’t know enough to do what they want to do. And they get hooked. They get in the first class and find out that it made a difference. What they’re learning made a difference. And so they come back and come back and come back. Those are the ones that you really get excited about. And they say, ‘I didn’t realize! If I knew what to expect, if I knew what they could do, then it would make a difference in what I do every day.’

Once students are enrolled in the ECD program, there were a variety of ways in which they scheduled and took classes. This is described in the following section.

**Scheduling and Taking Classes**

ECD students at Mapleview Community College selected and took classes based upon their individual needs. Chloe stated the largest ECD graduating class was 14. She explained that probably a quarter of that group, only three or four students, had actually completed the two-year associate degree program in two years. Chloe called this a “a good number” because the majority of ECD students at Mapleview do not begin the ECD program and go straight through. To complete the four semester ECD program in two years, as detailed in the Mapleview Community College catalog, ECD students would have to take 15 to 20 credit hours each semester. Chloe estimated it took the typical ECD students five years to earn an associate degree.

Economics, personal goals, abilities, and family responsibilities influenced how many credit hours an ECD student might take each quarter. The 1998-1999
Mapleview Community College catalog stated the instructional and general fee per semester hour of credit was $77.50. Chloe explained that ECD students who were on financial aid could enroll for nine to 12 credits each semester under financial aid rules. She indicated some ECD students who were working could only afford to take one course a term and students sometimes skipped a semester if they did not have sufficient money for tuition, general fees, and books.

Because so many of the ECD students were working, a large group of students existed whom Chloe identified as “night students.” The ECD program was scheduled to primarily meet the needs of night students. Chloe explained:

My day students also have to be night students. Because of the way we do that to meet the night students’ needs. Every other year the course has to be offered in the evening. So, if you’re a day student, you’re going to know that part of your courses are going to be in the evening. Because we’ve got to meet everybody’s need. But, as a night student, you can be sure that everything is going to be available to you at night except your practicum.

The needs of night students extended to General Education courses as well. Chloe described meetings she had with general education faculty to facilitate scheduling of general education courses:

We’re forced to come together once a year, in fact sometimes twice a year to look at scheduling. Because, I don’t want to have Cognitive Development [a required ECD course] the same times as Child Psych [a required general education course]. Because they happen in the same semester, they need to be able to take both of those. So, I need to meet with the Psychology Department to see when they need to offer it. Plus, I need to make sure that the math, that the human biology are offered day and night.

Chloe noted the meetings with general education faculty were not always smooth.

Larger general education programs with multiple sections usually had few problems offering night sections of courses required for ECD students. Sometimes, however,
smaller general education programs indicated they could only offer a particular course during the day because they had difficulty locating faculty to teach that course at night. Chloe related her response was, “They have to know that that’s important to our students who want to graduate, because they’re holding out for this class to be offered in the evening, because they work all day.”

It was impossible to meet every ECD students’ individual needs for scheduling and taking classes. Jayne Winn, one of the ECD part-time faculty members, noted:

I think scheduling is a big consideration for them [the ECD students]. I know Chloe does try to work with them to try to offer schedules that are compatible for everyone. But I think that sometimes it is so diverse that it’s impossible to offer exactly what’s going to be best for everyone.

ECD students scheduled and took courses in various ways. The fluid nature of the class schedules of ECD students presented barriers to the formation of cohort groups, as described in the following section.

**ECD Students Identification with A Cohort Group**

Elementary education students’ identification with a cohort group was a characteristic of quality and coherence described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study. Within the ECD program at Mapleview, the formation of formal cohort groups was not possible, due to the diverse ways in which students scheduled and took classes. Informal cohort groups did exist and the ECD faculty used a number of techniques to support them.

Chloe related the ECD students “really feel like they belong here.” At the time of this study, Chloe had recently completed exit interviews with ten graduating ECD students. She recalled, “Eight of those ten made the same comment: ‘I’m so afraid
about leaving here.’ You could hear that they were real hesitant about leaving us.
And that you had to push them out a bit to say where I would see them again and how
I would see them again. It said that we had built some kind of a relationship that
definitely had supported learning.”

The ECD faculty described a number of ways in which they intentionally
planned and supported the formation of informal cohort groups among the ECD
students. Students frequently worked in small groups or “teams” in ECD classes to
develop projects and/or presentations related to course content. Jean Schmidt, an
adjunct ECD faculty member, related, “I know that as a goal they need to create new
friendships and new linkages. I try to give that opportunity. In every class I’m
teaching we would have some group work.” The dedicated ECD classroom, described
earlier in this chapter, also provided an environment that brought ECD students
together. One evening, prior to the meeting of the practicum seminar, six or seven
ECD students were observed in the dedicated ECD classroom. Some students were
conversing and some appeared to be studying. Chloe described the dedicated ECD
classroom as the ECD students’ “spot”. She said, “You’ll find students who’ll spend
the whole afternoon in the classroom. And that’s kind of their spot. And that has
brought different groups of students together.”

The ECD Club, a student affiliate of the Area Association for the Education of
Young Children (AAEYC), the local NAEYC affiliate, also provided the opportunity
for the formation of informal cohort groups among students. Chloe described a
number of activities in which the ECD Club members had been involved. They had
Student identification with a cohort group was one characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) related to students. The second student characteristic of quality and coherence, as described by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was that elementary education students in their study all recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. This characteristic of quality and coherence was also found within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College, as described in the following section.

**ECD Students Recognized A Milestone or Benchmark Point in the Program**

A second characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education...
was that students recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. At Mapleview Community College, Chloe believed the ECD students recognized "getting to the student teaching level, getting to that fourth semester" as a milestone or benchmark point in the program. Chloe explained:

And when they get through that fall semester, their second fall, I think then they kind of take a deep breath and say, ‘Now I’m ready to do my student teaching.’ And I think that it all seems to come together. And they might say, ‘Ta-Da!’ when they register for their student teaching. ‘I’m going to make it!’ And students who have been here five years – it’s definitely when they register for student teaching.

Chloe believed the ECD student who had been taking courses for five years or more definitely recognized registering for the ECD practicum course as the benchmark or milestone in their program. She said many of these students expressed feelings such as, “I can’t believe I finally got here!”

**The ECD Students: Summary**

Except for being female and Caucasian, the characteristics of the Early Childhood Development students at Mapleview were quite diverse. Students of all ages enrolled in the ECD program. ECD students were frequently challenged by economic considerations, which impacted their ability to enroll in ECD courses. Multiple family responsibilities influenced ECD students’ enrollment, class attendance, and participation in activities outside of the classroom. Most of the ECD students had some type of prior experience with young children, but not always with young children in a group setting. ECD students exhibited diverse abilities and expressed varying personal and professional goals. The ECD faculty clearly identified both the importance of family culture as well as the cultural diversity of the ECD
students enrolled in Maplevie’s prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education. Students selected the ECD program for a variety of reasons, but the strongest reason appeared to be because they liked young children. Finally, the ways in which ECD students schedule and take classes was described. Economics, personal goals, abilities, and family responsibilities affected how students scheduled and took ECD classes within the program.

Two characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) were evident among the Mapleview Community College ECD students. The first characteristic of quality and coherence related to students, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was that students identified with a cohort group. ECD students at Mapleview Community College identified with informal cohort groups, which were planned and supported by ECD faculty. Such groups included those who met informally in the dedicated ECD classroom, groups and/or teams formed in particular ECD classes, and those students who participated in ECD Club activities. Due to the small nature of the ECD program, ECD students were frequently members of more than one informal cohort group. The second characteristic of quality and coherence related to students described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was that students recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. For the ECD students at Maplevieview Community College, the identified milestone or benchmark point in the program was the ECD practicum course.
The final commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) was the subject matter. The subject matter of the Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College is described in the following section.

**The Subject Matter of the ECD Program**

Schwab (1978) explained knowledge of the subject matter included familiarity with "the scholarly materials under treatment" and "the discipline from which they come" (p. 366). The subject matter of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College is examined in the following section in order to identify the specific nature of the curriculum, the organization of the curriculum, and its structural and conceptual orientation.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified six characteristics of quality and coherence specifically related to the subject matter in the exemplary programs of elementary teacher education in their research. One characteristic of quality and coherence related to the subject matter in programs of elementary teacher education was thematic curriculum (Howey & Zimpher, 1989). Two clear thematic strands comprised the conceptual orientation of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College: (a) constructivism and (b) problem solving/decision making.

A second characteristic of quality and coherence within the programs of elementary teacher education described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience. This balance was clearly documented in the ECD program at Mapleview in both the
academic and experiential backgrounds of the faculty as detailed earlier in this chapter as well as within the ECD program itself.

Howey and Zimpher's (1989) third characteristic of quality and coherence related to program structure. They found the structure of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study enabled interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum. At Mapleview Community College the ECD faculty utilized interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum in both the ECD program as well as the early childhood curriculum courses within the ECD program.

A fourth characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was the programs in their study were rigorous and academically challenging. At Mapleview Community College the faculty interviewed in this research described the ECD program as a rigorous and academically challenging associate degree program.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found adequate time within the structure of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education to be a fifth characteristic of quality and coherence related to the subject matter. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College consistently described time as an ongoing challenge to both faculty and students.

Finally, Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of elementary education in their study were systematically evaluated. At Mapleview Community College the ECD faculty described multiple types of formal evaluations of the ECD program as well as a system of informal evaluation processes developed and used by
individual ECD faculty members within particular ECD courses. This section on the subject matter of the ECD program of Mapleview Community College begins with an examination of the conceptual orientations found in the program.

**Conceptual Orientations of the ECD Program**

As noted earlier in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Howey (1996) believes the cornerstone of program coherence is a conceptual orientation. “Such a framework, when fleshed out, makes explicit conceptions of teaching, learning, schooling, and learning to teach” (Howey, 1996, p. 143). Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, found a characteristic of quality and coherence in those program to be thematic curriculum. The conceptual orientations or curriculum themes guiding teaching and learning throughout the ECD program at Mapleview Community College were constructivism and problem solving/decision making. This conceptual orientation most closely reflected the practical orientation in programs of teacher education described in Chapter Two.

**Constructivism.** The conceptual orientation of constructivism was woven throughout the ECD program. Chloe explained constructivism was also the conceptual orientation of Mapleview Community College because of “the college’s belief that active learning is the best method, the best strategy to use.” The entire ECD faculty interviewed in this study concurred that constructivism was the basis of teaching and learning for both ECD students and young children. Chloe indicated, “Students always have to be involved in some way. I think active learning is
important and I think individual differences have to be looked at, both on the early childhood side and the adult side.”

Chloe described a number of examples of the integration of the constructivist conceptual framework of the ECD program. She recalled, when teaching the ECD course on professional resources, she used to invite speakers from community agencies to class throughout the semester. Chloe had made the initial contacts, scheduled all of the different resource persons, reminded the individuals of their appointments, introduced all the speakers to the class, and wrote thank-you letters. Chloe explained:

Then, I decided, this is silly. If students are going to be making those contacts when they’re in the field, why aren’t they making those contacts, now? So, we brainstorm early in the semester about what do we know? What don’t we know? What do we need to know? And then we match those up. The students decide. It has become more their class. They have to call five or six times to nail a person down and coordinate with the rest of the class. Then they have to call and remind, make sure the person’s coming. And then they introduce. They pass out the question sheet so people get information. And then at the end they’re the person that thanks them for coming and asks the class, ‘Are there any questions?’ Then they write the thank-you note. So, it’s become more their class, which, I think, makes it more valuable for the student.

Constructivists believe active learning takes place through varied opportunities and methods that combine prior knowledge with new opportunities for learning (Woolfolk, 1995). The syllabus of each of the ECD courses reflected the constructivist conceptual framework of the ECD program. According to the syllabi of ECD courses in the program, students at Mapleview had multiple opportunities for active learning including: (a) observing children including infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children with special needs, (b) observing and/or participating in
professional meetings or board meetings, (c) writing papers (d) critiquing articles and videos, (e) developing group projects and presentations, (f) developing personal teaching portfolios, (g) writing letters, (h) planning, preparing, and teaching different types of activities for young children, (i) participating in class activities, (j) taking field trips to programs of early education and care for young children, (k) taking field trips to professional resource sites, (l) creating displays, (m) writing handouts and/or newsletters for parents, (n) designing indoor and outdoor learning environments for young children, (o) developing curriculum notebooks and resource files, (p) assessing aspects of development in young children, (q) developing individual projects and presentations, (r) creating learning materials for young children, (s) writing a personal philosophy of education, (t) participating in the Campus Childcare Center and other community programs of early education and care, (u) meeting and/or working with the families of young children, (v) job shadowing, (w) writing a philosophy statement for a program of early education and care, (x) assessing physical environments for young children, (y) evaluating toys and equipment for young children including aspects of health and safety, (z) interacting with in-class guest speakers, (aa) role playing, and (bb) journal writing. All of these opportunities for active learning are detailed in individual ECD course syllabi. Many of these learning activities for ECD students were developed to fulfill the one semester hour laboratory credit described earlier in this chapter in the section detailing the quarter to semester conversion at Mapleview Community College.
Jean, an adjunct ECD faculty member, also considered the modeling of respect for the individual a part of the constructivist orientation to teaching and learning. Jean said:

We try to instill that sacred respect for the child by modeling it in our relationships with our [ECD] students. We’re respecting their opinions, we’re valuing their input, we’re listening, we’re responding to concerns. And then we’re trying to give some real hands-on examples both through fieldwork and through our classroom instruction about how you value that sacredness of the child’s individualism.

As discussed earlier in this chapter in the section describing the ECD faculty, Chloe related the ECD faculty had participated in a book discussion group during a recent academic year to discuss Vygotsky’s work on social constructivism and it’s implications to their teaching. Chloe believed Vygotsky’s work had been incorporated into the ECD program in the past few years. There were clear indications of faculty beliefs in socially constructed knowledge as Chloe explained, “I think the interaction in class, the active learning together, the peer learning, is important.” She concluded, “Cooperative learning is another big strategy here. If you’re going to be an active learner, learning cooperative learning is a part of that.”

Chloe also explained how she believed constructivism, as a conceptual orientation for adult students, would serve as a teaching model for ECD students:

So, it’s kind of trying to find out where they [the ECD students] are, and then leading them to a way that would allow them to allow children to be active learners, to discover, to say that I’m going to let you construct your own learning, your own knowledge.

Constructivism was also the conceptual orientation for teaching and learning and young children within the ECD program. As discussed in Chapter Two,
Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) is the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Constructivism, knowledge of child development, and pragmatism comprise the key components of the conceptual framework of the developmentally appropriate practice statement (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Young children are considered active learners and child development is the basis of the early childhood professional’s knowledge base (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member said, “I think that developmentally appropriate practices permeate everything that is done there [the ECD program at Mapleview], and is reflected in the students and the work that they do.” Jean, another ECD adjunct concurred. She related, “I suppose we would have taken Bredekamp’s work in developmentally appropriate practice as our Bible and our real basis for informing whatever it is that we do.” Chloe concluded, “we definitely teach developmentally appropriate planning, meeting children’s needs, child-centered, teacher/child directed, you know, facilitation and all those goods words.”

Constructivism was one aspect of the conceptual orientation of the ECD program described by the faculty and reflected in ECD program documentation. The second related aspect of the ECD program conceptual orientation identified by the faculty was problem solving/decision making.

**Problem solving/decision making.** According to Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), the early childhood teacher is expected to be a pragmatic decisionmaker who uses
multiple sources of knowledge, including professional knowledge, knowledge of
individual children, and knowledge of the social and cultural context of the classroom
and community, to solve the practical problems encountered in her teaching practice.
The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College described a theoretically
pragmatic, problem solving conceptual orientation within the ECD program. Chloe
explained:

We do use the Developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple,
1997) book in the Intro class. But when you look at it, it doesn't give a
definition of what developmentally appropriate practice is. So, immediately it
becomes a decision making model. And when they see that, then what are they
basing those decisions upon? What they know about the child. What they
know about development. What they know about the social and cultural
contexts.

As a part of becoming a problem solver/decision maker, Chloe was also
“concerned that they [the ECD students] know what the real world is.” She related
that “many times, after they’re [the ECD students] out in the real world, they come
back and say, ‘What you’re teaching isn’t what’s really happening.’” Chloe perceived
these exchanges as a problem solving/decision making exercise for both her and
students. Chloe related an example of an ECD student who began her practicum in a
community program of early care and education where the teachers and children all
washed their hands in the same dishpan of soapy water. The student came to Chloe
and related she was having “a real problem” with everyone washing their hands in the
same water and sharing germs. Chloe visited this program, which was housed in an
elementary school building, the next week and, following her observation of the
student and the classroom, casually asked the teacher, “What’s next year looking like
for your program?” The teacher enthusiastically responded, “Well, for one thing, we’re getting running water [in the classroom].” Chloe concluded:

It’s the real world! And you’re having to say in class, ‘It is the real world.’ How are you going to maintain an effort to keep children’s hand clean? How many times are you going to the bathroom? And are you all going as a group and sitting in the hall? How else can you make that work? And so, sometimes you come up with, there’s not another way. That teacher’s doing the best she can do with what she has.

Chloe viewed the ECD program as preparing ECD student for problem solving and decision making in the real world. For example, Chloe related that when she had students write detailed lesson plans in a particular ECD course the students had challenged her because “they’re not writing lesson plans out there in the real world.” Chloe had replied to the students:

Well, you are [going to write lesson plans for this class]. Because, when you become a five-part thinker, and you think about these five parts [of the lesson plan], then you will automatically think about those five parts every time you think about what you’re going to do.

Chloe believed that teaching ECD students a problem solving/decision making system for curriculum planning, “forcing them to do that, even though it’s not a real world thing and knowing that they won’t do it in the real world on paper, [would] hopefully create a model they’ll always use.”

Constructivism and problem solving/decision making were the two conceptual orientations of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. These conceptual orientations provided the curriculum theme for the structure of the ECD program, which is described in the next section.
ECD Program Structure

The structure of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College was guided by multiple external standards. The ECD program met appropriate guidelines and standards of: (a) the Ohio Board of Regents, (b) the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, (c) the Ohio Department of Education, and (d) the Ohio Department of Human Services. In addition the ECD program met voluntary guidelines of NAEYC and NCATE.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) noted four characteristics of quality and coherence related to the structure of the programs of elementary education in their study: (a) the relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience were balanced, (b) program structures enabled interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum, (c) programs were rigorous and academically challenging, and (d) programs had adequate time within the structure of the program. Each of these characteristics of quality and coherence related to the structure of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College is examined in the following sections.

Balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience. There was a clearly balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. The ECD degree program consisted of 67-70 semester hours, depending upon the student's choice of elective. The ECD degree requirements were 40-42 semester hours in early childhood and 27-28 semester hours in general education.
The ECD program requirements for pedagogical knowledge in early childhood met standards established by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Human Services. These requirements reflected the early childhood core of professional knowledge identified by NAEYC (Willer, 1994; NAEYC, DEC/CED, NBPTS, 1996) which were described in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The structure of the ECD program included the following categories of pedagogical knowledge: (a) knowledge and application of child development, (b) observing and assessing children’s behavior, (c) establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment, (d) planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, (e) demonstrating appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, (f) establishing and maintaining positive relationships with families, (g) supporting learning and development within a context of family and culture, and (h) demonstrating professionalism (Willer, 1994; NAEYC, DEC/CED, NBPTS, 1996).

The general education requirements of the ECD degree program included courses in psychology, child development, sociology, English composition, speech, humanities, computer applications, science, and mathematics. These were courses that Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member, described as “those basic courses they all would take as a beginning in a four-year college.” As described earlier in this section, due to the constructivist conceptual orientation of the ECD program, experiential knowledge was integrated into the entire ECD curriculum, culminating in a practicum experience in a community program of early education and care during the student’s final quarter.
Chloe explained ECD students first took a core of three ECD courses: (a) introduction to early childhood education, (b) introduction to early childhood curriculum, and (c) observing and guiding young children. These three courses were the prerequisites for ECD courses in health, safety, nutrition, recognizing child-abuse, first aid, cognitive development, creativity, language and literacy, children with special needs, family and community resources, and practicum. ECD electives included courses in administration of child care programs, programs for infants and toddlers, creating instructional materials, the High Scope curriculum, and the Reggio Emilia approach. ECD courses varied from one to four semester credits. All ECD courses were offered in a once-a-week time block on Tuesday or Thursday. Chloe explained this left Monday, Wednesday and Friday for students to schedule their required general education courses.

The balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience was one characteristic of quality and coherence related to the structure of the program found within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, a second characteristic of quality and coherence associated with program structure, are examined in the following section.

**Interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum.** As described earlier in this chapter, the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College included an interdisciplinary divisional composition. Interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum were clearly evident within the ECD program. For example, ECD students were expected to integrate child development knowledge from their psychology
courses in all of their ECD courses. Jean, an adjunct ECD faculty member, related, "As we talk about the brain research then the [ECD] students say, ‘Oh, yes! We just learned this in psychology.’" Chloe related the ECD students in psychology classes had “an opportunity, many times” to choose research topics related to their professional field. For example, Chloe described a student who chose to research differences between the children of working parents and children of non-working parents for her psychology class.

In addition to psychology, Chloe offered multiple examples of interdisciplinary curricular approaches with ECD courses and English composition, the humanities, sociology, human biology, and speech. Chloe explained the campus culture at Mapleview included a “real push for writing. So the [English] composition class is really important to us. They’re not doing anything specifically in composition that would say, ‘This is early childhood.’ But we’re turning around and saying [to ECD students], ‘Use your comp guide.’” Chloe perceived a direct relationship between the humanities and the curriculum developed by ECD students. Chloe explained:

We hope they’re [the ECD students] developing an appreciation for fine art and music so that children will be exposed to some classical music and you would see them choose some classroom pieces that would be good art, that would be attractive to children. In the creativity class we do talk about that.

Chloe also described a clear interdisciplinary curricular approach between sociology and the ECD program. She explained, “They take sociology and family and marriage, and so that constantly relates.” ECD students who planned to transfer to a four-year college were required to take a laboratory science as a part of their degree program. Chloe indicated many of the ECD students took a course in human biology that had
been designed for nursing students because ECD students learned “about the body and how it works and about cells and germs. It makes more sense in our program because kinesthetically they would see how muscles work. Communicable disease-wise they would understand that chain of infection.” Chloe explained the communications faculty at Maplevue was currently deliberating whether to offer program specific speech courses in which the speeches you gave “related to the program in some way.” She believed this interdisciplinary approach would offer ECD students an opportunity to prepare to speak to parents and present at professional meetings. Chloe concluded, “We’ve tried to choose general ed courses that would help us focus.”

As a characteristic of quality and coherence, interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum were evident at the divisional and program levels at Maplevue Community College. The third characteristic of quality and coherence related to program structure, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was a rigorous and academically challenging program. The rigor and academic challenge of the ECD program at Maplevue Community College is described in the following section.

**Rigorous and academically challenging program.** The ECD faculty described many aspects of the ECD program that were rigorous and academically challenging. Chloe explained this was an area of the ECD program she had carefully considered during the past academic year because of the number of ECD students who had graduated with honors. Chloe recalled, “I think we had fourteen graduates and eight of them might have graduated with honors. And that’s way high. The president doesn’t want to see that you’ve got a program full. He questions the intellectual
challenge of that." Chloe went on to explain that after graduation she had gone back
and checked the student records of those ECD students who had graduated with
honors. Chloe said, at the time she had asked herself, "Do I give away grades?" After
examining the ECD honors graduates Chloe found, "They not only go A's in early
childhood courses, they got A's in human biology and humanities and child psych. So
when I look at it that way, they're good students."

When asked to describe the intellectual challenge of the ECD program, Chloe
responded "I think that we have courses where students are more challenged
intellectually." Chloe said, I've looked for ways to make it [the ECD program]
legitimate, to keep it really legitimate." Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member,
responded she believed the intellectual challenge of the curriculum in the ECD
program was "right on target." Jayne continued:

I think that it is challenging enough to truly be a challenge to the students. I
know that the expectations are high and that the standards are high and
maintained. But, I don't think they are daunting, in the sense that it could just
be overwhelming for students.

Jean, another ECD adjunct faculty member, paused before she responded. She said:

I think it's probably a moderate intellectual challenge. I think our Intro course
is probably very much of an intellectual challenge. I think Chloe designed
Intro so that students know this is a rigorous course that they're taking. And
that they must buckle down and study. Just the realization that you're really
going to have to spend some time on this takes a while to sink in, for some
students. That it's [the ECD program] not all 'make-it/take-it' and it's not even
fun sometimes.

Jean also believed that some faculty members at Mapleview may have had
unreasonable intellectual challenges in their courses. Jean said:
I only know that, from talking to students, some of them are very stressed, concerned, worried, and preoccupied with meeting some of those challenges. The biology, the psychology, (pause) sometimes it does appear as though some professors have been expecting graduate, super-graduate level work for what is an undergraduate, beginning level course. However, you’ll find that every place.

ECD and general education courses that included theoretical concepts seemed to be the most readily identified with intellectual challenge within the ECD program. The Introduction to Early Childhood course was mentioned by all ECD faculty interviewed for this study as intellectually challenging. A major component of the Introduction course was the study of major theorists influencing the field early childhood including Maslow, Piaget, Erickson, and Vygotsky. Students in the ECD Introduction course also studied the influences of behaviorists, constructivists, the NAEYC developmentally appropriate practice statement (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), and maturationists to the profession of early childhood education. Many other ECD courses included theory as a part of the curriculum. In the ECD observation and guidance course, students compared and contrasted Social Learning, Rogerian, and Adlerian theories regarding children’s behaviors. In the ECD early childhood curriculum course, students studied early childhood curriculum models including the Anti-Bias curriculum, the Creative Curriculum, High Scope, Bank Street, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Head Start. The theoretical focus in the ECD creative activities course was Howard Gardner’s work on multiple intelligence. Students based their studies in the ECD cognitive activities class on both Piaget’s stages of cognitive learning as well as Vygotsky’s social constructivism. Chloe concluded her discussion of the theorists studied by the ECD students when she said, “So we use Erickson,
Maslow, Piaget, Vygotsky. Child psych does a little bit of Kohlberg. We talk a little bit about Dewey as the very basis of the education system that we have. But I think that’s about it.”

As described in an earlier section, the ECD program utilized an interdisciplinary approach with many aspects of the general education curriculum. This integration of general education demonstrated another aspect of the rigor and academic challenge of the ECD program. For example, the ECD program set clear standards for professional written and oral communication skills. Chloe explained, “There’s a real desire here [at Mapleview Community College] to have them graduate and have writing skills. So we’ve agreed, as an institution, to not pass those things off easily. The same way with speaking.” Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member who directed a program of early education and care used as a practicum site for the ECD program, believed the standard of writing expected from ECD students was quite high. She related practicum students at her program were expected to write parent newsletters and a written weekly review of the children’s curriculum for parents. Jayne explained, “we are just such sticklers for good grammar and for correct spelling.” Jayne also described a situation in which she had reviewed resumes for a job opening in her program. She had traveled to a clearinghouse in a nearby community and looked through a large number of resumes of persons seeking jobs in the early childhood field. Jayne recalled:

The difference between the resumes I would get from Mapleview students and what she had there [at the clearinghouse], it was just absolutely incredible. Some had not only grammatical errors, misspelled. Some of them were handwritten with crossed out words. You would never get anything like that
from a Mapleview student. They would always be very well done and very professionally done.

The ECD program at Mapleview Community College was rigorous and academically challenging as an associate degree program. The final characteristic of quality and coherence (Howey & Zimpher, 1989) related to program structure was that programs had adequate time within the structure of the program, which is discussed in the next section.

**Adequate time within the structure of the program.** A characteristic of quality and coherence in programs of elementary teacher education, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was adequate time within the structure of the program. The ECD faculty at Mapleview consistently described time in ways indicating it was inadequate or challenging. Comments such as Chloe’s “I have to look at how much class time can I take to do this?” or Jayne’s description of ECD courses as “very compact, with very little time” were typical. Jean, in a discussion on continuity between field and laboratory experiences and the ECD program in the language and literature class she taught explained:

Then I hope not only does it work classroom to field experience but field experience back to classroom. So that, if they find something really intriguing, I hope that we’re giving an opportunity [to discuss that in class]. A lot of times, time is short, and you can allow just for a narrow reporting, because we have one semester for language and literature. That’s a valuable thing for students to hear what each other has to say. That can also just burn up a huge amount of classroom time. It’s such a trade off and so, you have to pick and choose.

ECD students and faculty both expressed challenges with time, especially the time required to be a practicum student and to observe practicum students. The State
of Ohio Department of Education mandates 300 clock hours of supervised field experience for prekindergarten associate degree programs, the same number of hours required in Ohio baccalaureate degree programs of teacher education. Jean, in a discussion of practicum seminar, said, “Some students have said that we really would like to have more time.” As discussed earlier in this chapter in section on the milieu of the ECD program, time, especially travel time, was an issue for the ECD faculty member who taught the practicum class. Jean explained the challenge of time as the practicum instructor. “It’s not doable,” Jean said. “It’s very difficult. It’s very time consuming. It takes me the whole morning to get up to [a practicum site in an adjoining county]. And be there a whole hour and maybe have a chance to talk with the student afterwards.” Jean concluded “It’s almost impossible for Chloe to get out three times” to observe practicum students due to her teaching load of three to four other ECD courses.

As discussed earlier in the faculty section of this chapter, the ECD faculty had full professional lives. The entire ECD faculty had expressed, however, interest in meeting more frequently to discuss issues related to teaching and learning. They were very interested in opportunities to share teaching strategies but, as Jean expressed, “We probably need to meet together more often. And we would do that if we just, (pause) time is just an element for everyone. It’s called, time, time, time.”

Adequate time within the structure of the program, the fourth characteristic of quality and coherence related to program structure as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was described as challenging and perceived as sometimes inadequate
by the ECD faculty interviewed in this study. The final characteristic of quality and coherence related to programs of teacher education was systematic program evaluation (Howey & Zimpher, 1989). The extensive formal and informal evaluations of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College are described in the following section.

Systematic Program Evaluation

Systematic program evaluation was a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The ECD program at Mapleview Community College was systematically evaluated through multiple methods. The first type of systematic evaluation was by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredited Mapleview Community College. The entire college, including the ECD program, participated in this self-study and external evaluation process. Chloe related, “The college came out very well with North Central.”

A second type of systematic evaluation of the ECD program was the program review. Mapleview Community College had instituted a system of internal evaluation through a process of reviewing individual programs within the college. Chloe explained the college had established a cyclical schedule in which each program at Mapleview was reviewed every five years. As a part of the program review, each program completed an internal questionnaire and was then evaluated by an external team. The ECD program had been positively reviewed during the first year of the Mapleview Community College program review cycle.
A third type of internal systematic evaluation of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College was the yearly program assessment. This was a formal self-assessment procedure completed by program faculty and submitted to Mapleview Community College administrators.

The fourth type of systematic evaluation of the ECD program was the prekindergarten review of the program conducted by a team from the State of Ohio Department of Education. As discussed earlier in this chapter in the section detailing the quarter to semester conversion, preparations for the prekindergarten review guided the revision of the total ECD program. When asked about evaluation of the program, Chloe said, “The biggest thing we’ve done is applying for Pre-K. That made us look at everything.” Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member related, “Certainly, in applying for state accreditation for the Pre-K program, that was just such a thorough, thorough investigation and research [of the ECD program]”. Jean, another adjunct ECD faculty member, described the Pre-K process as a “rigorous evaluation”.

A fifth type of evaluation described by the ECD faculty was faculty evaluations by ECD students. Chloe explained Mapleview used a standardized faculty evaluation form for all faculty members that took students twenty to twenty-five minutes to complete. Student evaluations of faculty were used by the Mapleview administration as a part of the faculty performance review. Chloe expressed some concerns related to faculty evaluations by students. She believed, “It’s hard on students, because if they’re taking five classes they have to do it in each of their classes. They hate it.” Chloe indicated she believed she could pick out the
evaluations of students who were failing, doing poorly in the class, or who were angry or upset with some aspect of the class.

Chloe also suggested there were ways in which student evaluations of faculty were helpful. She explained:

It does help because if you’re very slow in handing graded papers back, it shows that you are. If you were not on time for class, it would show. It they thought you had favorites, that might show up. Mine, my papers are slow in coming back, and they always get me for that.

Chloe also described how differences in perceptions between faculty and students were illuminated by the student evaluations of faculty:

It’s strange, because sometimes they’ll say that you’re not prepared. And that’s so funny, because you go into class knowing what you’re going to do. But, you wonder if the students know what you’re going to do. So, one of my questions [to the class] has always been, ‘What are we going to do today?’ to see if students know what we’re going to do today. And I think they think I don’t know what we’re going to do today!

The sixth type of program evaluation described by the ECD faculty was a number of informal evaluation processes used by individual faculty members in various ECD classes. Chloe related, “To evaluate the program and to evaluate the class, I ask for feedback. I found that journals are a wonderful way to get feedback. Students tell you in a very natural way.” Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member, also indicated the importance of student journals for class and program evaluation. When asked if there was a process for evaluation of the ECD program she responded, “Certainly!” and explained the ECD students “keep a personal journal. And they discuss things freely and openly with Chloe, not only about being here [at a practicum site], but about other parts of the program.” Jean, another adjunct ECD faculty
member, related how this informal process of evaluation by students impacted the ECD program. She said, "And through students' comments, we also discover some things we're not addressing or things that we’re not addressing real well." Jean also mentioned she often asked students, on a final examination, for ways to improve the course to make it better.

The seventh type of program evaluation which impacted the ECD program at Mapleview Community College was the accreditation of the Campus Childcare Center by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. At the time of this study ECD faculty, ECD students, the Campus Childcare Center staff, and Campus Childcare parents were in the self-study phase of the accreditation process. Chloe, as director of the Campus Childcare Center, administered the preparations for the accreditation. Both Chloe and Jayne, an adjunct ECD faculty member, were certified validators for the NAEYC National Academy. Jayne explained she believed the impact of this self-study process on the ECD program would, “in itself, just inevitably, involve an investigation of many of the courses that the [ECD] student needs, their participation, and their expectations.”

Systematic program evaluation was a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). Within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College an established system of formal and informal evaluation of the ECD program ensured a systematic evaluation of the program. ECD faculty had utilized these multiple evaluative processes to focus on the development of conceptual
and curricular coherence within the ECD program. The ECD faculty quest for coherence is described in the following section.

**Conceptual and Curricular Program Coherence**

The ECD program at Mapleview Community College exhibited multiple characteristics of conceptual and curricular coherence. There were many indications of an on-going pursuit for conceptual and curricular coherence among the entire ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College. First, as described in the section of this chapter relating to the ECD faculty, Chloe had consciously sought conceptual coherence among ECD faculty by seeking part-time ECD faculty through the Area Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC), the local NAEYC affiliate. Chloe recalled, “The AAEYC connection was an easy way to know who was the developmentally appropriate practice person, because they joined. And so we immediately had a common ground there.” Chloe commented she wanted to “know that person before I had her teach.”

A second indicator of conceptual and curricular coherence within the ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College was the development of consistent, coherent ECD class policies and syllabi. This development occurred during a series of summer meetings attended by many of the ECD faculty members. The ECD faculty met to discuss classroom policies such as grading scales and late policies, “all of the things,” Chloe said, “we wrestle with alone.” She explained:

I decided that I needed a way to draw people into the same basket. That we couldn’t all be out here telling students different things. We decided that we needed to be a department and we needed to look at each other and say, ‘I like what you do. I’ll do that. Can you do this?’ So there was a lot of give and
take. There were no arguments. We found common ground easily. We adopted policies that are alike. There’s one set of early childhood policies.

Every syllabus for every ECD course contains the same set of class policy statements as agreed upon by the ECD faculty. The ECD Class Policy Statement included ECD students’ responsibilities regarding readings, attendance and participation, submission of original work for each ECD course, typing assignments, submitting assignments on time, and completing all assignment in a course in order to receive a final grade.

The third indicator of the ECD faculty's goal of curriculum coherence was represented in the ECD program through the planned sequence of ECD and general education prerequisites. Chloe related, however, that while the ECD faculty tried to keep ECD student “in sequence” they also recognized ECD students needed to “be able to go at their own pace, at their own time schedule and meet their needs.” She explained, “our curriculum doesn’t build quite that tightly on each other.” Chloe related she made decisions about ECD students taking courses without prerequisites on an individual basis:

I'm not going to tell you that you can’t do it. If I think you’re capable of doing it, and the class is being offered, just because you don’t have those other two courses, I’m going to slot you in there because it meets your need. Otherwise I would have you around for five or six years instead of three or four or five years.

The final indicator of conceptual and curricular coherence in the ECD program was the allocation of audiovisual resources to particular ECD courses. Chloe explained ECD faculty had reviewed ECD course resources, such as videos, to “decide who would use what, where.” Chloe related, in the past, adjunct faculty would review the available ECD class videos and pick videos for their class that ECD students may
have previously viewed in other ECD classes. Chloe said, students would complain, and say, “Well, I just saw that. Can I leave?” The ECD program has an extensive collection of videos and some students were seeing particular videos again and again. These ECD faculty deliberations included reviewing available curriculum resources and developing a list of resources for each ECD class. This resource list was added to each ECD course master syllabus.

Conceptual and curriculum coherence was an integral part of the associate degree program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College. Faculty had actively sought to develop coherence among the ECD courses, coherence between courses in the ECD program and general education, conceptual coherence between the ECD program and the multiple professional standards upon which the program was based, and conceptual coherence between the ECD program and the identified program themes of constructivism and problem solving/decision making. As described earlier in this chapter, conceptual coherence between the ECD program and the programs of education and care for young children used as practicum sites was also a clear goal.

The Subject Matter of the ECD Program: Summary

Five of the six characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter of programs of teacher education identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) were found in the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. The ECD faculty identified constructivism and problem solving/decision making as two clear curricular themes. The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and
experience was satisfactorily balanced. The divisional structure at Mapleview as well as the structure of the ECD program enabled interdisciplinary approaches to the ECD curriculum. ECD students also studied and planned interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum for young children. The ECD faculty concurred that the ECD program, especially those courses in which theoretical concepts were taught, was rigorous and academically challenging for an associate degree program. The ECD program was systematically evaluated by multiple external and internal processes. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs in their study to have adequate time within the structure of the program. No data could be found to support this characteristic within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College. Finally, the ECD program at Mapleview Community College exhibited multiple characteristics of conceptual and curricular coherence, a clear characteristic of a quality program of teacher education.

Conclusion

In this chapter a case study of a prekindergarten program of teacher education was presented through holistic description and analysis. The central purpose of this case was to investigate the bounded phenomena in this research, the Early Childhood Development Program of prekindergarten teacher education at Mapleview Community College. Multiple data sources were used to provide an extensive view of the case. A significant part of the case of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College focused on intrinsic (Stake, 1995) aspects of the case to enable the reader to better understand a prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education. The intrinsic case study was important due to the lack of knowledge concerning associate
degree programs of early childhood teacher education, noted repeatedly in the literature.

The other important aspect of this case was the focus on the instrumental aspect of the case. An instrumental case study provides insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, identified 14 characteristics of quality and coherence. The ECD program at Mapleview Community College was studied to identify what aspects of a high-quality, coherent program of teacher education, as described by Howey and Zimpher (1989), were present and how identified characteristics of quality and coherence were represented in the program. The conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978), the teacher, the milieu, the student, and the subject matter, was used to facilitate an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in the prekindergarten program of teacher education at Mapleview Community College.

Three characteristics of quality and coherence related to the ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College. These characteristics were similar to those found by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The characteristics of quality and coherence within the ECD program at Mapleview Community College were: (a) ECD faculty identified with distinctive aspects of the program, (b) ECD faculty possessed a clear conception of teaching and learning, and (c) ECD faculty clearly linked their program with research and development in the field of early childhood education. A unique aspect of quality
among the ECD faculty at Mapleview was the professional cohort group among the early childhood professionals in the community.

Three characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) related to both the institutional milieu of Mapleview Community College and the milieu of the Early Childhood Development program itself. The characteristics of the milieu found at Mapleview were similar to those described by Howey and Zimpher (1989): (a) the ECD program goals were clear, reasonable, and professional, (b) the ECD program had more than adequate resources including a dedicated ECD classroom, an ECD Resource Room in the Mapleview Community College Library, and a laboratory facility in the Campus Childcare Center, and (c) curriculum articulation with community programs of education and care for young children used as practicum sites was in a process of growth and development.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) described two characteristics of quality and coherence related to the students in programs of teacher education. ECD students at Mapleview Community College had similar characteristics: (a) students identified with informal cohort groups, and (b) students recognized the ECD practicum course as the milestone or benchmark point in the program.

Finally, five of the six characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter, as identified Howey & Zimpher (1989) were reflected in the subject matter of the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College: (a) the ECD program was rigorous and academically challenging as an associate degree program, (b) constructivism and problem solving/decision making,
the conceptual orientation of the ECD program, was reflected thematically through the program, (c) there was a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience, (d) the Mapleview Community College divisional structure, the ECD program structure, and the nature of developmentally appropriate practices for young children enabled interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, (e) the ECD program was systematically evaluated through multiple internal, external, formal, and informal processes. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of elementary education in this study had adequate time within the structure of the programs. ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College described time as an ongoing challenge. In addition to these characteristics of quality and coherence, the ECD program also exhibited multiple characteristics of conceptual and curricular coherence.
CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY AND COHERENCE
IN ASSOCIATE DEGREE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION

VOLUME II

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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By

Mary Ann Connolly, M.S.Ed.

* * * *

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ABSTRACT

Little previous research was found in the literature related to the characteristics of associate degree programs of prekindergarten early childhood teacher education. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding regarding two typical associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in Ohio.

The major questions guiding this research were: (a) what are the characteristics of two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education and (b) what characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), are found in these programs. A qualitative, naturalistic, non-manipulative case study research approach was used to explore in detail the contexts of each program. Data collection methods included: (a) in-depth, semi-structured interviews of early childhood faculty and staff, (b) examination of varied documents related to each program, (c) observations of selected early childhood classes and program facilities, and (d) photographs of program facilities.

A constant comparison method of data analysis was utilized to analyze data using the tool QRS*NUDIST 4, a qualitative data analysis software program. Two conceptual frameworks guided this study: (a) Schwab's (1978) four commonplaces of
The curriculum: the teacher, the milieu, the students, and the subject matter; and (b) characteristics of quality and coherence in exemplary programs of teacher education as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). Individual case studies of each program were written to describe the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of each case.

The major findings of the study were: (a) both unique as well as shared characteristics regarding the faculty, students, milieu, and subject matter were identified in the two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education; (b) both programs possessed a practical, deliberative approach to curriculum development; (c) each program had a distinct conceptual orientation to teacher education: one used a practical, problem-solving/decision-making orientation while in the other, a personal, valuing-the-individual orientation permeated the program; and (d) most, but not all, of the characteristics of quality and coherence, as described by Howey and Zimpher (1989), were identified in the two associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in this study. Implications for future research were suggested.
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## Characteristics of Quality and Coherence in Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

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### Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to Faculty in Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

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- Faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program
- Faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning
- Programs link with research and development in teacher education

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- Program goals are clear and reasonable
- Programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories
- Programs have curriculum articulation with the schools

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- Students identify with a cohort group
- Students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program

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### Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to the Subject Matter of Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

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- Program curriculum is thematic
- The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience is balanced
- Program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum
- Programs are rigorous and academically challenging
- Programs are systematically evaluated
- Programs have adequate time within the structure of the program

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CHAPTER 5

THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OF TEACHER EDUCATION OF BEACHLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"I’m here to help them learn and I really care about what they do."
Sue Ralough, the single full-time Early Childhood Education faculty member at Beachline Community College.

Introducing the Case

The Setting

The route to Beachline Community College was dusted with snow as I drove along the interstate highway. The countryside surrounding the freeway was snow covered and, in spite of intermittent snow squalls, traffic proceeded at a brisk pace. I began my research at Beachline Community College in the midst of a typical midwestern winter with below freezing temperatures and blowing snow. When I had concluded my initial interviews at Beachline, flowering trees and spring bulbs were in full bloom. The sprawling Beachline Community College campus was located quite close to the interstate highway, on the edge of a moderately sized city within a short driving distance from a number of larger urban communities. The Beachline Campus was snow covered and flat with bare trees interspersed with tall evergreens dotting the landscape. Multiple light brick building comprised the Beachline Community College
campus. I had contacted Sue Ralough, the single full-time Early Childhood Education (ECE) faculty member at Beachline, previous to the December holiday period. Sue had indicated her keen interest in discussing Beachline's ECE program with me.

I traveled to Beachline Community College with the same research questions I had used to study the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College. What was the role of the faculty in the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College? What types of students were enrolled in the program? What aspects of the college and the surrounding community affected the program? What was the associate degree prekindergarten program of teacher education at Beachline Community College? Would I find characteristics of quality and coherence similar to those identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in this program of prekindergarten teacher education? What similarities and differences would I find between the Early Childhood Development Program (ECD) at Mapleview Community College and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program at Beachline Community College? I brought all of these questions with me as I began my research at Beachline Community College.

Sue Ralough's office was located in a divisional suite of faculty offices. The secretary announced my arrival, and Sue led me down a short hallway to her office. We passed through a small suite meeting area containing faculty mailboxes, a coffeepot on a stand, and a small circular table with several chairs. Attached to Sue's office door was a small bulletin board with a schedule of her office hours and a brightly colored invitation to ECE students to leave her a message. The rectangular
interior of Sue's compact office was crowded. A large desk and two side chairs took up one long wall. On the opposite wall were two short bookcases, filled with professional books related to early childhood education, and a tall file cabinet. Children's art and photographs of Sue's family and ECE students were scattered on the walls, on her desk, and on top of the bookcases and file cabinets. A tall, narrow window overlooking a parking lot filled the short wall opposite the door.

I began my research of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College in this small office. Multiple interviews with Sue Ralough, the single full-time Early Childhood Education faculty member, Dawne O'Brien, the ECE program laboratory assistant who was also a graduate of the ECE program, and Kelly Moore, a part-time adjunct ECE faculty member, tours, observations of campus facilities, documents, and photographs constituted the data collected to develop an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in the prekindergarten program of teacher education at Beachline Community College. The representation of this data is presented as a case study in this chapter.

**An Overview of the Case**

As in the case study of Mapleview Community College presented in the preceding chapter, the conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum, the subject matter, the milieu, the teacher, and the students (Schwab, 1978), ensured meaningful elements of this case would be examined. The format for describing the case of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline is similar to the process used in the case study of the ECD program at Mapleview. The case study of the Early
Childhood Education (ECE) program at Beachline Community College begins with a description of the ECE faculty to explore the research questions related to the role of faculty in a prekindergarten associate degree program of early childhood teacher education. The characteristics of quality and coherence associated with the ECE faculty are also examined. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found three characteristics of quality and coherence associated with the faculty in exemplary programs of elementary teacher education: (a) faculty identified with distinctive aspects of the program, (b) faculty possessed clear conceptions of teaching and learning, and (c) faculty clearly linked their programs with research and development in teacher education. At Beachline Community College similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found. ECE faculty and staff identified with multiple aspects of the program, expressed clear conceptions of teaching and learning, and identified their program with research and development in the field of early childhood education, especially contemporary issues related to the health of young children. One unique aspect of the ECE program at Beachline was the role of Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant, who was a graduate of the ECE program.

The milieu of Beachline Community College’s prekindergarten program of teacher education is examined in the second section of this chapter. Specific social, cultural, and/or environmental contexts are considered to explore the particular interrelated conditions in which the Beachline Community College Early Childhood Education program occurred. Three characteristics of quality and coherence related to the milieu of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education were identified by
Howey and Zimpher (1989): (a) program goals were clear and reasonable, (b) programs had adequate resources including materials and laboratories, and (c) programs had curriculum articulation with the schools. At Beachline Community College, similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found. The ECE program had clear and reasonable goals. The Early Childhood Curriculum Materials Center, located within the Beachline Community College library, and the ECE program's affiliation with the campus Rainbow Children's Learning Center provided adequate resources for ECE students. A variety of community programs of early education and care were used as practicum sites for the ECE program. Curriculum articulation between these sites and the ECE program at Beachline was described as consistent.

In the third section of this chapter, characteristics of Beachline's Early Childhood Education students are considered in response to the research question concerning student characteristics. Two characteristics of quality and coherence related to students were described by Howey and Zimpher (1989): (a) students identify with a cohort group, and (b) students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program. The ECE faculty at Beachline Community College continued to work to structure the ECE program to accommodate the diverse characteristics and needs of the ECE students. Formal cohort groups were not practical, due to the varied characteristics and needs of ECE students. Informal student cohorts existed within the group of ECE students at Beachline and these informal cohorts were supported by activities planned by faculty, including the ECE student club.
In the fourth section of this chapter, in response to the research questions in this study concerning associate degree programs of teacher education, the subject matter of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College is examined. The specific nature of the curriculum and its organization are explored to determine the structural and conceptual orientations of the program. Exemplary programs of elementary teacher education had the following characteristics of quality and coherence (Howey & Zimpher, 1989): (a) the programs were rigorous and academically challenging, (b) the curriculum was thematic, (c) there was a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience, (d) the program structure enabled interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, (e) the programs had adequate time within the structure of the program, and (f) the programs were systematically evaluated. Similar characteristics of quality and coherence were found in the ECE program at Beachline Community College. The ECE faculty described the ECE program as academically challenging at an associate degree level. The ECE program had two clearly articulated program themes: (a) constructivism and (b) valuing the individual. The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience was carefully balanced. No evidence was found to indicate there was not adequate time within the structure of the program. This chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the findings in this case study of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College.
The Faculty

At the time of this study, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) faculty at Beachline Community College included one full-time faculty member and five part-time, adjunct faculty. Two of the Early Childhood Education faculty members, Sue Ralough and Kelly Moore, were interviewed for this study. There was a unique staff member within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. Dawne O’Brien, a graduate of the Beachline Community College ECE program, held the staff position of Early Childhood Education Laboratory Assistant. Dawne was also interviewed for this study. All of the names of the Beachline faculty and staff are pseudonyms and their identities have been masked.

Professional knowledge of the teacher was one of the commonplaces of curriculum development identified by Schwab (1978). Schwab (1978) believed this knowledge should include information concerning teachers’ professional knowledge base as well as their capacity for professional growth. At Beachline Community College the faculty role of Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, was extensive and complex. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study identified with distinctive aspects of the program. Sue Ralough identified with all aspects of the program and was viewed by part-time faculty and ECE staff as the individual with full knowledge and understanding of the ECE program.

Sue Ralough: The Single Full-Time ECE Faculty Member

Typical associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education have a single full-time faculty member (Katz & Goffin, 1990). Sue Ralough, the primary
informant in this case study, was the single full-time faculty member for the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College. Immediately following her high school graduation in the early 1970s, Sue attended a local state university while working as a secretary. Early childhood education was not an available major at the state university at this time. Sue’s undergraduate major was speech and language pathology, “the closest thing we had to children,” according to Sue. In the midst of completing the speech and language pathology practicum during her senior year, Sue quit the university when a client at her practicum site verbally assaulted her. Sue related, “I just picked my book bag up, turned around, and walked out and I never went back to the [speech and language pathology] program. Never!” Sue described this experience as “a spin point for me in dealing with students in practicum. I think that my heart wants to have them be successful.”

After leaving the university, Sue took a part-time job as a secretary at her church. Her congregation supported a program of early care and education for approximately 150 young children within its building complex. The director of this church’s program for young children suddenly resigned about three months after Sue had begun working as the church secretary. Her pastor asked Sue to become the new director because, “you’ve got some background with kids. You can help me out.” Sue assumed the director position and “just dove in and learned the business and stayed until 10, 11, 12 o’clock and night. I reorganized the office, went through everything, learned the [Ohio Department of Human Resources] rules. It was a wonderful challenge for me.” Sue worked as the center director for her church’s
program of early education and care for young children for four years. During that
time she returned to school at a local community college and earned an associate
degree in early childhood education with an emphasis in young children with special
needs. Sue then transferred her credits from the community college to the local state
university where she had previously studied. After completing a few additional
courses at the state university, Sue graduated with a bachelor’s degree in speech
communication disorders.

Sue’s church moved to a large, newly constructed complex of buildings soon
after her graduation. Sue moved with them, helping to plan and establish a new
program of early care and education for young children in the modern facility. Sue
administered this new program for young children for another year and then moved
into the position of Education Coordinator for her church’s congregation, a position
she held into the mid 1980s. Sue began to feel a need for further professional growth.
She recalled:

I just really felt the need to grow more. The only way I could go was to be a
counselor or go back to school and get my Christian Ed certification, a pastoral
kind of thing that I really wasn’t interested in. So, I started looking around and
saw an ad in the paper for Head Start. I was always interested in that.

As the Education Coordinator of her church, Sue worked in what she described
as “a multi-million dollar building and an office with everything I wanted.” Sue’s
interview with the Head Start agency was in a basement room in an old, urban church
where, Sue said, “the paint was falling of the wall.” She recalled, “I thought, ‘I don’t
want this job.’” Sue explained, “I screwed the interview up, I thought. And they
called the next day and said, ‘We want to give you the position of supervising teacher
over several centers.” Sue smiled as she recalled her reply to this job offer to work with Head Start. “In my heart I was saying, ‘No!’ and my mouth said, ‘Yes!’ to the job.”

Sue worked as a supervising teacher in the Head Start program for approximately four years. As she described this part of her professional career, Sue commented, “It was just an incredible experience but it was a painful experience because I had never worked with that clientele. The families and the children [pause]—it taught me an awful lot.” Sue explained she liked her job at Head Start and “worked really hard at it. I loved the people. We built a wonderful team.” Sue continued her professional development while working as a supervising teacher. The Head Start program where she was employed used the High Scope curriculum model and Sue became an “endorsed trainer of trainers” in this model by attending a series of workshops offered by the High Scope organization. During this period Sue also completed 15 semester hours of graduate work in family counseling at a local private university.

While Sue was working for Head Start, one of the teachers that she supervised was hired by Beachline Community College to begin a new program in early childhood education. Sue explained she was asked to be an adjunct faculty member in Beachline’s newly formed Early Childhood Education program. Sue said, “I started teaching on my lunch hour and after school. I really enjoyed it.” In 1987 Sue was offered a three-quarters time faculty position at Beachline Community College and made the decision to leave Head Start. Sue was hired specifically to coordinate and
prepare the Beachline Community College Early Childhood Education program’s Prekindergarten application for the Ohio Department of Education. The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College was approved by the Ohio Department of Education as a Prekindergarten Associate program in 1988. Sue continued to teach as a three-quarters time faculty member at Beachline until 1990, when the full-time ECE faculty member suddenly resigned. Sue was offered the full-time tenure-track position, which she accepted. Full-time faculty status led Sue to assume a number of ECE program responsibilities. These are described in the following section.

**ECE program responsibilities.** Sue considered teaching her primary program responsibility. She recalled what she described as “a wonderful learning experience” from one of her community college early childhood education instructors. Sue said:

> I remember sitting in her class. She was an incredible teacher. I only had her for one class. And I remember her teaching one day and I thought, ‘Gosh, I could do that!’ And that was kind of a pivotal point for me.

Sue related that for her first few years as a full-time faculty member in the ECE program at Beachline Community College she “pretty much” did what her predecessor had done. Sue explained she “taught all of the [ECE] courses with the exception of special needs and sensorimotor.” She believed this background of teaching most of the curriculum in the program of Early Childhood Education “gave me a real baseline of knowing what the courses needed to be.”

Sue described her teaching and planning within the program of Early Childhood Education at Beachline Community College. She explained:
I never teach a class the same way. I will have part of it that will be the same. And I always have a plan, from attending workshops, reading research, or whatever. It always seems to vary. But, to pick up the same syllabus and go with it. I just don’t do that. And I try different things. And, I think that’s been a burden [for me], but it’s also an asset for the students. I never use the same notes. I always throw them away. It’s always fresh and new depending on where I feel the class is and where I feel I am. Sometimes I wish I would just pull them [the class notes] and do the same dance routine [laughter] like some of my peers do.

Sue expressed her belief that students needed a variety of means to express their learning, including projects, papers, tests, and quizzes. She believed student evaluations needed to be more than “just a midterm and a final.” She explained, “I personally struggles with tests. I can have the information, but getting it out on paper [Sue slowly shook her head].”

Sue also served as the academic advisor for all of the Early Childhood Education students at Beachline Community College, a responsibility she described as “a big task.” She made individual appointments with students for academic advising by posting an advising schedule on the bulletin board on her door. For students who were unable to come at scheduled times, Sue explained, “I have them call me and I’ll come back [to the campus]. Usually I do a couple of evenings so I can advise the evening students.” Sue’s personal beliefs about teaching and learning, which guided her teaching as well as her interactions with ECE students, are described in the following section.

Personal theory of action. Sue believed “two really ground level basic concepts” guided her teaching practice. The first concept encompassed “the students and staff and children being treated fairly, building self-esteem.” Sue’s second
guiding concept was the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s statement of developmentally appropriate practice (1997). Sue explained, “I believe those things are basic and all other things are going to fall right into place” when those two guiding concepts are followed.

Sue considered it important to “look at each student as an individual.” She related, however, this was:

 Pretty tough when you have 106 to 116 of them. But I think it’s a real key. And, again, it’s something that I really try to do in my classes. I try to really stay in touch with where they’re at. And I pretty much know my students. I work at that. Trying to find out what’s important in their lives. Letting them know that I’m here, that I want them to succeed. They know that I’m tough in what I want back, and I may have to give the things back three or four times, but that will help them succeed, if they’re willing. Now, you [the ECE student] have to meet me half way. But, at the same time, you know my desk can be piled up with books and papers and if they have something they need to talk about, I’ll do that. So, I think they know that I’m there for them, but, more important than that, I’m there to help them learn. And, I really care about what they do.

Sue’s teaching load was calculated using a combination of credit hours and contact hours. Sue usually taught three classes each quarter. The remainder of her load was comprised of contact hours to administer the ECE program, including the prekindergarten program. Sue’s dean discouraged overload pay for full-time faculty which necessitated the use of a small, regular pool of ECE adjunct faculty. The role of the adjunct faculty in the ECE program at Beachline Community College is described in the next section.

Adjunct Faculty in the Early Childhood Education Program

Part-time, adjunct ECE faculty are important to understanding the role of faculty in Beachline’s prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education.
Howey and Zimpher (1989) found faculty in the programs they studied identified with distinctive aspects of the program. Adjunct ECE faculty at Beachline identified with the aspects of the program with which they had experience as well as a professional knowledge base. In the ECE program’s Prekindergarten Proposal to the Ohio Department of Education, ECE faculty members were described as having:

Experience and expertise in the field of early childhood education and already have, or are obtaining, advanced education directly related to the education and development of young children. Each faculty member has had direct, substantial, and successful experiences in the education of young children. All faculty members remain current in their field through activities in organizations and conferences, knowledge of current research, and similar professional development activities.

Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member perceived ECE adjunct faculty as:

Coming from years of experience in early childhood. I see lots of knowledge in terms of practical experience. Some have been kindergarten teachers and some have been with Head Start. I see it as an experienced group in terms of knowing the field.

All of the ECE faculty members in the ECE program at Beachline Community College had experience in the field of early childhood education. Two of the ECE faculty, including Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, had earned associate degrees in early childhood education from a community college.

Approximately half of the ECE faculty, including Sue Ralough, had baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education, or a related field, as their highest degree. The remaining half of the ECE faculty had master’s degrees in early childhood education or a related field. All ECE faculty members taught courses in areas in which they had an earned associate, bachelors and/or master’s degree and professional experience.
According to the ECE Program Review, described more fully in a later section of this chapter, adjunct faculty taught approximately 66% of the ECE courses at Beachline Community College. Ohio Department of Education guidelines, however, mandated at least 60% of courses in the ECE program be taught by full-time faculty. Beachline’s non-compliance with this guideline was frankly acknowledged. The ECE Program Review clearly explained a single full-time ECE faculty member was unable to teach 60% of the ECE courses and administer the Prekindergarten Certification program, another requirement of the Ohio Department of Education.

In the early 1990s, when Sue was hired as the single full-time ECE faculty member at Beachline Community College, she was in a pool of approximately 10 part-time ECE faculty members. At the time of this study, the five part-time ECE faculty members who most regularly taught ECE classes had been members of the part-time faculty pool for more than 10 years. Sue explained, “the adjuncts have been here long enough that we really share the same philosophy.” Kelly Moore, an ECE part-time faculty concurred as she explained, “there seem to be a good number [of adjunct ECE faculty members] who are kind of a long term teaching staff. Sue explained it was often difficult to find part-time faculty to teach day sections of ECE classes since most adjuncts “worked or had other responsibilities.” Sue concluded, “key with adjuncts is that they know early childhood, know developmentally appropriate practice, and even more than that is that they know how to treat students.”

Not only had the ECE adjunct faculty been teaching at Beachline for a period of time, some of them also had many years of professional experience. Kelly Moore,
an ECE part-time faculty member and director of a program of early education and
care, was interviewed in this study. Kelly related she had worked in the field of early
childhood education for over 22 years. Kelly's baccalaureate degree was in
elementary education because, as she explained, "I went to college at a time when
early childhood was not an emphasis in many programs." After graduating with her
baccalaureate degree, Kelly accepted a job as a toddler teacher in a local program of
early education and care for infants and toddlers. This program was sponsored by a
social service agency affiliated with a major Christian religious denomination. Kelly's
infant and toddler classroom was located in the basement of one of the denomination's
churches. She recalled, "Very close to where I lived there was a day care center that
served infants and toddlers. And I had seen these children out about the neighborhood
and just felt that, 'Oh boy! Would that be a fun age to work with! [laughter].'" Kelly
explained that while this "was back in the days when education was not really a
requirement for working in programs [of early education and care]," her employer
made available on-site courses in early childhood education from the local joint
vocational school. Kelly took many of these courses, such as early childhood
development and working with parents, during her lunch hour.

Kelly explained she became deeply attached to the young toddlers in her care
and, after a few years at the infant and toddler program, decided to move with a group
of her children to the nearby preschool center. The Preschool Center was also run as a
social service and was having serious financial programs. Kelly recalled, "there were
periods of time where we didn’t know if we would get paid. Payday would come and they would say, ‘We can’t pay you today. We think we can tomorrow.’”

Kelly left the Preschool Center after a short period of time and accepted a position as a learning disabilities tutor with the local city public school system. She recalled, “after a time I thought I would like to do something in early childhood again.” Kelly said she became aware of a director position at a large, local corporation that had an on-site program of early education and care for the infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age children of the corporation’s employees. Kelly interviewed, was offered the position of director, and accepted. At the time of this research, Kelly had been the director of the corporate program of early education and care for over 18 years. She laughingly explained, “We have parents who use our center now who were children in the old center. We have staff that I have hired that were children when I started to work here!”

Kelly’s association with the ECE program at Beachline Community College began in the early 1990s. While she continued to be very satisfied with her director’s position, she was having difficulty making ends meet on the salary she was earning. Kelly recalled at that time she was “just making it from one check to another.” She decided, “I’ve got to do something else.” Kelly was a member of the ECE program’s advisory committee and, and after a meeting, Kelly casually mentioned to Sue Ralough that she would be interested in teaching in the ECE program. Sue subsequently asked Kelly to begin teaching the following quarter. At Beachline, Kelly had taught a number of early childhood education courses including: (a) health,
safety, and nutrition, (b) art and music, (c) infant and toddler education, (d) organization management, and (e) practicum.

While ECE adjunct faculty at Beachline Community College taught approximately two-thirds of the ECE courses, there was also a unique staff position which existed within the ECE program. The role of the ECE program laboratory assistant, a graduate of the ECE program, is examined in the following section.

**Dawne O’Brien: The ECE Program Laboratory Assistant**

Dawne O’Brien, a graduate of the ECE program at Beachline Community College was interviewed for this study. She held the unique staff position of ECE Program Laboratory Assistant. Dawne had entered the profession of early childhood education after raising her own children. She recalled, “I decided I wanted to go back to work. And I didn’t want to just get a job. I wanted to get a job I felt was meaningful.” Dawne applied for a job with the local Head Start agency after reading an advertisement in the local newspaper. Dawne was interested in part-time employment and the only part-time position available with the Head Start agency was the job of health/handicap aide. Dawne accepted this job and worked as a health/handicap aide for two years. She explained that each year she worked, under the direction of a teacher, in a Head Start classroom with a child with special needs. Dawne recalled:

> I was not prepared for that job. It was amazing to me. That was a position that to me would have been very intricate, very important. And yet it was given to a person that did have [pause] I didn’t have to have any kind of educational background – only a high school diploma.
During her first year as a health/handicap aid, Dawne worked with a child with Down's Syndrome. She said, "before I started that job I went to the library and researched it myself to give me some help to be able to be one-on-one with this child."

During her second year with Head Start, Dawne worked with a teacher whom she described as "the most incredible woman." Dawne said, "I had never seen classroom management like she did it. And, I thought, just because I have kids doesn't make me qualified to take care of children." Dawne decided she wanted to become a lead teacher in a Head Start classroom and was told by the Head Start agency that she needed to earn the minimum of an associate degree in early childhood education. She checked three nearby universities and none of their education programs had the emphasis in early childhood that Dawne was seeking. Dawne then investigated the program of early childhood education at Beachline Community College. She said:

What I really liked was that I could start taking classes and I could take classes that would be hands on right away. It wouldn't be like I'd have to take prerequisites forever and then not take any early childhood. I liked the fact that I could get in/get out. I knew it was going to be two years and then I could set about doing what I wanted to do, be a lead teacher at Head Start.

Dawne enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College in 1990. She had credits from other universities that transferred into the program and, as Dawne explained, "I didn't have to take a real heavy load to complete it [an associate degree in early childhood education] in two years." Dawne considered her return to college a real turning point in her life. She described her self-esteem at that time as "just kind of bonkers." In her first ECE class, Introduction to Early Childhood Education, Sue Ralough was the instructor. Dawne recalled that
during the first class meeting, Sue asked students to introduce themselves and Dawne was so apprehensive about saying her name that her mouth trembled. It was in that class that the special friendship between Sue and Dawne began.

Both Sue and Dawne described the personal friendship that permeated their professional relationship. During Dawne’s first quarter at Beachline, Sue asked her to lunch. During the interview, Dawne asked rhetorically, “Have you ever met anybody you just feel you could talk to forever and ever?” The common bond of the strong friendship between Sue and Dawne was their deeply held, shared religious beliefs. Dawne recalled:

All of a sudden it was just like God was real important to both of us. And we shared that. We really believe in the Creator and we believe He brought us together for a purpose. And the purpose is probably multifaceted. It appears as thought the purpose is the ministry that we’re involve in. But it also is [pause] people’s ministries are themselves. God manifested in themselves. So, it’s wherever you are. So the ministry’s here, too.

Dawne laughed as she recalled that, early in their friendship, Sue had told her, “you’re going to be my assistant.” At the time Dawne said she had responded to Sue, “No, I’m not. I’m going to be a Head Start lead teacher.” During her second year in the ECE program, Dawne was hired as a student worker in the divisional office suite. When Dawne graduated with her associate degree in early childhood education, she decided to take some additional classes in social work and continued as a student worker for another six months. By the end of that period of time, Sue and her divisional dean had created a position for Dawne so that she could remain with the Early Childhood Education program.
When Sue accepted the position of full-time early childhood education faculty member at Beachline Community College, she had been assured that the Beachline Community College administration would “replace who I was, which was the three-quarter-time [faculty] person. They never did that.” During Sue’s first two years as the full-time ECE faculty member, enrollment in the ECE program increased and Sue and the dean of her division worked together to “try to configure something beside the three-quarter-time person.” Sue explained that she and the dean, working within the college’s personnel policies and comparable jobs in other departments, created the position of Early Childhood Education Laboratory Assistant. Sue said, “The closest thing, and the way the college does things, is you have to stay on the level of what else is happening. And there’s a lab assistant little pew that people can be in. So that’s when Dawne was hired.” At the time of this study, five programs at Beachline Community College had laboratory assistants. The role of the Early Childhood Education laboratory assistant is described in the following section.

**Early Childhood Education Laboratory Assistant.** When Dawne accepted the part-time job as Early Childhood Education Laboratory assistant, it was with the clear understanding that her primary job responsibilities were to serve as Sue Ralough’s assistant. There was no actual physical place on campus that was an Early Childhood Education program laboratory. The ECE laboratory assistant position was part-time, with a certain number of hours budgeted for the academic year. Dawne’s flexible schedule was determined by Sue’s needs and Dawne’s availability.
Dawne’s job description as ECE laboratory assistant included responsibilities to ECE students such as answering general scheduling questions, making copies for in-class projects, gathering materials for in-class projects, and coordinating and advising the ECE student club. The ECE laboratory assistant’s responsibilities to the community included serving on the committee that developed the campus Rainbow Children’s Learning Center which is described later in this chapter, joining a local non-denominational religious foundation’s board, and serving on the local Head Start agency’s educational advisory committee. Dawne’s responsibilities to Sue were numerous and included: (a) drafting letters, (b) filing, (c) answering the phone in their shared office space, (d) assisting Sue with planning for ECE classes, (e) making copies, (f) previewing videos for use in ECE classes, (g) previewing ECE textbooks, (h) distributing and filing ECE students’ Prekindergarten evaluations, (i) ordering ECE textbooks each quarter, (j) researching particular topics related to ECE, (k) ordering audiovisual media for ECE classes, (l) facilitating honorarium requests for ECE class speakers, (m) assisting in coordinating special projects, (n) assisting in coordinating guest speakers for all ECE classes, (o) assisting in the development of new ECE curriculum and programs, (p) coordinating the ECE Advisory Committee meetings, minutes, mailings, and luncheon, (q) participating in college and community meetings as requested, (r) assisting with the ECE students’ Prekindergarten orientation meeting, (s) coordinating practicum student information including references, fingerprinting, and required documentation, (t) assisting Sue in practicum site visits, and (u) arranging sites for ECE student observations.
Both Dawne and Sue elaborated on Dawne's role as ECE laboratory assistant and offered examples of how Dawne's role had evolved, as the laboratory assistant position had been refined. Dawne explained, at first, her laboratory assistant position was "pretty much doing what I was doing as a student worker. Simply doing whatever it was that Sue needed me to do." Dawne suggested the fact that she was a graduate of Beachline's ECE program offered some clear advantages to both Sue and the ECE students. She said, "Since I had taken the classes, when students came with questions about what's required for a class, I could tell them firsthand what it was. It brought in kind of a unique perception." Sue concurred and elaborated on the importance of Dawne's knowledge of the ECE program. "She [Dawne] has taken all the classes," said Sue. "I haven't taught all the classes. I've taught most of them. But she really brings the student view."

While most of the ECE laboratory assistant's job description was clerical, Dawne's role grew and extended beyond what she had been hired to do. She had served on a number of college committees, including the steering committee that was instrumental in creating the Rainbow Children's Learning Center on campus. Dawne had recently joined the Beachline Community College committee for the recruitment and retention of minority students. She observed practicum students with Sue and frequently discussed the students' teaching with them while Sue spoke with the cooperating teacher. Dawne indicated, "When there's two of us, we kind of confirm one another." Dawne frequently assisted Sue by setting up students activities in particular ECE classes. Dawne explained, "If we had a lab project for that day in [the
ECE] art class, I got the supplies and brought them in and described the project.” I asked Dawne if she just set up what Sue decided was going to be the art project or if they talked about what might be the best kinds of projects for this particular group. Dawne responded firmly, “There’s always dialogue about it.” Sue described Dawne’s job in very similar terms and concluded, “She does a lot of things. She really helps take off work from me. It’s wonderful.”

One of the roles Dawne sought to assume as ECE laboratory assistant had not been successful. When Dawne first began, Sue asked her to assume the role of early childhood education academic advisor. As she began advising, Dawne found that the ECE students “really wanted to talk to Sue, personally. She was their instructor and I think they felt more comfortable getting information from her.” Dawne and Sue discussed the needs of the ECE students regarding academic advising, and Sue remained the primary academic advisor in the ECE program.

Dawne’s job as ECE laboratory assistant had become much more limited during the academic year in which the ECE program at Beachline Community College was being researched. Dawne had chosen to become increasingly involved in a nondenominational religious outreach program called the Children’s Salvation Center. As a result, Sue had been gradually reassuming many of the job tasks Dawne had performed as ECE laboratory assistant. For example, Dawne had taken the lead role in advising the ECE Student Club and, Sue explained, “In the last year and a half I’ve kind of picked that back up again.” Dawne’s commitment to the Children’s Salvation Center is described in the next section.
The Children’s Salvation Center. Dawne described her position as ECE laboratory assistant in great detail. Towards the end of the interview, however, she explained “Sue has had to assume more of that as I’m spending more time in the ministry and more time in the preschool.” The ministry and preschool Dawne referred to was the Children’s Salvation Center, a program of early education and care for young children located in an area of the city with the highest rate of poverty and crime. Sue Ralough and Dawne O’Brien had established the Children’s Salvation Center in the same year Dawne accepted the job as ECE laboratory assistant. The Children’s Salvation Center began as a twice a week after school program for neighborhood children attending a local elementary school. At the time of this research, the Children’s Salvation Center had grown into a daily program of early education and care for preschool children as well as a daily program of after school activities for school-age children. Dawne and Sue were co-directors of the Children’s Salvation Center and Dawne was the half-day preschool teacher four days a week. At the time of this study, Dawne worked as the ECE laboratory assistant only during one afternoon a week.

Dawne explained the Children’s Salvation Center was “an effort to be a safe haven for getting kids off the street.” The program was designed, at first, to be “more of an after-school type program,” which initially fit into Dawne’s flexible work schedule at Beachline. The preschool program of early education and care was begun as Sue and Dawne became aware of the need for such a program for neighborhood children. At the time of this research, the Children’s Salvation Center enrolled 15 to
18 preschool children, offered after-school care for up to 20 children, and coordinated a weekly free meal offered to neighborhood children and their families on Saturday afternoons in a local church. The funding for the Children's Salvation Center was done entirely through donations and a grant from a nondenominational religious foundation. Both Sue and Dawne expressed a firm belief in the importance of their work in the Children's Salvation Center.

The ECE Faculty Beliefs About Teaching and Learning

Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified two characteristics of quality and coherence related to faculty beliefs about teaching and learning in their research on exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The found (a) faculty members possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning and (b) programs link with research and development in teacher education. In the ECE program at Beachline Community College, the faculty clearly identified constructivism as the conceptual framework for teaching and learning as it related to both community college students and young children. Unlike the programs of elementary teacher education studied by Howey and Zimpher (1989), the Beachline ECE faculty expressed a clear linkage with research and development in the field of early childhood education, rather than research and development in the teacher education.

ECE faculty's conception of teaching and learning. The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study identified constructivism as their conception of teaching and learning for both ECE students and young children. When asked to describe her
conception of teaching and learning for young children and ECE students Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, said:

I think it's the same. I believe that how I teach these students is going to be how they teach young children. And I try to have a variety of ways because we know that students learn in a variety of ways. Active learning. Showing them, bringing in props, doing activities where they have to be involved in an example.

Sue offered an example of active learning in one of the classes she taught, ECE Curriculum. She explained for one of the class meetings for this course, she set the college classroom up in learning centers with activities similar to those found in a developmentally appropriate classroom for young children. This was a fall quarter class and the curriculum theme Sue had chosen to demonstrate was "Orange." The ECE students were to enter the classroom and interact with the materials and then be prepared to discuss the theoretical applications in the various activities. Sue related:

They [the ECE students] were supposed to change to different areas. One of the students in the class stayed with the pumpkin the whole time. Cut the pumpkin out, carved the pumpkin, took the stuff out. She did the pumpkin the whole time in class. And, we had them [the ECE students] making play dough, orange play dough. We had them cutting out pictures of orange things. There was water. They were blending the two colors to make orange. There were all kinds of things going on. So afterwards, talking through it, I asked the question, 'Did anybody feel bad about the fact that Jenny was at the pumpkin? She was there the whole time!' And it was surprising how they [the ECE students in the Curriculum Development class] thought. [The ECE students said] 'Oh, that was cool if that's what she wanted to do!' So, from that lesson we talked about different theories. We talked about different learning that happens with children. Some [ECE students] decided to say with one activity. Some [ECE students] went to all six [activities]. And was that okay? Well, sure it was okay, because that's what they wanted to do. And I always try to tell them, 'You have a plan, but what the children are going to do with that is their own choosing.' And that's what the learning is. And I'm hoping that I can teach them through my example.'
Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, described the ECE faculty’s concept of teaching and learning for adults and young children as “both the same.” Dawne recalled Sue’s modeling of teaching and learning when she was an ECE student. She said, “I always wanted to sit back and smile. Because as soon as she [Sue] walked in the door she treated us the way she would want us to turn around and treat a child.”

Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, pointed out her beliefs in the differences and similarities between teaching and learning and young children and adults. She said:

We’re filling a very different role with young children in my mind. We’re needing to be nurturers. I think for both [young children and adult learners] the teacher needs to be facilitator, setting up a learning environment and making it interesting. I know I think of college students as adult students. They do have some experiences already. They like to share their experiences. Letting them talk and really treating them as an adult, showing them that respect as an equal or a peer, instead of, ‘I’m the authority who knows everything. I have all the answers, just ask me!’

Sue considered it especially important that all ECE faculty members share a similar conception of teaching and learning. Sue related, “The adjunct have been here long enough that we really share the same philosophy.” In the ECE Program Review, described more fully later in this chapter, Sue wrote:

Our goal is to share our educational philosophy with each adjunct faculty before they are hired. We highlight that each student is to be treated with respect and that we are trying to build each student’s self-esteem by reinforcing the wonderful gifts they bring to the program. It is imperative that all of the faculty share this common thread.

Sue emphasized the importance of conceptual coherence among ECE faculty. She said:
When I interview adjuncts, I’m just really strong about that. That my students will be taught the way we want them to teach young children. And if there’s anything that comes back to me that that’s not happening in the classroom, I will go and I will talk to the instructor about it. And that’s why I’m really emphatic when I interview somebody because that’s what I want to happen. So, it’s a real strong, strong, thread.

The constructivist beliefs of the ECE faculty regarding teaching and learning were also reflected in their strong links with research and development in the field of early childhood education, which are discussed in the following section.

**Faculty links with research and development in early childhood education.**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has published two statements of developmentally appropriate practice for young children (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Developmentally appropriate practices in programs of early education and care for young children are described as age appropriate, individually appropriate, and appropriate to the social and cultural context of young children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

The NAEYC statement of developmentally appropriate practice (1997) was the foundation for beliefs regarding teaching, learning, and young children within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. Sue explained that the NAEYC statement of developmentally appropriate practice was the “main ribbon that goes through every single [ECE] course. We talk about it over and over and over again. From Intro, I think, clear through the last day they’re in [practicum] seminar. Really talking about what is appropriate for that child.” ECE students were expected to read the NAEYC statement on developmentally appropriate practice during their second practicum.
The ECE faculty and staff were clearly interested in and connected to research and development in the field of early childhood education, especially professional issues related to the health of young children. One of those issues was the increase of respiratory illnesses in young children. Sue explained this is a growing topic in the ECE course on health, safety and nutrition. “Twenty years ago,” said Sue, “you didn’t see breathing treatments in child care centers and you walk in now and there’s lots!” Sue explained that she and Dawne and another ECE adjunct faculty had discussed this issue and they all researched the topic to gather the latest information for the class.

Sue and Dawne had also recently researched a second professional issue, the effect of prenatal exposure to alcohol and/or crack cocaine on young children. Through their studies of the effects of prenatal drug exposure, Sue and Dawne contacted one of the national researchers in this area. They both had observed young children at the Children’s Salvation Center whom they believed to have been prenatally exposed to crack cocaine. As early childhood professionals, they were working with this researcher to identify differences in treatments for young children who had been prenatally exposed to crack cocaine and young children who were hyperactive.

The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College possessed a clear conception of teaching and learning, identifying constructivism as the basis for teaching and learning for both ECE students and young children. The ECE faculty and staff in this study expressed strong linkages with research and development, not in the area of teacher education as found in the Howey and Zimpher (1989) study, but in
the field of early childhood education. The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline were particularly connected to research relating to contemporary health issues in early childhood education in response to the increased numbers of young children in programs of early education and care with health concerns.

**ECE Faculty Support of Student Learning**

The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College were clearly supportive of student learning, especially through valuing and respecting the individual student. Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member explained, “I try to look at each student as an individual. I try to stay in touch with where they’re at. They know I’m here to help them learn and I really care about what they do.” Kelly Moore, an part-time adjunct ECE faculty member, related that she tried to support student learning “by actively involving them in the lesson.” Kelly said:

In terms of working with a student who is working along with me, I’ll do that. If they need more time. If they say, ‘Gee. I just didn’t understand this. I’ll certainly work with them as long as I understand that they’re working, too.”

Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant and a graduate of the ECE program, believed that students’ learning had been supported by Sue’s efforts to bring together an ECE faculty with shared beliefs about teaching and learning. Dawne explained, “Sue has done a good job of this, at bringing faculty who has the same heart that she has for making a safe and secure environment. The ECE faculty all have good rapport with students.”

Sue described a number of ways that she interacted with students both in class and outside of the classroom. She said:
I work really hard at being open to what students ask me to do. They may ask me to come to their site or they may want me to come over and see something that they're doing at their church. I try really hard to do that. Sometimes we just go out for lunch and sit around a table and talk.

Sue explained that part-time ECE faculty members also took advantage of opportunities to interact with students outside of the classroom. She described these interactions as "kind of sporadic." Sue related that one adjunct has "a lot of the students [in her class] do observations at her center. So they have a relationship in and out of the classroom." Sue said another ECE adjunct faculty member was like her and liked to get feedback from students. She sometimes invited ECE students to join her for a soft drink or coffee after class. Sue recalled the adjunct faculty member who taught the course on children with special needs was especially willing to stay after class and speak with students who had "real close issues of children or family members" with handicapping conditions or developmental delays.

ECE faculty at Beachline Community College supported student learning based upon their shared conceptual framework of valuing and respecting the individual student. ECE faculty members demonstrated this support of students both in and out of the classroom. The ECE faculty believed their positive interactions with student to be an important aspect of their professional roles as ECE faculty. The ECE faculty and staff also expressed a clear commitment to the profession of early childhood education. This commitment is described in the following section.
The ECE Faculty’s Commitment to the Profession

The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College described complete commitment to the early childhood profession. Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member described her commitment to the profession in this way:

I think personally and professionally it’s probably my heartbeat. I can facilitate learning to teachers who are going to just keep reciprocating that over and over and over and over. Lots of children are hopefully going to be taught the basics of one person that really cared for them in life. It may be one of my students that taught them self-esteem, that showed them caring and loving concern. That’s where it’s at. We can make a difference.

Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member and director of a corporate program of early education and care, explained:

I’ve done this for twenty-two years! I say that I am probably very committed! I think that it is an extremely important field of endeavor. What we know about young children now doesn’t even come close to what we knew twenty years ago. I think that the importance of the early years [pause] I think my dedication is strong. I’d like to see us, as a society, really value those early years, really value supporting families.

Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant and a graduate of the program, described her professional commitment as “very strong.” Dawne explained, “I think that the early years are so valuable and so important.”

Members of the ECE faculty and staff were committed to the profession of early childhood education. One of the ways in which they expressed their commitment was the manner in which they worked together.

How the ECE Faculty and Staff Worked Together

The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College actively sought both formal and informal ways to work together. Sue Ralough, the single full-time
ECE faculty member, often led and organized collaborative meetings and events for
the ECE faculty. Sue explained, “We have meetings together with adjuncts. I try to
always have them come to my house or we have something here at the college.” Sue
commented that most of the ECE adjunct faculty “have other jobs so it’s really kind of
hard to get them all together.” One of the activities Sue used to involve adjunct ECE
faculty members was to review textbooks for ECE classes. Sue explained, “Whenever
new textbooks [free desk copies from publishers] come in, I always circulate them to
the adjuncts and then they take a look at it.” During a recent academic year Sue had
organized a meeting with adjunct ECE faculty members to review recently published
ECE textbooks. Sue explained that each ECE faculty member received “five or six
textbooks each, and over the summer they reviewed them and came back with their
feedback on those textbooks for the courses they taught.”

Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member interviewed in this study, was a
part of the adjunct faculty textbook review. She explained that after dividing up the
ECE textbooks and reviewing them, the ECE adjunct faculty met with Sue and
discussed the books, their recommendations for textbook adoptions for particular
courses, and the reasons for their particular selections. Kelly also described the
meetings for ECE adjunct faculty. She said, “Sometimes, before a quarter starts, there
is a meeting or a dinner where everybody comes and meets. And that way you know
who’s who and get an idea of what their background and focus is.”

Sue also believed it was beneficial to help the ECE adjunct faculty members
know important Beachline Community College campus information. During the
academic year of this study, she had begun mailing copies of the weekly campus bulletin to those ECE adjunct faculty members who were not teaching during the quarter. Sue explained that ECE adjunct faculty members who were teaching during the current academic quarter received a weekly copy of this newsletter in their campus mailboxes.

Dawne O'Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant, described working with Sue and other ECE adjunct faculty on the development of curriculum for the ECE program. Dawne said:

Maybe it's because Sue and I are so close and good friends. We do a lot of brainstorming. And I think that I have been able to help open some ideas. Behavior Management [a course recently added to the ECE program curriculum], that was Sue and me. That was brainstorming. And also [another part-time ECE faculty member] brainstormed on that one. We've come up with some real good ideas of classes that could be offered to students.

The Faculty: Summary

The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study expressed a clear commitment to the profession of early childhood education. This commitment was demonstrated by the number of years they have stayed in the field of early childhood education in spite of low salaries and sometimes challenging working conditions. The ECE faculty and staff used both formal and informal opportunities to work together in spite of commitments to their primary employers.

The ECE faculty at Beachline Community College demonstrated all of the characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary education. The ECE faculty members at Beachline Community College clearly identified with distinctive aspects
of the program. The entire ECE faculty taught courses in areas in which they had an associate, bachelors, and/or masters degree as well as professional experience. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study to possess a clear conception of teaching and learning. The ECE faculty at Beachline Community College clearly identified constructivism and developmentally appropriate practices as the conceptual framework for teaching both adults and young children. The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study indicated a special emphasis on valuing and respecting the individual. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the faculty in their study linked with research and development in the field of teacher education. The ECE faculty and at Beachline Community College clearly linked with research and development in the field of early childhood education, especially areas focusing on contemporary health issues in the field.

In this section the role of the ECE faculty at Beachline Community College was detailed and characteristics of quality and coherence related to the ECE faculty were described. In the following section important aspect of the milieu, the physical and social environment in which the ECE program existed, are examined.

The Milieu

The commonplace of the milieu, as described by Schwab (1978), includes the multiple cultural and/or environmental contexts affecting one another as well and the development of the curriculum. In this section the milieu of Beachline Community College’s prekindergarten program of teacher education is examined to identify the
aspects of the milieu that contribute to understanding the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program.

The Institutional Milieu of Beachline Community College

Four important aspects of the institutional milieu of Beachline Community College influenced the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program of prekindergarten teacher education. The first was the general physical and administrative composition of the college. The second was the mandatory self-study process of program review that was used by the ECE faculty and the Beachline Community College administration for program evaluation and planning. A third aspect of the institutional milieu was the stated goals of the ECE program. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the goals of the programs of teacher education in their study to be clear and reasonable. The ECE program of prekindergarten teacher education at Beachline Community College had established clear and professional goals that met multiple established external guidelines. Finally, the ECE Program Advisory Committee was the fourth aspect of the institutional milieu that influenced this program of prekindergarten teacher education. Each of these relevant aspects of the institutional milieu at Beachline Community College is described below.

The general physical and administrative composition of Beachline Community College. The Ohio Board of Regents chartered Beachline in the early 1960s as a public, state-supported, technical college. Within 10 years, in response to identified needs within the local community, Beachline Technical College was enrolling over 1000 students in six technical areas of study. In the mid-1980s, the
administration of Beachline Technical College determined that the local community needed the availability of a university parallel program at the college. New courses in general education were added to the curriculum and, in the late 1980s, the Ohio Board of Regents approved the institution's change to Beachline Community College. By 1998, Beachline enrolled approximately 2,500 students from a four-county service area.

The facilities of Beachline Community College were divided among two campuses: (a) the main campus situated on the outskirts of a moderately sized city, and (b) the Metropolitan Campus Center located in the heart of the city. Four large brick buildings formed the main campus. These buildings housed classrooms, laboratories, faculty and administrative offices, a bookstore, the library, and a gymnasium. Located on the grounds of the main campus was the Rainbow Children's Learning Center, a program of early care and education for young children. Rainbow Children's Learning Center was operated jointly by Beachline Community College and the local Joint Vocation School. The Early Childhood Education programs at both institutions used the Rainbow Children's Learning Center for field and laboratory experiences for their students. Two buildings comprised the Metropolitan Campus Center of Beachline Community College. Those buildings included classrooms, offices for faculty and administration, and a large performing arts facility. In addition to the main campus and the Metropolitan Campus Center, Beachline Community College also offered classes at local high schools within its four-county service area.
The Beachline Community College catalog encouraged student enrollment by describing the institution as "learner-centered and community-focused." Beachline Community College students could choose among four technical programs, including Early Childhood Education, or enroll in a university parallel program which was designed to meet all or part of the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. According to the college catalog, Beachline Community College was chartered by the Ohio Board of Regents and accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Individual program accreditations were also listed in the catalog, including the Early Childhood Education program's approval by the Ohio Department of Education for course work leading to prekindergarten associate teacher certification.

Beachline Community College was located in a moderately sized city of approximately 70,000, within a short driving distance to a number of larger urban communities. Until recently, the predominant industries in Beachline's four-county service area were agriculture and manufacturing. In the last decade the manufacturing industries had seen a slight decline while service-oriented employment had risen. Many residents in this area commuted to jobs in the nearby larger urban communities. Eight baccalaureate colleges and universities were located within twenty-five miles of Beachline Community College, six of which were within Beachline's four-county service area.

Beachline's Mission Statement expressed the college's commitment to serving as the single two-year open admissions institution in their four-county service area. The college was committed to providing: (a) learner-centered programs based upon
community needs, (b) life long learning opportunities, (c) knowledge and skills necessary for employment, (d) university parallel programs, (e) general education, (f) developmental education, (g) knowledge and skills necessary for job training and retraining, (h) appropriate student services, (i) cultural enrichment opportunities for students and the community, and (j) opportunities for increased global awareness for students and the community. In 1998, 57 full-time faculty and 132 part-time faculty were listed for Beachline Community College on the College Edge web site.

Sue Ralough, the single full-time Early Childhood Education program faculty member, described a traditional administrative structure at Beachline based upon academic discipline. There were four academic divisions at Beachline Community College: (a) Business, (b) Public Services, (c) Health, and (d) Arts and Sciences. Sue related, however, the current divisional structure, which combined early childhood education, engineering and agriculture in a division called Public Services, was not a “fit at all”. Sue explained the college administration was considering a new arrangement of divisions, but she was unclear at the time of this research, what type of divisional reorganization was being discussed.

**Program review.** Each program at Beachline Community College was required to complete a self-study process entitled “Program Review” every five years. The Early Childhood Education program had completed the procedures of the program review two quarter previous to beginning of this research at Beachline Community College. One of the documents gathered in the course of this study was a copy of the 250 page ECE Program Review. Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty
member, explained this had been her first experience as the person with primary responsibility for the program review. As a three-quarter-time faculty member she had been a part of the self-study process for the previous program review. Sue explained there were differences between the last two program reviews of the Early Childhood Education Program. She related the program review process had “been cut down quite a bit” and the first program review of the ECE program had been “even more extensive” than the latest ECE program review.

Beachline Community College had a set of required procedures for program review. The Early Childhood Education program review process began with the creation of a program review team. Sue created a team that included herself, four ECE adjunct faculty members, the director of Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, the campus program of early education and care described in a later section of this chapter, and an assistant dean at Beachline Community College. This team was responsible for completing the self-study of the ECE program. An outside evaluator then assessed the self-study documents developed by the ECE program review team. Sue explained the role of the outside evaluator was “to come in to really have a new set of eyes, [to] kind of look at your program.”

Sue indicated she had looked for an ECE program review outside evaluator who had “a good solid background in early childhood education.” The outside evaluator Sue selected was an early childhood education doctoral student at a large Midwestern university. The outside evaluator had been an ECE adjunct faculty member at Beachline Community College at the same time that Sue was an ECE
adjunct faculty member. The outside evaluator had earned a baccalaureate degree in nursing and a master’s degree in early childhood education. Her professional experiences included working in the Head Start program, teaching early childhood education courses at Beachline Community College, working for the Ohio Department of Human Services, and supervising a program of early education and care for developmentally delayed infants and toddlers and their families. Sue believed the outside evaluator’s knowledge of the program “years and years ago”, when she was an ECE adjunct faculty member at Beachline, would help her “see how this program had grown and changed.”

The ECE Program Review document began with a summary of ECE student demographic information gathered through ECE student surveys and the Beachline Community College Office of Institutional Planning and Research. The major portion of the ECE Program Review consisted of a series of narratives and data reports related to five criteria: (a) ECE program goals, (b) current local, state and/or national trends impacting the ECE program, (c) relevance of the ECE program curriculum including compliance with external standards, (d) qualifications of ECE program faculty, and (e) adequate and appropriate facilities for instruction.

The criterion of examining current local state and/or national trends that may impact the program was a part of an institutional planning process called environmental scanning (Morrison & Wilson, 1997; Stoffels, 1994). Environmental scanning was a mandated part of all program reviews at Beachline Community College. The purpose of environmental scanning in the ECE program review was to
carefully study the ECE program milieu to: (a) identify possible local, state, and/or national circumstances or events that could affect the program, (b) discuss these circumstances and events to determine their possible implications on the program, and (c) recommend changes to the ECE program in response to the identified circumstances and events.

Sue had participated in an environmental scanning workshop in preparation for researching this portion of the ECE Program Review. She assembled an Environmental Scanning Team consisting of herself, three ECE adjunct faculty members, Dawne O'Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant, the director of the Rainbow Children's Learning Center, and an assistant dean at the college. This team was charged with answering two questions: (a) What are the national, state, and local trends that will affect the ECE program in the next three to five years? (b) How should the ECE program prepare to meet these trends for the benefit of our students and the benefit of our college? After initial planning meetings the ECE Environmental Scanning Team interviewed a focus group of local community representatives including professionals from public schools, the county Department of Human Services, and Head Start. The purpose of the focus group was to identify national, state, and local trends that could possibly affect Beachline's ECE program. The members of the ECE Environmental Scanning Team also researched selected local newspapers, magazines, and professional early childhood education journals.

The ECE Environmental Scanning Team identified six trends they believed would affect the ECE program in the next three to five years. Those trends were: (a)
the national welfare reform guidelines which no longer allowed child care assistance for students, (b) Ohio Department of Education teacher licensing renewal standards that required earning additional college credits, (c) health issues in young children including increased respiratory illnesses, prenatal exposure to drugs, violence, and the inclusion of children with special needs, (d) the need for longer service hours and sick child care in programs of early education and care serving corporate employees, (e) the increased need for programs of early education and care for infants and toddlers, and (f) the impact of technology on teaching and learning in both the early childhood and college classrooms. The committee recommended the ECE program: (a) remain committed to flexibly scheduling classes in response to student needs including short-term and modularized courses, (b) develop new courses for students seeking to renew their prekindergarten associate teaching certificate, (c) add more specific information in the ECE health, safety and nutrition course regarding respiratory illness in young children, including specific instruction on how to administer breathing treatments, (d) seek faculty development training in technology, including developmentally appropriate software for young children, and (e) create a specialized ECE certificate program in Infant/Toddler Education.

Sue explained that after the ECE Program Review had been compiled, she sent a copy to the external evaluator about a month before her scheduled on-site visit. The external evaluator then visited the campus and met with Sue, ECE adjunct faculty, and Beachline Community College administrators. At the close of her visit, the external
evaluator submitted her written evaluation, which became a part of the ECE Program Review document.

The external evaluator's comments regarding Beachline's ECE program were quite positive. She wrote that the ECE program met and in many cases exceeded "most community college program of which I am familiar." The external evaluator described as "outstanding" the ECE faculty's research to keep the ECE program curriculum reflective of the most current issues related to young children and their families. The external evaluator found the ECE program curriculum relevant and appropriate. She noted "this curriculum provides immediate opportunities for early childhood experiences." The external evaluator concluded the ECE program faculty members were appropriately qualified, but she recommended the addition of another full-time ECE faculty member, budget permitting. Based on her review of the ECE student comments and surveys, the external reviewer noted, "It strongly appears that the full-time and adjunct faculty are extremely effective." Finally, in the area of program facilities, the external evaluator described the Rainbow Children's Learning Center, the on-campus program of early education and care for young children, as "a wonderful asset to the program."

The external evaluator had two recommendations for ECE program facilities. First, she believed there was a "critical need" for a classroom on campus dedicated to the ECE program. She recommended the classroom be equipped with "sinks, storage for multiple art supplies, drying areas for artwork, and a stove and refrigerator for nutritional activities. Tables and chairs would be necessary for large project and
activities." The second recommendation of the outside evaluator was to upgrade the materials and equipment in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center located in the Beachline Community College library.

Sue described the ECE Program Review as "a working document. Changes are made because of the work that happens" in developing a program review. After the ECE Program Review was completed, Sue submitted it to her divisional dean for examination. Each program review at Beachline Community College is then submitted to the college’s Board of Trustees. Sue related program reviews are "highly regarded document[s] that people sit up and take notice." She explained the program review process could be "a good time for those program that are doing really well. But it's not so good for programs where enrollment is down."

The goals of the ECE program were evaluated as a part of the program review self-study process. Clear and reasonable program goals were a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary program of elementary teacher education. The program goals of the ECE program at Beachline Community College are described in the following section.

The goals of the ECE program. The third significant aspect of the institutional milieu of Beachline Community College was the ECE program goals. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the goals of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study to be clear and reasonable. The ECE program goals included the development of ECE students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values related to:

(a) identifying and explaining theories in the professional field of early childhood
education (b) understanding child development, (c) understanding the organization and workings of the field of Early Childhood Education, (d) developing values and ethics as an early childhood professional, (e) assessing the needs of individual children and developing curriculum to assist children in reaching individual goals, (f) planning and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum and meeting the needs of the typical/atypical child, (g) developing a safe, healthy, meaningful learning environment for young children that arouses curiosity and leads to discovery and learning, (h) communicating effectively with parents, children, and peers, (i) developing methods of classroom and behavior management, (j) locating and using local, state, and national professional resources, and (k) applying professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. These goals were clear, reasonable, and professional.

The Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College included program goals for the general education courses required for the associate degree. ECE students took general education courses in communications, social sciences, and humanities. The ECE program goals for general education courses were to provide students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to: (a) set personal goals and succeed in life, (b) acquire basic mathematical skills, (c) communicate effectively using both oral and written skills, (d) become an active and productive member of society, (e) take responsibility for personal actions and personal freedom, (f) increase personal awareness of local, national, and international communities, (g) discover the richness of humanities and social sciences and their effect on life, and (h)
become a whole person willing to create new ideas affecting the present and future while reflecting on the past.

Multiple external standards had been used to develop the clear, reasonable, and professional program goals of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College. The ECE program met standards of the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Department of Human Resources. The ECE program goals of Beachline Community College also encompassed all areas of professional knowledge described in the Guidelines for Preparation of Early Childhood Professionals (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996).

The Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee. The Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College had a viable, working advisory committee. Many of the members of the ECE Advisory Committee were either ECE adjunct faculty members and/or cooperating teachers for practicum students and/or directors of a program of early education and care for young children within the core group used as practicum sites. The ECE Advisory Committee had been instrumental in guiding a number of curriculum revisions in the ECE program within the five years previous to this study.

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, explained that she used the ECE Advisory Committee as a source for determining “Are [ECE] students coming out with what they need?” Sue indicated, “We have a real active advisory committee. There are probably three or four who are cooperating teachers. And they
give constant feedback to us.” In the past five years, that feedback resulted in four changes to the ECE program curriculum.

The ECE Program Advisory Committee had suggested curriculum for a number of ECE courses. A course in school-age childcare was the first addition to the ECE program after Sue became the single full-time faculty member. Sue recalled, “There was a big growth in latch-key [programs], so we added this school age course basically because of what the community was saying.” Sue related that before the school age course was developed, “We had lots and lots of early childhood and samplings of school age, but no more than just a few lectures.” Sue took the issue of limited school age childcare curriculum in the ECE program to the ECE Advisory Committee. She said, “I told them my concern and they agreed with my concern, and we talked about what we could do about that. We came up with a school age curriculum course.” After developing the school age course, Sue next had to find a place for it in the required ECE program. At the time there was a required three-hour ECE course in first aid for young children and recognizing child abuse and communicable disease in young children. This is specific professional knowledge mandated by the Ohio Department of Human Services day care licensing rules. Sue investigated and found out that a local community service agency was offering the training in first aid, child abuse, and communicable disease for a charge of five dollars. The training met the Ohio Department of Human Services’ guidelines. Sue said, “So when you looked at that economically, the [Beachline Community College] curriculum committee agreed with me, the dean agreed with me, so I went ahead and
did the school age curriculum.” The three-credit hour course in first-aid, child abuse, and communicable disease was deleted from the ECE program and replaced with a three-credit hour course in school age child care.

Two additional ECE courses evolved from community needs as perceived by both Sue and the ECE Program Advisory Committee. Sue explained she frequently sought feedback from ECE professional in the community such as practicum site cooperating teachers and center directors as well as members of the ECE Program Advisory Committee. Sue said, “I always ask the questions, ‘Are [ECE] students lacking in anything?’ ‘What would you want to have them [ECE students] have more competence in?’” Sue explained that behavior management strategies was an area that was frequently identified as a need by both ECE students and members of the local ECE community. Sue met with her dean, a fairly new administrator at Beachline Community College, and discussed her desire to add new courses to the ECE program. The dean reviewed the ECE program and the Ohio Board of Regents guidelines and informed Sue there was room to add the courses. Sue said, “We had to work real hard at setting up that curriculum.” Sue related she worked the “the advisory committee, adjunct faculty, and the dean. It was a real working interplay of everybody giving information.”

At the time the ECE course in behavior management was added to the ECE program, two additional courses were developed. One course was the Current Issues in Early Childhood Education and the other was a course entitled Special Topics. Sue explained:
The current issues classes also came from our adjunct faculty and the [ECE] advisory committee because of the current kinds of things that we wanted to make sure that our students were getting – crack cocaine issues, how to deal with the cocaine affected child, all the new inclusions, all those new kinds of things, even though we have a special needs class.

The current issues course, said Sue, was designed to “look at in depth what in other courses we just touched on. For instance low vision, fetal alcohol, crack cocaine.”

The course was set up to utilize the professional expertise of persons in the community who are invited to speak and interact with the ECE students in the class. Sue explained:

We did this class and set it up specifically to have people come in. And we had to set the curriculum in such a way to pay people their worth to come in. There’s a person who come in and talks about low vision that gets paid a stipend that’s much more than what our honorarium of $35 is.

At this same time the ECE program also added a special topics course to, as Sue explained, “allow us to do any topic that we particularly want to do.” Sue hoped to target ECE special topics courses to ECE graduates who “need to come back and get their Pre-K certification requirement.” The Ohio Department of Education mandated 12 quarter credit hours of course work in the field to renew the prekindergarten associate teaching certificate.

The general physical and administrative composition of Beachline Community College, the self-study process of program review, the clear and professional ECE program goals, and the ECE Advisory Committee were four significant aspects of the institutional milieu of Beachline Community College that impacted the ECE program. Specific aspects of the milieu of the Early Childhood Education program itself also
influenced the ECE curriculum. These aspects of the milieu of the ECE program are discussed in the following section.

**The Milieu of the Early Childhood Education Program**

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the quality programs of elementary teacher education in their study all had adequate resources including materials and laboratories. Two important features of the milieu of the Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College demonstrated the availability of adequate materials and laboratories. These features included: (a) the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center located in the Beachline Community College library, and (b) the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center located on the campus of Beachline Community College. Howey and Zimpher (1989) also found the exemplary programs in their study had clear curriculum articulation with the schools. Within the four-county service area of Beachline’s ECE program, a variety of community programs of education and care for young children were used as sites for two separate practicums. Curriculum articulation between the programs of early education and care regularly used for field and laboratory experiences and the ECE program was described by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study as consistent. Each of these relevant aspects of the milieu of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College is described below.

**The Early Childhood Education Program Curriculum Materials Center.**

The first relevant aspect of the milieu of the ECE Program at Beachline Community College was the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center. Sue
Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member explained the ECE Curriculum Materials Center was established in 1988, in response to Ohio Department of Education's prekindergarten guidelines for program certification. The ECE Curriculum Materials Center was located in a small room off the main area of the Beachline Community College library.

The Curriculum Materials Center contained two large tables with chairs, a machine for making die-cast letters, a binding machine, a laminator, a collection of teacher resource books, a small collection of children's books, children's puzzles, cassette tapes and records, an autoharp, and a small collection of manipulative toys for young children. Sue explained that while this was a small collection of curriculum materials, she believed it was a "sampling" of the kinds of commercial resource materials available to the early childhood professional. Sue related she was, however, looking to "really beef that whole thing up." She believed the ECE Curriculum Materials Center "could be a lot more and we're hoping that in the next three to five years to get some grants to help." The external evaluator, in the ECE Program Review, commented the ECE Curriculum Materials Center would be more effective if basic supplies, such as a 3-hole punch, rulers, scissors, staplers, and paper supplies were available in the Center. The evaluator also suggested that new curriculum resources, especially updated materials and age-appropriate children's literature, be added to the collection. ECE students, especially practicum students, and ECE faculty utilized the learning materials in the ECE Curriculum Materials Center. A second
aspect of the milieu of the ECE program at Beachline Community College was the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, which is described in the following section.

**Rainbow Children’s Learning Center.** The second important aspect of the milieu of the ECE program at Beachline Community College was the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center located on the grounds of the campus, a short distance from the main buildings. At the time of this research, the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center was only a few years old. This program of early education and care was begun as a joint venture between Beachline Community College and the local Joint Vocational School. The primary source of funding for constructing and furnishing the building was state grant monies targeting the creation of campus childcare centers. Sue explained Beachline faculty, staff, and students enrolled children in the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center. The center also had a Title XX contract to provide childcare for eligible students. Rainbow Children’s Learning Center was self-supporting through the fees charged to families. There was a full-time director of the center.

The new building housing the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center contained six classrooms for young children from infancy through preschool. Each room was named for a particular color and each room’s door and flooring reflected their color name. The entire building had been carefully designed to be what the external evaluator of the ECE Program Review described as “state of the art.” The Rainbow Children’s Learning Center provided a program of early care and education for young children and was used as a field and laboratory site for ECE students from Beachline
Community College and the local Joint Vocational School. Upon entering the building visitors were greeted by a receptionist who directed them to the appropriate area. To the left of the reception area was a long center hall. Three classrooms for young children were on each side of this hall. Additionally, space had been planned for student observation in between the classrooms. To the right of the reception area was a kitchen area, storage facilities, a teacher’s lounge, and a classroom used for the ECE program practicum seminars. Rainbow Children’s Learning Center was one of several community programs of early education and care used as practicum sites by Beachline’s ECE program.

**Practicum sites: community programs of early education and care.** Early Childhood Education (ECE) students at Beachline Community College completed two four-credit-hour practicum courses, usually in the students’ final two quarters of the program. Practicum I was scheduled each winter quarter and Practicum II was offered every spring quarter. Practicum I or Practicum II could also be taken during the 11-week summer term. Both ECE practicum courses were completed at a program of early education and care in Beachline’s four-county service area. A variety of early childhood programs were available to use as practicum sites including the campus Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, private independent schools, for-profit childcare centers, corporate programs of early education and care for young children, church related programs, Head Start programs, and early intervention preschool classes.

The ECE students usually selected their own practicum field sites. Sue explained ECE students frequently chose practicum sites because they had observed
the program in previous ECE courses, it was close to their home, and/or they “really, really, really want to go there!” Sue indicated the ECE students frequently selected practicum sites based on field and laboratory experiences in previous ECE courses. The ECE faculty carefully selected those field and laboratory sites. Sue explained, “In the Intro class [Introduction to Early Childhood Education] they have to do observation hours in childcare centers. We try to give them a variety: church based, our lab school [Rainbow Children’s Learning Center], corporate sponsored, for-profit, and federally funded.” The Children’s Salvation Center, directed by Sue and Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant, was also used as a field and laboratory site. Sue had carefully selected the various types of programs of early education and care for the ECE students’ observation in the Introduction to Early Childhood Education course. Each of these sites had a relationship with the ECE program at Beachline. Directors of these programs were either ECE adjunct faculty and/or served on the ECE advisory committee. It was to these five sites that students typically returned for field and laboratory experiences required in other ECE courses and it was these programs of early education and care that formed the core of sites predominately used as placements for Practicum I and Practicum II.

After ECE students had given Sue what she described as “a couple” of choices of practicum site Sue initiated:

The whole process of calling to make sure the director’s okay with that. And then she [the director] has to double check and make sure the cooperating teacher wants to take that responsibility on. And then I let the student know that it’s okay. And [I] make sure, of course, that they’re site approved and that the cooperating teacher has the form.
Site approval and information regarding cooperating teachers, Sue explained, were two Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten program guidelines. Sue showed me a large notebook as she said:

We have a notebook that we keep all of the information, the cooperating teacher form and the affiliation forms. So that when students come in and tell me they want to have a particular place I can check to see if they're in the notebook. I have them all here, [arranged in] alphabetical [order].

The affiliation agreement was a legal contractual document that clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities of Beachline Community College, the ECE practicum instructor, the ECE student, the practicum site, the practicum site administrator, and the cooperating teacher. Each affiliation agreement was signed by the director or administrator of the program of early education and care used as a practicum site and by Sue, as the legal representative of the college. Each cooperating teacher completed an information sheet detailing their professional education and experiences, including supervision of practicum students, as well as their professional affiliations. Cooperating teachers were also asked to write an extensive, two-page, statement expressing "your philosophy of Early Childhood Education as well as your philosophy of child day-care centers and the type of program they should offer children, their parents, and the community." The Early Childhood Education program clearly sought curriculum articulation between the ECE program and the ECE students' practicum experience.

Dawne O'Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, described her practicum experiences as having continuity between the ECE courses she had completed at Beachline Community College and the sites where she
completed her practicum courses. When asked what type of continuity existed between the ECE program and the field and laboratory sites, Dawne responded, “Things fit.” Both of the sites where Dawne completed a practicum had ECE adjunct faculty on staff. Dawne, in her role as co-director and teacher at the Children's Salvation Center, had recently assumed the role of cooperating teacher with a Practicum I student. It was Dawne’s first experience as a cooperating teacher. She explained, “I think it’s been good. That [Practicum I] student sees me put into practice what is being taught here [the ECE program at Beachline]. It’s working. Because I have a thorough understanding of what is expected, of what the [Practicum I] student is to be doing.”

Kelly Moore, the ECE adjunct faculty member who directed the Corporate Child Care Center, explained she clearly saw continuity between Beachline’s ECE program and the program of early education and care at the Corporate Child Care Center. She described the continuity in curriculum planning as “one of the easiest.” Kelly said:

I think that there’s been a good continuity with the practical applications of lesson planning and reading books during story time and in small groups. I’ve seen students manage those well and be able to respond well to both group needs and individual needs. I think that there’s continuity with the idea of total learning through play. We teach it at Beachline and these student have really applied it.

Kelly described a number of other challenges to curriculum articulation between the ECE program and practicum sites. Kelly believed that while there was a continuity between the prekindergarten program of Early Childhood Education at Beachline Community College and the field and laboratory experiences, ECE students
sometimes had difficulty in applying what they had learned and, when faced with challenging classroom situations, returned to previous knowledge from their life experiences. She said, “If they’ve [the ECE student] got some skillful direction given to them, even though they’ve slipped back into ‘what I knew before,’ if they’ve got somebody whom they’ve developed a good rapport with, kind of guiding them through it, sometimes you can steer them back.”

ECE students had to complete the each practicum course at different sites. For example, Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant, recalled she had done her Practicum I in a Head Start classroom with preschool age children. Dawne completed her Practicum II experience in an infant classroom in the Corporate Child Care Center directed by Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member interviewed in this study. Sue explained, “We encourage them to do different ages.” This was possible because the two of the primary practicum sites, Rainbow Children’s Learning Center and The Corporate Child Care Center, both had programs of early education and care for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.

ECE students who worked in a program of early education and care for young children were permitted to complete their Practicum I course in their place of employment if certain guidelines were followed. Sue recalled, “We called the Ohio Department of Education and we said to them, ‘How can they [Beachline’s ECE students] do this [practicum] without quitting their job?’” Sue said the Ohio Department of Education’s response was, “They could work at the center as long as they were supervised by a person who met the Ohio Department of Education
Prekindergarten guidelines.” Sue said only a few students have completed Practicum I at their place of employment. She explained, “Most of the time they’re not going to have someone [an early childhood professional meeting the Ohio Department of Education’s guidelines] to observe.”

Sue described the current placements of the 17 students she had in two sections of the Practicum I course. Most of the Practicum I students were placed at two sites. Six students were at the Corporate Child Care Center, five students were at the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, and one Practicum I student was at the Children’s Salvation Center. Sue related the remaining five Practicum I students were in Head Start programs and other local programs of early education and care for young children.

The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study clearly explained the differences between the two practicum courses. Sue said, “Practicum I is more of an observation [course] at the beginning and they kind of move into having them do activities. Practicum II is where they begin to take the lead role in lesson planning.” Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member and the director of the Corporate Child Care Center, a site frequently used for practicum students, also described the practicum courses. “Practicum I is set up largely to be an observation time for them [the ECE students],” said Kelly. Kelly described the Practicum I experience as “a time to be in the classroom and be aware of some of the daily routines. Hopefully, to be a very appropriate interactions model with children in all different stages of
emotional well-being.” Kelly described the Practicum I experience as “real world.”

She described the ECE Practicum I students’ experiences as:

Observing curriculum development. How do we set up different activity areas? Different learning centers? It’s a time of learning in that they [the ECE Practicum I student] are expected to ask questions whenever they’re wondering, ‘Why do you do this?’ The cooperating teacher is supposed to be describing why we do this. As the quarter moves on they are expected to do two different tasks. One is called a child interaction. It’s a form that they fill out discussing an interaction with one particular child. What activity they would do with that child or did with that child and how the child responded to them. [They are] still within the classroom and under the approval or direction of the cooperating teacher. Then, before the end of the quarter, they will do a brief activity plan and actually develop an activity based on a theme and present that to a small group. Throughout the quarter, in addition to observing, they serve kind of a helper role or an aid role. They do help with some of the tasks [such as] patting backs at naptime, washing off the tables, and serving meals and snacks. Some of them immediately will jump into reading stories and others are more comfortable kind of watching what’s going on. But, by the end of the quarter, we like to see them moving into the direct interaction with children and parents.

Kelly explained the role of the Practicum II student was “more of taking the lead under the direction of the cooperating teacher. Not the observation. They [the ECE Practicum II students] will spend a brief time early in the quarter doing observation and getting oriented to the center, but they’re expected to take a lead as far as activity planning and carrying out activities quickly.”

Sue tried to impart a realistic expectation of both practicum experiences to the students. She recalled:

I always, in some way, in their very first practicum seminar, say to the students, ‘This is what you’ve been waiting for. This is a culmination of all your hard work, of your study, the learning of theories, the lesson planning. You’re on stage. This is it! Don’t expect to be perfect!’
Sue explained Practicum I students often came to seminar with “several licensing issues, saying, ‘I can’t believe the teacher did that!” Sue indicated her response to students was “We [the ECE faculty] preach a text book. And you’re going out in the real world and it’s not the textbook. But, [smiling] it should be pretty close!” Sue related she explained to practicum students:

We’re dealing with children who have a mind of their own. And we’re dealing with teachers who have a mind of their own. And, they [the teachers] have their own way of doing things. So, we’re going into their home. And we’re their guests. But, they’re asking us over!

Sue commented she tried very hard to make the students comfortable in their practicum experience. She explained, “I work really hard with the cooperating teacher and the students.” Sue indicated she tried to make an initial contact at the practicum site quite early in the quarter to “make sure they’re okay.” She then made a second visit when she tried to “really observe them. I try to spend at least 45 minutes to an hour with each student each time. And then I try to go back the third time. I will go back more than that if there are problems.”

Sue believed the close professional relationships she had developed with directors and cooperating teachers provided benefits to the ECE practicum students. Sue believed the early childhood community in the four-county service area of Beachline Community College knew:

What we [the ECE faculty at Beachline] expect -- what our students go out expecting because they know our cooperating teachers are saying and their directors are saying, ‘I’m going to put you with this person, this person, this person because they will share the same values, they will share the same theory and practical application.’
When questioned as to how many of the cooperating teachers at practicum sites would share a theoretical and practical orientation with the ECE program Sue’s response was “lots.” She said, “In terms of the Corporate Child Care Center I would say ‘most’, the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, ‘all’, Head Start, ‘some’.” Sue also mentioned she had also successfully placed practicum students in programs of early education and care operated by Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in two counties.

I asked Sue what she did when there was a real philosophical contrast between the practicum site and the ECE program. Sue responded with a laugh and the comment, “Interesting that you should ask that question!” Sue related that during the previous quarter a student had chosen a practicum site at a program of early education and care in a small community close to her home but approximately 25 miles from the Beachline Community College main campus. At the time of the student’s request, Sue recalled a practicum student had been successfully placed at that site six or seven years ago. Sue said she and Dawne had made a site visit early in the current quarter and observed a circle time. Sue related:

The children were three and a half to four years old. And they sat in a circle time for 30 minutes. They could not move. They could not talk between the songs that they were singing. And one little girl took her shoe off and the teacher said, ‘Put your shoe back on!’ And the little girl said, ‘Teacher, my foot itches.’ The teacher said, ‘You can itch it after we’re finished with circle time.’ And I [Sue] wanted to stand up and say, ‘If your foot itched, are you going to wait until lunch time?’ [laughter]

Sue indicated the ECE practicum student had given her some “hints” about this program and she planned to visit the site the following week and speak to the director.
because "just real inappropriate things are going on [pause] shaming of children." Sue was pleased that the ECE practicum student had felt knowledgeable and comfortable enough to speak to her about the practicum site. The practicum student told Sue she wanted to remain at the practicum site because she thought she could make a difference. Sue explained this became a professional decision on her part. Sue indicated she asked herself, "Do you leave them in there because they can make a difference or do you pull them out so they can be role modeled [by the cooperating teacher] the quote/unquote correct way?"

Sue explained most of the practicum sites were ones that were used "over and over again." If a student selected a new site, Sue said:

Basically, I'm looking at two real philosophical things. One is that our students and the children and the staff are treated the same way and that they are treated with value. That's my number one. Because I think that's so important with the whole self esteem. That just flows out from everything, I hope. The second thing is that they [the teachers at the practicum site] really understand developmentally appropriate practice, in that that's what happening in the classroom.

To facilitate continuity between the ECE program and the practicum site, Sue had developed a small, six-page ECE Practicum Handbook she distributed to all cooperating teachers and appropriate program administrators. The ECE Practicum Handbook explained the purposes of Practicum I and Practicum II and described the individual roles and responsibilities of the ECE student, the cooperating teacher, and the practicum instructor.

When Sue first came to the ECE program, she had frequently tried to schedule group meetings for cooperating teachers and directors. She explained:
It just was so tough for everybody's schedule. So now we pretty much use the same sites over and over again. There's really not the need to go back and say, we're doing this and this and this, because they know. Unless we make a change. And then I'll make sure they know.

The pool of practicum sites and cooperating teachers was well established within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. For example, the Corporate Child Care Center had been used as a practicum site since the beginning of the ECE program, according to Kelly Moore, the director of the Corporate Child Care Center and an ECE adjunct faculty member. Kelly described the process she used to choose cooperating teachers for ECE practicum students. She said she carefully selected who will be a cooperating teacher for an ECE practicum student. Kelly explained:

I've got about a third of the people on my staff who have either gone through Beachline's [ECE] program or are working towards their degree and are those people who have been going to school for years, [and] working for years! [laughter] And I often time will rely on them to be, or ask them to be the cooperating teachers. Other than that group I will ask the people who have been on our staff the longest and are the happiest in their jobs. Who, I think, will be the best role models. The idea that you're a cooperating teacher does call for you to give some feedback. Does call for you to do some evaluations. So I look for someone that I think is ready to do that evaluative piece. Because that's not always easy.

Kelly explained that there were also times when she and Sue discussed cooperating teachers. Kelly said:

Sometimes Sue will say to me, 'I've got such and such student. She needs to be with a real strong person.' And then others, she'll say, 'This is a real strong student. She probably could hold her own in any group. Doesn't need as much guidance. Doesn't need as much confidence boosting.'

Kelly described cooperating teachers' response to the request to take an ECE practicum student as mixed. She explained, "It varies in large part in what our [the
cooperating teacher's] last experience with a practicum student was. If it was a
difficult one, then it's like, 'Oh, please. I don't want to do this again.' If it was
successful, 'Sure!'' Kelly also mentioned there were teachers at the Corporate Child Care Center that she had not asked to be cooperating teachers. She said she thought some of her staff members "are just dying to have somebody in that room! [laugh]
And I think that they see them as helpers more than understanding the evaluation that you have to do." Kelly commented that during the current quarter there had been a very positive communication exchange between the ECE practicum students and the cooperating teachers. She said:

The students have offered ideas. The [cooperating] teachers have said, 'Oh, look at what she came in with!' Or, 'She brought in such and such' or shared these ideas. They [the cooperating teachers] have noted on evaluations that they have learned things from the students, as well.

Within the ECE program at Beachline Community College, the ECE students primarily selected their own practicum sites. I asked Kelly why she believed students chose the Corporate Child Care Center. Kelly said:

I think we have a real good reputation in the community. And I'm sure that's a big part of it. I think, also, we've had a good many successes in terms of practicums, so that the word spread that such and such is a good cooperating teacher. I am sure that the fact that I teach some of them [the ECE students] and they know me from that role, helps.

The ECE program at Beachline Community College had an established, successful pool of practicum sites. ECE students selected these programs of early education and care for practicum primarily because they had observed at these programs as a part of their ECE course work. The ECE faculty had carefully selected these observation sites and had a close, professional relationship with many of the
directors and/or teachers of these programs of early education and care, many of whom were either ECE adjunct faculty members or served on the ECE Program Advisory Committee. Curriculum articulation between the ECE program and the field and laboratory sites was described by the faculty and staff interviewed in this study as consistent, a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989).

**The Milieu: Summary**

The milieu was the second of Schwab’s commonplaces of the curriculum examined in this study. The ECE faculty at Beachline Community College identified the general physical and administrative composition of the college, the self-study process of program review, and the ECE Advisory Committee as important aspects of the institutional milieu. The goals of the ECE program, based on state standards and complying with recognized national standards in the field of early childhood education, were professional and clear, a characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The Early Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center, located in the Beachline Community College library, the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center, located on the Beachline campus, as well as community programs of early education and care used for practicum sites comprised important aspects of the ECE program milieu. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified adequate program resources, including materials and laboratories, as a characteristic of quality in the programs they researched. The ECE program resources, including the Early
Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center and the Rainbow Children's Learning Center were adequate. However, the external evaluator of the recent ECE Program Review and Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, both noted the need for new and updated curriculum materials and supplies in the ECE Curriculum Materials Center. The external evaluator also pointed out the need for a dedicated ECE classroom on the Beachline Campus.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of teacher education in their study to have curriculum articulation with the schools. Curriculum articulation between the core group of programs of early education and care regularly used for field and laboratory experiences, including both Practicum I and Practicum II, and the ECE program was described as consistent. The faculty and staff interviewed in this study perceived these programs of early education and care used as practicum sites as having a conceptual framework that included valuing the individual and developmentally appropriate practices.

The third commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) was the student. The characteristics of the Early Childhood Education students at Beachline Community College are described in the following section.

**The Students**

The students were the third commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) as important to curriculum development. In this section the characteristics of the Early Childhood Education students enrolled in the prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education at Beachline Community College are considered.
Schwab (1978) indicated knowledge of the learners should include specific details related to students’ career goals, families, friends, neighbors, and cultures.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found two characteristics of quality and coherence related to the students enrolled in the programs of elementary teacher education in their study: (a) students identified with a cohort group, and (b) students recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. In the ECE program at Beachline Community College, there were indications of similar characteristics of quality and coherence related to the formation of student cohort groups. ECE students had multiple opportunities for group work in many of their ECE classes and formed informal cohort groups through the ECE club. No clear benchmark point or milestone in the ECE program was identified by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in the study.

All of the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study described ECE students in multiple ways. The ECE Program Review document also contained an extensive summary of ECE student demographic information. The characteristics of the Early Childhood Education students at Beachline Community College included the different types of students enrolled in the ECE program, the reasons students chose the ECE program, and the ways in which ECE students scheduled and took classes. Each of these characteristics is described below.

**Types of Students Enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program**

The Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College was small. When Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member had begun
teaching at the college as an adjunct faculty member she recalled there were usually only four or five students in each ECE class. Over the years the program had grown and in the late 1990s the ECE program graduated about 20 students each year.

According to the 1998 graduation program, the 19 ECE graduates were from all four of the counties in the Beachline Community College service area. The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study were asked to describe the types of students enrolled in the ECE program. Variances in age, economic status, family responsibilities, prior experiences with children, abilities, personal and professional goals, and cultures were among the numerous differences described by the ECE faculty and staff. Each of these differences is described in the following sections.

**Diversity in sex.** Most of the students in the ECE program at Beachline Community College were female. Dawne O'Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program recalled that when she was an ECE student, “We didn’t have any men in the program, then. We had only women.” Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, described the ECE students as being “a broad range in everything but sex. ECE students are definitely predominately female.” Kelly said, “I think I have only had two gentlemen in class in the eight years that I’ve taught.” At the time of this research at Beachline, Sue Ralough, the single ECE faculty member, indicated there were three male students currently enrolled in the ECE program.

**Diversity in age.** All of the ECE faculty and staff interviewed at Beachline described ECE students as diverse in age. According to the ECE Program Review, about half of the ECE students were in their late teens and early 20s, a group described
by ECE faculty and staff as “right out of high school.” Sue Ralough, the single ECE faculty member, believed the numbers of students in this age group had grown in the past few years because of Beachline’s advertising the community college as the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. Approximately 20% of ECE students were 23 to 30 years of age. Around a third of ECE students were in an age range described by the ECE faculty and staff as middle age, 31 to 54. Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program, recalled that when she enrolled in the ECE program, she “was surprised that there were as many students who were middle-aged. I expected that they would mostly be students right out of high school!” The age diversity Dawne found in her ECE classes helped her to feel “comfortable, because I was probably one of the older students in the class, but there were a lot of middle aged students.” Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, described ECE students has coming from a “broad age range.” She said, “I’ve had student in their 50s. Probably, this is a guess, probably a median age would be 30. During the day time it’s usually the young group, but not entirely. Evening students tend to be older, but not necessarily ‘old’.”

**Economic diversity.** The ECE students at Beachline Community College were described by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study as economically diverse. Dawne O’Brien indicated that when she was an ECE student, “I was surprised that there were as many students who were on financial assistance.” Dawne also commented, “Even now I’m amazed at the students who carry part-time or even
full-time jobs and take coursework on top of that.” Kelly Moore related, “I know that a number of them [ECE students] do have employment at different centers.” She said:

There are always students in the class that I know are probably really struggling financially. But not everybody is. There are some that you just ‘know’, and they sometimes are very open about it. And my guess, and it’s just a guess, is that community college may be where we see higher numbers of those students.

Sue said, “I think a lot of my student have full-time positions. I think that’s more the norm than not. Even if they’re coming to school full-time, it’s part-time according to their schedule.

Sue related some graduates of the ECE program had not followed through with applications for their associate prekindergarten licensure with the Ohio Department of Education “because of the money issue.” Sue said, “I have some students who were ‘A’ students who just didn’t have the money.” At the time of this research, the Ohio Department of Education charged a $40.00 fee for applying for associate prekindergarten certification. Sue said she believed there were some types of special student assistance programs that would pay the Prekindergarten application fee but such payments were not part of most financial aid packages.

**Multiple family responsibilities.** The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study viewed work as the primary outside commitment of most of the ECE students in the program. Many of the ECE students also had multiple family responsibilities. Kelly Moore said, “I don’t know that I would say that I’m aware of other commitments beside family and work.” Sue Ralough suggested “a large percentage” of ECE students had family commitments. She explained, “They’ve got
to balance all that. It really is hard. And I think for us, as instructors, it also has to be a balancing act.” Sue mentioned she had one student this quarter “who comes in every single day five to ten minutes late. And she feels terrible about it. But her child’s school bus is late and she can’t do anything about it. I just say, ‘relax’!” In addition to their own children, many ECE students also had experiences working with children.

**Prior experiences with children.** Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, explained the ECE program “worked okay for me because I’d had experience coming into it. Just experience with my own children and my experience with Head Start.” Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, related she perceived ECE students as having:

A broad range in terms of experience. There are students who are just out of high school and really have no experience. There are people who have been in the field twenty years, twenty-five years, working diligently and now are taking classes.

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, believed “95% of my students are working.” When how many ECE students were working with children, Sue indicated her response would be “shooting in the dark.” Sue said, “Let me do some research on that.” At the next interview session, Sue handed me the survey sheets she had developed and distributed to two of her ECE classes. In the survey Sue asked 26 ECE students how many hours they had completed, if they were currently working in childcare, if they had experience working in childcare, and if they were completing their current practicum where they were employed. The ECE students who responded to this survey were about equally divided between the first and second year of their program, according to the credit hours they had completed. Almost two-thirds of the
ECE students surveyed were currently working in a program of early education and care for young children. Over half of the ECE students surveyed said they had prior experience working in childcare. Approximately two-thirds of the ECE students Sue surveyed were completing their Practicum I course in the center where they were employed.

**Abilities and goals.** Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, perceived “a broad range” of intellectual abilities among the ECE students. Kelly explained:

One of the things that is just alarming or frustrating or a real eye-opener for me is the number of students who don’t seem to have good writing skills, or communication skills, but writing in particular [pause] wrong grammar, incorrect usage [pause] basic spelling. Then, there are students who are very competent at expressing themselves and doing college level writing and college level research. I’d say probably those are fewer in number.

Kelly said, “The maturity level and the abilities are certainly different at a college level. I think of college students as adult students. They do have some experiences already and they like to share their experiences.” Kelly believed it was important to let “them [the ECE students] talk and really treat them as an adult, showing them that respect as an equal or a peer, instead of, ‘I’m the authority who knows everything. I have all the answers, just ask me!’” Kelly concluded:

It makes for an interesting mix of students. It makes it a little bit challenging to do that evaluative piece, too. Open enrollment means you get in. And if you get in and somebody says, ‘If you’re doing a research paper it better be a college level’, and they’re [the student] writing at third grade level [pause] and that’s the reality sometimes [pause], it’s difficult. And, I don’t know what I want people to know about that [laugh]!

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, explained the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline was an open enrollment program. She
described ECE students has having a “wide range” of abilities. All ECE students had to take an assessment test of their basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills before entering the program. Some ECE students, said Sue, “have to take every developmental class that we have. They may have to take them two times.” Sue explained other ECE students “probably scored off the board on any kind of SAT or ACT test.”

Sue related two stories to illustrate what she described as the “two ends of the spectrum” in describing the abilities of ECE students. At one end of the spectrum was an ECE student whom Sue described as “severely brain injured.” Sue said, this ECE student “worked very hard, had a tutor. I know she spent twice, maybe three times as many hours studying.” She explained she was very concerned that “we were setting up this person to fail. Because there was no way she could ever be in charge of a classroom. She could be a part. She could be an aide.” Sue recalled she discussed this student with her dean and they concluded this was a very individual situation. This student took all of the ECE courses and when she enrolled in Practicum I, she was not successful. This student dropped the Practicum I class after discussing the situation with Sue. Sue explained that while this student didn’t graduate she now has a family and Sue believed “what she gained and gleaned from these [ECE] classes is going to help her be a successful mother.” Sue then described a student at the opposite end of the spectrum, a student who had earned an associate degree in early childhood education from Beachline, was currently enrolled in a local private university pursuing
her baccalaureate degree, and planned “to go on and get her Masters and come back and teach for me someday.”

Not all of the ECE students in the ECE program at Beachline were designated as “PreK” students, that is, students who would pursue prekindergarten teaching certification by the Ohio Department of Education upon graduation. Sue explained that grades were the “major reason” why a student would not be an ECE PreK student. The Ohio Department of Education mandated that students receive a grade of “C” or better in all of their early childhood education courses in order to apply for prekindergarten associate licensure.

The summary of the student demographic information in the ECE Program Review offered clear information concerning ECE students’ goals. Almost half of the ECE students were studying early childhood education in preparation for a job. One fourth of the ECE students were seeking to upgrade their job skills. A fifth of the ECE students planned to transfer their Beachline Community College to a four-year college or university as soon as they earned their associate degree. The remaining ECE students were enrolled for “personal interest.” Almost half of the ECE students indicated they planned “to transfer eventually to a four-year college or university.”

Cultural diversity. According to the summary of ECE student demographic information in the ECE Program Review, approximately 20% of ECE students were African American, 72% were Caucasian, and 8% did not respond. This diversity among ECE students was clearly described by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study. Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who had graduated from
the ECE program, said, when she was a student, “We had a small percentage of Afro-Africans. I don’t remember any other ethnic group.” The recruitment and retention of minority students was a program goal identified in the ECE Program Review. Sue and Dawne had both joined the Beachline Community College Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee to facilitate the achievement of this goal.

**Selecting the ECE Program**

The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study described a number of reasons why they believed students selected the ECE program. Some students chose to major in the Early Childhood Education program because they wanted to work with young children, believed they could make a different in the lives of young children and their families, and/or perceived ECE as a career where they could be successful.

Sue smiled as she explained why she believed students chose ECE as their major. “Well,” said Sue, “It’s probably a perception to begin with that we all in early childhood have to snicker at that they just really love kids. And I was probably one of those students way back when!” Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member, concurred. She said, “A lot of them [ECE students], a lot of the young ones, have really enjoyed the children that they’ve been around and see that as just a pleasurable kind of thing.” Sue said there were also students, whom she described as “really dedicated people,” who “know there’s no money in it. But it’s their heart and they really feel they can make a difference.”

Sue believed ECE students’ reasons for studying early childhood education could change once they were in the program. She said, “I think that once they get into
it and really understand the [child] development, and how crucial it is, and how critical it is, then it becomes something different.” Sue laughed when she concluded, “And there’s probably a percentage that think it’s fun and it’s easy. And I think they kind of get a little shock wave when they find out things.”

Dawne O’Brien, a graduate of the ECE program, said, “I know of students who have had older siblings or someone they knew who went through the [ECE] program and were successful. And that they see that these people are out in the work force and they’re making a living with the education that they got.” Dawne also saw the federally funded Head Start program as influencing students to select the ECE program. “I think Head Start plays a big part in students who come here,” Dawne said, “Because Head Start requires lead teachers [in Ohio] to have the associate degree, the prekindergarten certificate.”

Kelly Moore, the ECE adjunct faculty member explained her beliefs regarding inservice ECE students:

Some of the more experienced ones [ECE students] are enrolling either because it’s a job requirement now, that they get more training. Or they’re choosing to learn more because they find that they’re enjoying their job but it might be easier for them to learn a little more -- a little more about behavior management, a little bit more about activity and lesson planning.

Dawne also believed students chose associate degree programs because they were able to enter their chosen profession more quickly. She explained, “I think that there are students who want to be able to have a two-year education and then be able to go out into the work force right away rather than two years and then needing additional education to go out.” Dawne also believed some students chose ECE because they “think of early childhood as being, quote, easy.” Other students,
explained Dawne, may have had successful experience with young children, which led them to study early childhood education. She said, “They might have babysat, and they think because they babysat, this is something that they can do.” Dawne concluded that some students, whom she described as “thinking less of themselves,” chose early childhood education “because they’re not sure if they might be able to succeed in another field but they feel they can succeed in this field.” Dawne believed students who chose the ECE program “feel very good about the program and about themselves. I think they sense it’s more than just a job. It’s a profession. It’s dealing with lives. And I think students feel proud about what they’re doing.”

**Scheduling and Taking Classes**

ECE students at Beachline Community College selected and took classes based upon their individual needs. Sue indicated she had “48 students in Intro [two sections of Introduction to Early Childhood Education in the fall quarter] and we graduate 16 to 22. About one third graduate and of those about one half did it in two years.” Sue explained the ECE program followed the program sequence as printed in the college catalog. For example, the course Introduction to Early Childhood Education was only offered fall quarter and Sue indicated the majority of ECE students started the program in the fall quarter. Sue explained there were a few ECE courses you could take without prerequisites, “but the major courses” in the ECE program required the “theory base and history background,” essential components of the Introduction to Early Childhood Education course. ECE students who began the program in other quarters were advised by Sue to “get some of their general eds out of the way.”
Moore perceived some disadvantages for students who did not take the ECE program sequentially. She believed ECE students who sometimes, “kind of pick and choose because this one [ECE class] sounds interesting or maybe that one would help me with my job” didn’t achieve “quite the same overview we want with child development” as those ECE students who moved through the ECE program as it was planned and sequenced.

According to the summary of student demographic information in the ECE Program Review, a little over half of the ECE students identified themselves as “night” students while the remainder described themselves as “day” students. The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study described night ECE students as “older” and day ECE students as “younger.” Kelly Moore believed:

Some of the younger ones [ECE students], especially, follow that two-year pattern. But, in following that two-year pattern, even in some of the younger students, life happens! Sometimes it’s a health issue, a baby that’s born. Sometimes is, ‘Gee, I’m really enjoying this but I have a chance to get a job and I think I’m going to do that.’

Kelly had also had experience teaching evening students. She explained, “For many of the older students, it seems to be a more lengthy process. Most of them certainly finish within two years, some much longer.” Kelly said:

For those individuals who are already working in the field, just the fact that they’re working and taking classes at night, they’re not going to take as many classes as you would if you’re a full-time day student. For the evening student, just the fact of work, sometimes the need to do practicum and you’re working during the day, and so you have to wait until it’s offered at a time when you can fulfill that obligation. Or the class that you need next is offered at a time when you are able to take it. Sometimes it’s just family obligations or, ‘Whew! I’m just tired of going to school. I’ve been doing this for a long time and I think I’ll take a quarter off!’
Sue also attempted to meet the ECE students’ scheduling needs by offering flexibly scheduled courses that met on the weekends, usually a Friday evening and all day Saturday. Sue said, “We also have Saturday offerings in our early childhood program which really helps students who are typically night students. They can get help with children on Saturdays more [easily] than they can at night.”

**ECE Students Identification with a Cohort Group**

Identification with a cohort group was a characteristic of quality and coherence described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. Within the ECE program at Beachline Community College, the formation of formal cohort groups was not possible, due to the diverse ways in which ECE students scheduled and took classes. Informal cohort groups did exist and the ECE faculty used a number of techniques to support them.

The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study offered multiple examples of how ECE students were encouraged to work in small groups. Dawne O’Brien, The ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, recalled, “Sue loved to break up into groups. That was one of her favorite things to do. And I used to hate that because then you had to ‘do stuff’ [laughter].” Kelly Moore, one of the ECE adjunct faculty members, said, “I think that a number of the [ECE] courses have a requirement for some kind of group participation, whether it’s a group that’s going to plan a presentation or a discussion group during class.” Sue explained group work in ECE classes was used by faculty to assists ECE students in “building relationships with their peers, really getting them to know each other, building that camaraderie,
because they’re pretty much all in the same classes.” Sue also felt it was important learning experience for ECE students “to begin to work together because they’re going to have to do it in the field.”

ECE students sometimes found group work challenging. Sue explained in the Introduction to Early Childhood course especially, the students “kind of look those eyes back at you like, ‘What are you asking me to do?’” When I asked Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was also a graduate of the ECE program, about her opportunities to work with other ECE students in class, she explained:

If you had asked me that when I was a student, I would have said that I found them [group experiences] very difficult, because I had been really used to working by myself. And so, to work in a group was hard, but it became easier when I knew that the group was going to evaluate each other. If you had someone in the group that wasn’t pulling their weight, that the whole group had a chance to evaluate it. So there wasn’t a feeling, ‘It’s not fair. I’m doing this and they’re doing nothing.’ You knew you would be graded for what you did. So that was good. But now that I’m through, I’m out working, I see it was extremely helpful because the whole idea of team teaching [pause] you don’t work by yourself, you work with a group of people.

The Beachline Community College Early Childhood Education student club also provided for the formation of informal cohort groups. ECE faculty and staff described a number of activities in which the ECE Club members had been involved. Dawne, an ECE program graduate, viewed the ECE Club as a clear opportunity for students to be together. She said, “as an early childhood student the ECE Club had a variety of activities. For instance, at Christmas time, the students had fund raisers and then did philanthropic activities.” Kelly, an ECE adjunct faculty member, pointed out, “Outside of the classroom there is an Early Childhood Club and they do some fund raising and have sponsored parties [for children in] Head Start program.” Sue, the
full-time ECE faculty member, described the ECE Club as “real oriented to community.” She depicted ECE Club activities such as craft sales and bake sales to raise money to buy food and gifts for families at the holidays. Sue also explained the members of the ECE Club have participated in activities during the Week of the Young Child, a national recognition week sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Sue commented she had been the ECE Club advisor for a number of years and then Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant, had assumed the advisor role. At the time of this research Sue said, “Now the last year and a half I’ve kind of picked that back up again.” As club advisor Sue said she has, “tried to make it their club, let them [the ECE students] do what they wanted to do. I want it to be an experience for them. I really like to support what they’re doing.”

**ECE Students Recognized A Milestone or Benchmark Point in the Program**

No clear benchmark point or milestone was identified by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in the study. Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, said she didn’t believe ECE students saw any particular course as a milestone or benchmark point in the program. Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant who had graduated from the program, laughingly replied, “I thought once I got past Intro [Introduction to Early Childhood Education] I had it made. I thought that was the hardest one!” Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, believed students saw a particular instructor in one of the general education requirements as milestone. Students had indicated to Sue, “Boy, if you can make it through this course – because this instructor always teaches this course.”
The characteristics of the Early Childhood Education students at Beachline Community College were quite diverse. While ECE students were overwhelmingly female, there were a small number of male students. Students of all ages enrolled in the ECE program. ECE students were frequently challenged by economic considerations that influenced their ability to enroll in ECE classes and apply for their associate prekindergarten teacher licensure. Work responsibilities influenced ECE students' enrollment patterns and class attendance. Many of the ECE students had some type of prior experience with young children. ECE exhibited diverse abilities and expressed varying personal and professional goals. Students selected the ECE program for a variety of reasons, but the strongest reason appeared to be because they liked young children. Most ECE students at Beachline scheduled and took classes based upon their work schedules.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified two characteristics of quality and coherence related to students. The first was that students identified with a cohort group. ECE students at Beachline Community College identified with informal cohort groups that were planned and supported by the ECE faculty and staff. Such groups included the small groups formed in multiple ECE classes as well as those students who participated in ECE Club activities. The second characteristic of quality and coherence related to students (Howey & Zimpher, 1989) was that students recognized a milestone or benchmark point in the program. The ECE faculty and staff...
interviewed in this study identified no clear benchmark or milestone point in the ECE program at Beachline.

The final commonplace identified by Schwab (1978) was the subject matter. The subject matter of the Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College is described in the following section.

The Subject Matter of the ECE Program

Schwab (1978) identified the subject matter as the fourth commonplace of the curriculum. Schwab (1978) explained knowledge of the subject matter included familiarity with “the scholarly materials under treatment” and “the discipline from which they come” (p. 366). The subject matter of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College is examined in the following section in order to identify the specific nature of the curriculum, the organization of the curriculum, and its structural and conceptual orientations.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified six characteristics of quality and coherence specifically related to the subject matter in the exemplary programs of elementary teacher education in their study. Thematic curriculum was one characteristic of quality and coherence related to the subject matter in programs of elementary teacher education (Howey & Zimpher, 1989). Two clear thematic stands comprised the conceptual orientation of the ECE program at Beachline Community College: (a) constructivism and (b) valuing the individual. A second characteristic of quality and coherence within programs of elementary teacher education described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was a balanced relationship among general knowledge,
pedagogical knowledge, and experience. This balance was clearly documented in the ECE program at Beachline. Howey and Zimpher's (1989) third characteristic of quality and coherence related to program structure. They found the structure of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study enabled interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum. There was inconsistent evidence of interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum found within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. A fourth characteristic of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was the faculty and staff in the exemplary programs of elementary teacher education in this study perceived their programs as rigorous and academically challenging. At Beachline Community College the faculty and staff interviewed in this research described the ECE program as a rigorous and academically challenging associate degree program. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found adequate time within the structure of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education to be a fifth characteristic of quality and coherence related to the subject matter. The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline offered no indications of inadequate time within the program. Finally, Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs of elementary education in their study were systematically evaluated. At Beachline Community College the ECE faculty described the formal evaluation process of program review and student course evaluation as well as informal evaluation processes used by individual ECE faculty members within particular ECE courses. This section on the subject matter of the ECE program of Beachline Community College begins with an examination of the conceptual orientations found in the program.
Conceptual Orientations

Howey (1996) believes the cornerstone of program coherence in teacher education is conceptual orientation. “Such a framework, when fleshed out, makes explicit conceptions of teaching, learning, schooling, and learning to teach” (Howey, 1996, p. 143). The conceptual orientations guiding teaching and learning throughout the ECE program at Beachline Community College were constructivism and valuing the individual.

Constructivism. The conceptual orientation of constructivism was woven throughout the ECE program. The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study concurred that constructivism, actively building knowledge, was the basis of teaching and learning for both ECE students and young children. Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, described the integration of the constructivist conceptual framework of the ECE program. She described the ECE courses as “very hands on, even the theory classes, which could be very dry and difficult, were presented in a way that was hands on.” When asked to give an example of what she meant by the term ‘hands on’, Dawne replied with an example from the ECE art and music class. She said:

The theory of the project was taught and then we actually did the project. And I remember that was real difficult for me, coming in as a 45-year-old lady because I had played with my children but I hadn’t been a child in so long. So, to sit down and actually do this art project – you know, I really felt pretty stupid doing this. But it was so good for me because, actually doing this project, you have to play. You have to remember how to play again. But, I had to keep convincing myself, I’m an adult. I’m in college and I’m doing this type of activity which, if somebody was going down the hall they might look in there and think, ‘What are they doing?’ But, I knew I need the process. The process of learning this, to be able to teach a child.
Dawne concluded, “You couldn’t just be passive, you had to do stuff.”

Constructivists believe active learning takes place through varied opportunities and methods that combine prior knowledge with new opportunities for learning (Woolfolk, 1995). The syllabus of each of the ECE courses reflected the constructivist conceptual framework of the ECE program. According to the syllabi of ECE courses in the program, students at Beachline had multiple opportunities for active learning including: (a) observing different types of early childhood programs including Head Start, corporate, church, laboratory and family owned, (b) child studies of individual children, (c) application of the State of Ohio Day Care Licensing Rules in a group project, (d) journals, (e) observing children including infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children with special needs, (f) critiquing articles and videos, (g) creating learning materials for young children, (h) planning, preparing, and teaching different types of activities and environments for groups of young children (i) identifying and collecting professional resources, (j) participating in class activities, (k) assessing aspects of development in young children, (l) developing individual projects and presentations, (m) participating in the development of group projects and presentations, (n) developing curriculum notebooks and resource files, (o) planning, preparing, and implementing different types of activities for individual young children, including those with special needs, (p) interacting with in-class guest speakers, (q) role playing, (r) evaluating toys and equipment for young children including aspects of health and safety, (s) planning nutritional menus, (t) interviewing early childhood professionals, and (u) analyzing case studies.
The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study all described the NAEYC (1997) statement of developmentally appropriate practices not only as "thread" that went through the entire ECE program but as the 'cornerstone' of the program. Dawne explained developmentally appropriate practice meant the early childhood professional understood, "That development is sequential, but all children don't' achieve it at the same time, and that we need to value where that child is." NAEYC's Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) points out the importance of the early childhood professional's knowledge of both child development and individual children. Kelly Moore, an ECE adjunct faculty member, related:

Early on [in the ECE program] there was just a very big emphasis on Piaget. And I think there still is emphasis, probably not as strong as it once was. But the idea of children learning by doing. Hands on application is very much there. Developmentally appropriate practices as defined and understood by NAEYC are there.

Kelly explained the role of teacher as facilitator was "very much a cornerstone of the program." She said, the "teacher as facilitator is probably mentioned over and over and over again. Teacher as guide, teacher as setting up the environment, not teacher as didactically teaching." Kelly explained that in the ECE classes she taught she tried to help ECE students learn by "actively involving them in the lesson."

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, offered a number of examples of the constructivist conceptual framework that guided teaching and learning within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. In one example she recalled:
I actually to the [ECE] class over to the library and they [the college librarian] did a presentation on the Internet and how to get into the Internet. And then when talking to the librarian [before the class meeting] we came up with a very, very broad topic that they [the ECE students in the class] could choose to look at on the Internet. I would say the majority of my students don’t have computers at home and I’m not sure that they’ve used them very much on campus. So it was interesting. I purposefully watched the behavior of a couple of student who I know had no previous knowledge of even working on a computer. And one of the students found the Children’s Museum in Indianapolis. And she wrote the most incredible paper, because what they had to do was research a topic, print it off the Internet, and then they had to do a research/reaction paper. And she [the ECE student] was just, I mean to see how she changed in two hours. From when the librarian showed us how to do it. She was just glowing when she left.

Sue believed it was important for ECE students to be successful as they constructed their knowledge. She used terms like “it excites them” and “they’re successful” to describe teaching and learning. The constructivist orientation to teaching and learning within the ECE program at Beachline Community College was intertwined with a clear orientation of valuing the individual.

**Valuing the individual.** According to *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), the early childhood professional understands both variations in development and the “uniqueness of each person as an individual” (p. 10). The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College clearly described a conceptual orientation of valuing both the individual child and the individual ECE student. This conceptual orientation was reflective of the personal orientation to programs of teacher education described earlier in Chapter Two. Programs of teacher education with a personal orientation emphasize teaching and learning as the heart of the educational process while “the teachers’ own personal
development is a central part of teacher preparation" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 225).

Sue Ralough, the full-time ECE faculty member stated:

Our bottom line goal would be to have our students as well rounded as we possibly can, just like the whole child, really dealing with each aspect [of development], not just with the academics, but, also, building the student’s self-esteem. That’s real strong.

One of the required courses in the ECE program was Affective Education, a course offered through the Social Work Education program at Beachline Community College. According to the course description in the Beachline Community College catalog, the Affective Education course focused on “intrapersonal and interpersonal communication processes and personal growth and development.” Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program, described the course Affective Education and its influence on her personal growth and development.

Dawne said:

I found that class very valuable because that course helped me get in touch with me, and how I think about things, and what my biases are, and how I relate to people. And that really helped me. I was not expecting a class like that. I was expecting a class like theory. I was expecting to be taught ‘how to.’ I remember thinking that that course kind of aggravated me a little bit because I didn’t know if I was ready to get into myself quite as much as that class pushed me into doing it. I’m so glad I had that because it helps me in my relationships with parents and children. That’s what this course helped me with. To realize where I am coming from.

Valuing the individual child was described by Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member and the director of the Corporate Child Care Center, as “the heart of it all.” As an early childhood professional she explained:

The heart of it all is in valuing them, genuinely, and helping them know that they’re valued. From there you can go into developing a good rapport with the child so that they are as glad to see you as your are to see them. They need
that. And I see that as the professional model. Once you have established that rapport then you start to know that individual child. Then, in terms of teaching, you’ve got them because I think young children truly want to please you. And then the curriculum areas – you keep them interesting and keep them fresh. If you devote that little bit of time to say, ‘What would catch his interest?’ ‘What would bring this one over?’ The heart of it is making that child valued, special, and wanted.

Sue offered an example of valuing the individual child from a recent practicum site visit. She explained the young children in the practicum student’s classroom were sponge painting on a long sheet of paper taped to the wall. Sue said:

They had paper plates out with the different colors. One of the little boys wanted his own. ‘I want mine!’ They had little sponges and one of them got on the table. And that really sparked his interest. And the teacher let him sponge on the table. And that was, for my practicum student, it was amazing! Here the majority of the children were busy making this wallpaper and this little boy, he wanted to do his own. ‘I want to do my own thing.’ He was able to do that on the table. And it didn’t hurt anybody. There was not, ‘This is what we’re doing. You need to be focused over here.’ The whole scenario with this child is that that’s where he’s at right now. Whatever you say we’re going to do he wants to do something different. And what happened in that one small instant for my student was like, ‘Whoa!’

Sue viewed individual experiences as opportunities for learning and built upon those experiences in the classroom. She explained to ECE students:

Yes, you have to learn how to do lesson planning. Yes, you have to have a plan. One of my [ECE] instructors would say, ‘If you don’t have a plan for these children, these children will have a plan for you!’ But, being open enough to let that broaden and let the child go with their interest. So that’s going all the way around the circle. To see the ‘hands on’ Piaget, building the self esteem, bringing in the High Scope kind of thing, but also the whole Reggio Emilia feeling of, ‘Let’s go with this. What are the children interested in?’

The ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study also indicated they clearly valued individual ECE students. Sue said, “What I try to do in the early part of the [ECE] Intro [course] and really even in the [ECE student orientation] is trying to
develop the student’s self esteem so they can succeed.” Sue believed, “building that self esteem. If it’s really solid they take that through the rest of their life.” The ECE faculty and staff were committed to offering ECE students’ opportunities for individual development. Sue explained she often returned papers to students “three or four times” until their work was completed at an acceptable standard. Sue carefully prepared study guides for examinations in the ECE classes she taught. She reiterated the importance of positive interactions between ECE faculty and students a number of times during the course of her interviews. Sue recalled hiring a part-time ECE faculty member from one of the nearby urban communities “who came with raving reviews and is still known to be one of the key people in early childhood in the area.” Sue described a very unpleasant experience as she observed this new instructor while teaching an ECE class. Sue said, “When I was in the class, she just degraded my students. I just couldn’t believe it. I couldn’t believe that a person in early childhood would do that, but she did. I just never had her come back.”

Dawne O’Brien clearly perceived the conceptual orientation of valuing the individual as an ECE student. Dawne recalled that when she was a student in one of Sue’s classes she:

Always wanted to sit back and smile. Because as soon as Sue walked in the door she treated us the way she would want us to treat a child. It has to be a safe environment. You have to feel secure. She would reemphasize to us that we would work through this together. ‘It seems like a lot right now, but I’m going to guide you. I’m not going to put you in a situation where you’re uncomfortable.’ There was a lot of trust that was built because she didn’t do that. She always was interested in our self-esteem. And she would never put us in a situation that would blow that apart. She built from what she saw in us and went from there.
Sue recognized the emphasis and valuing of the individual could possibly have negative consequences for the ECE students. Sue viewed negation of self-esteem as a part of one’s life experience. She explained:

That’s also a liability for my students because we try so hard to develop that. Then they go into another course where the instructor [indicates], ‘You’re nothing but a piece of trash.’ But, that’s what life is, and hopefully they can see that if they can make that difference in young children because that’s what’s going to happen to them.

Sue concluded, “I try to look at each student as an individual. Try to really stay in touch with where they’re at. And I pretty much know my students. I work at that.”

Constructivism and valuing the individual were the two conceptual orientations of the ECE program at Beachline Community College. These conceptual orientations provided the curriculum theme for the structure of the ECD program, which is described in the next section.

**ECE Program Structure**

The structure of the ECE program at Beachline Community College was guided by multiple external standards. The ECE program met appropriate guidelines and standards of: (a) the Ohio Board of Regents, (b) the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, (c) the Ohio Department of Education, and (d) the Ohio Department of Human Services.

Howey and Zimpher identified four characteristics of quality and coherence related to the structure of the programs of elementary teacher education in their study: (a) the relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience were balanced, (b) program structures enabled interdisciplinary approaches...
to the curriculum, (c) programs were rigorous and academically challenging, and (d) programs had adequate time within the structure of the program. Each of these characteristics of quality and coherence within the ECE program at Beachline Community College is examined in the following sections.

**Balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience.** There was a clearly balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and experience within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. The ECE degree program consisted of 91 quarter hours. The ECE degree requirements were 54 quarter hours in early childhood education and 37 quarter hours in general education.

The ECE program requirements for pedagogical knowledge in early childhood met standards established by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Human Services. These requirements reflected the early childhood core of professional knowledge identified by NAEYC (Willer, 1994; NAEYC, DEC/CED, NBPTS, 1966) which were described in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The structure of the ECE program included the following categories of pedagogical knowledge: (a) knowledge and application of child development, (b) observing and assessing children's behavior, (c) establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment, (d) planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, (e) demonstrating appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, (f) establishing and maintaining positive relationships with families, (g) supporting
learning and development within a context of family and culture, and (h) demonstrating professionalism (Willer, 1994, NAEYC, DEC/CED, NBPTS, 1996).

The general education requirements of the ECE program included courses in English composition, psychology, sociology, social work education, computer application, oral communication, and humanities. There was not a required mathematics course in the ECE program. Instead, ECE students were required to take an entry level accounting course. Sue explained, “We used to have business math and a student group came and said, ‘We just really feel like this principles of accounting class would be really more geared to what we would do if we were a director [of a program of early education and care for young children].’” Sue related she met with faculty from the Business Department at Beachline to review the syllabi of both the business math course and the accounting course and discuss the issue with them. After careful consideration Sue switched the math requirement in the ECE program to the accounting course.

Sue used the analogy of building a house to describe the interrelationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. She explained:

Intro [Introduction to Early Childhood Education] being the foundational course. That’s how we start the program. I always tell my students it’s sort of like building a house. We’re building the foundation. And there’s going to be pieces of all of the courses that they will have down the road. And theories [in the Intro course] are real strong.

Sue related all of the ECE students who entered the program were required by the college to take a placement test assessing their reading, writing, and computation
skills. Beachline offered developmental courses in these areas and Sue described these courses as "a part of the foundation." Building on the ECE program foundation was an ECE course in art and music. Sue explained this course was deliberately paired with the ECE Introduction course for two reasons:

One is that it's fairly simple for a student to achieve in that course and get a fairly good grade. And two, it really begins to work on them, playing and doing art. A lot of students don't know how to play! And that's real important if you're going to be an early childhood person.

In the second quarter Sue indicated ECE students next "moved into more basic technical kinds of things like infant/toddler development. The ECE infant/toddler course was taken concurrently with a psychology course in human growth and development. Sue explained, "We do those together for a reason because they kind of parallel each other. A lot of it is the same but that's okay with me." ECE materials and resources, a course focusing on developing and selected materials for the classroom and identifying resources for the early childhood professional, was usually taken concurrently with the ECE infant/toddler course. During the third quarter of the ECE program, according to Sue, students took ECE courses in language development and behavior management, a sociology course on racial and cultural minorities, effective speaking, and a one-credit hour course in word processing.

Sue described the second year of the ECE program as "more technical, we're back to the building the house kind of thing." ECE students in their fourth quarter of the program studied movement, health, safety and nutrition, math and science activities, and preschool curriculum. In the fifth quarter ECE students completed their first practicum while taking ECE course work in children with special needs and
school age curriculum. In their final quarter students focused on their second
practicum course, an ECE course on current professional issues, and a course on
directing a childcare program.

The balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge,
and experience was one characteristic of quality and coherence related to the structure
of the program found within the ECE program at Beachline Community College.
Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, a second characteristic of quality and
coherence associated with program structure, are described in the following section.

**Interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum.** Interdisciplinary
approaches to the curriculum were evident within the ECE program at Beachline
Community College as a planned part of the ECE program sequence discussed in the
previous section of this chapter. Kelly Moore, a part-time ECE faculty member,
viewed ECE students as “building on what they’ve learning from other [ECE]
classes.” Kelly said:

I hear students really building on what they’ve learned from other [ECE]
classes. They will say in class, ‘Well, we learned in such and such a class
about the importance of play or the stages of play. They will bring that to their
other classes.

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, believed the ECE course in
infant/toddler development and the psychology course in human growth and
development, courses ECE students usually took concurrently, “keyed into one
another.” Sue believed when ECE students studied the communication course,
Effective Speaking, they were building upon previous ECE courses as well as the
Affective Education course described earlier in this chapter. Sue said, “With the
courses they’ve had with us in early childhood and affective ed, they’re beginning to get used to being ‘up front’.”

Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program, mentioned a number of ways in which the ECE program had enabled interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum. Dawne believed there were multiple relationships among the courses in the ECE program. She recalled learning about child development in many, many ECE courses and described the psychology course in human growth and development as taking child development “a little deeper than just the surface.” Dawne perceived her sociology classes, an introduction to sociology and a course on cultural minorities, as “helping in understanding where the children were coming to the centers, what their life might be like.” She believed her English composition and technical report writing classes had clearly helped prepare her for the professional writing she was required to do as the teacher/co-director of the Children’s Salvation Center. Dawne mentioned the only course in the ECE program that she questioned was the accounting course. She said, “I think we might need to have more of a math that would be used in an early childhood center – just some real basic math type things.”

The evidence of interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum within the ECE program at Beachline Community was inconsistent. For example, Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member, did not perceive ECE students as capitalizing on interdisciplinary opportunities for learning. She said, “I don’t hear a lot of appreciation or understanding from the [ECE] students who are taking those [general
education] classes. I have to admit it's the rare student who seems to enjoy the general education requirements or the electives.” Kelly believed the faculty “could focus better on” integrating writing skills into the ECE curriculum. Kelly said she told the ECE students in the classes she taught, “You’re going to write a college level research paper, just as you learned to do in English ‘whatever’. And if you’re not sure of that or if you need tutorial help, get it.”

Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum were evident within the ECE program at Beachline Community College in an inconsistent manner. One adjunct faculty member questioned ECE students’ full understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to learning, especially their general education courses. Dawne O’Brien, an ECE program graduate, expressed her understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the program. The third characteristic of quality and coherence related to program structure, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) was a rigorous and academically challenging program. The rigor and academic challenge of the ECE program at Beachline Community College is described in the following section.

**Rigorous and academically challenging program.** The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College described aspects of the ECE program as rigorous and academically challenging. Dawne O’Brien, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program, had attended three universities before enrolling in the ECE program. She commented, “I did not have the quality of education at any of those institutions as I did here [at Beachline Community College]. Dawne explained:

I thought it [the ECE program at Beachline Community College] was very challenging. I had taken lots of other college courses. I thought the Intro to
ECE was probably one of the hardest courses I’ve taken. I thought the special needs [class] was also difficult because it was so technical. The other classes that might have seemed less theoretical, more hands on, would be more, quote, ‘easy’, I guess. But there was always theory behind it. I thought it was challenging. I thought it was all challenging.

Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member, explained she believed the rigor and academic challenge of the ECE program had grown over the years. Kelly said, “I don’t know that it is terribly, terribly difficult, but it has improved over the years in my knowledge of it.” Kelly elaborated on how the ECE program had evolved academically and explained:

I think that students do have an academic accountability and know that. Earlier on it seemed that they were doing a lot of the things that kids do – cutting and pasting and gluing. That was more of an emphasis in some classes. Participating as if you were that child. Now, I can’t say that I feel that way. I think that there is a stronger academic component. Not anything that would be overwhelming to someone at the community college level.

Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, reiterated Beachline’s institutional philosophy of student success when asked to describe the intellectual challenge of the ECE program. She explained that Beachline Community College, as an open enrollment institution, used a number of methods to facilitate student success. Sue suggested Beachline supported student success by “offering and mandating the developmentals, the counseling that we have, the tutoring that’s available at no charge.” Sue believed “most of the faculty really look to having the students achieve.” Sue perceived the academic challenge at Beachline Community College as rigorous but realistic for a community college. She said, “I think there is an intellectual base they want the students to reach, but it’s not so far that they can’t obtain it.”
Sue restated the personal orientation of the ECE program at Beachline Community College as she described how she and other ECE faculty viewed ECE students as individuals. Sue explained, “What I’m trying to do is develop the student’s self esteem so they can achieve.” Sue recalled that students in ECE classes demonstrated a wide range of abilities and she and the other ECE faculty encouraged those students to learn and grown over a period of time. She explained:

There’re still some students, who because of their background, abilities, or maybe both – I’m thinking of some students who really have poor writing skills and grammar skills. What I have is my philosophy, and I try to give my adjuncts [my philosophy], that you really need to look at the class as a whole, we know that. There are also individual who are doing the very best that they can. And they may have already gone through developmentals, but they still need help with their writing and reading skills. So what we try to do is steer those students to still work and to achieve, but they still need some work. Now, if those students then go into the technical report writing classes, which is one of our program requirements, one of the intellectual challenges is they have to be so precise. And a lot of students who have writing problems are so far from that preciseness, so we try to gradually get them to that point.

Sue explained ECE students at Beachline Community College found a number of courses within the ECE program especially rigorous. “I think we stretch ‘em [the ECE students],” she said. “We stretch ‘em pretty far.” Sue described the introduction to early childhood course as “tough. Intro’s real tough. They’ve got to really bear down and work – the theory and all that.” Sue also described the course on young children with special needs as “tough.” She said:

Special needs class is really tough because it’s things that students don’t know about, definitions, handicapping conditions. We have a person who teaches it who’s a wonderful teacher but, she makes them know their stuff. Fair, gives them study guides, wants them to succeed, but they’ve got to stretch.
While Sue described the ECE program as rigorous and academically challenging, she pointed out there were required courses within the program that appeared to challenge students in other ways. Sue said, “There are courses that my students just hit the wall – they’re running and they hit the wall.” For example, Sue described the psychology course in human growth and development as “a shock course for most of my students. It just like knocks the socks off of them.” Sue indicated some courses, such as the required sociology course in cultural minorities, were taught by faculty she described as “just really tough. I can tell you I’m going to have people at my door the third week of the quarter.” When asked to elaborate on the challenge of these courses, Sue explained:

My perspective, from where I sit, is an instructor that has very, very high expectations. The method of the delivery of the information and the tests, first of all, don’t equal each other. And, if you ask questions, which I encourage my students to do, they’re, and this is a strong word, but they’re belittled, or, [the instructor says] ‘I’ve already went over that.’ So, it’s this real expectation that you need to get it because you’re in college and now you need to just buff up and get it. Some of this is the personality of the instructor. But, outside of the classroom, I see that attitude that, “They’re in college, you know. We don’t need to be giving degrees away. They need to be earning this.” But, if you have a student who’s getting A’s in everything else in the world – you know there’s something wrong there.

Sue concluded with an explanation of how she helps students to succeed while maintaining a rigorous and academically challenging curriculum within the ECE program. She said:

I want my students to succeed. And [I do] whatever I can do to help them succeed. I may give a research paper back two times. But, it’s their [the ECE student’s] responsibility, if they choose. They can take the C of they can go back and correct their work. And for me, what learning’s taking place? What have they corrected? Because it’s mistakes that they’ll probably correct and not make again. I’m doing everything I can to help my student’s achieve.
That's one level. The other level is you're in college. Now I'm going to give you the toughest thing I can give you. And maybe it is a four-year mentality. I don't know. But I hope not. Because I hope my students are learning at the same level and learning how to learn and how to take test so they could go anyplace.

The ECE program at Beachline Community College was described by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study as rigorous and academically challenging as an associate degree program. In the next section the quality characteristic of adequate time within the structure of the ECE program is examined.

**Adequate time within the structure of the program.** A characteristic of quality and coherence in programs of elementary teacher education, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was adequate time within the structure of the program. While all of the ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College interviewed in this study mentioned time as a frequent personal and professional challenge, they offered no indications that time within the structure of the ECE program was inadequate or challenging. Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member, recalled, as she was describing actively involving ECE students in the classroom, “There’s some classes that really lend themselves more to didactic method and I try to really stay away from that. I can’t say I’m always able to. You know, sometimes it’s like there’s only this much time! And to say, “You need to know this!’ [laughter]. Kelly also noted, “If they [the ECE students in her classes] need more time, if they say, ‘Gee, I just didn’t understand this’, I’ll certainly work with them as long as I understand that they’re working, too.” Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the ECE program, explained she had transferred credit hours into the
program, which gave her, as an ECE student, more than adequate time within the structure of the program.

Program Evaluation

Howey and Zimpher (1989) found systematic program evaluation to be a characteristic of quality and coherence in the programs of elementary teacher education in their study. The ECE program at Beachline Community College was systematically evaluated through multiple methods. Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, believed there was what she described as "a real balance" between informal and formal evaluations of the ECE program. The first type of systematic evaluation was by the North Central Association of colleges and Schools, which accredited Beachline Community College. The entire college, including the ECE program, participated in this self-study and external evaluation process.

The second type of systematic evaluation of the ECE program was the extensive process of program review described earlier in this chapter. The ECE Program Review included research regarding students and faculty, a study of the local and national milieu, and an external evaluation by an early childhood professional.

The third type of systematic evaluation of the ECE program was the prekindergarten review of the program conducted by a team from the State of Ohio Department of Education. Sue Ralough had been hired by Beachline Community College to facilitate the ECE program's prekindergarten application and evaluation. Sue believed it was her work with the prekindergarten certification process that
especially enabled her to know and understand all aspects of Beachline’s ECE program.

A fourth type of evaluation described by the ECE faculty and staff was faculty evaluations by ECE students. Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant who was a graduate of the program, recalled she had filled our student evaluation forms “every quarter.” Kelly Moore, an adjunct ECE faculty member, explained that ECE students “do an evaluation of adjunct instructors with each class.” Sue Ralough, the single ECE full-time faculty member, related that, while the college only required full-time faculty to request student evaluations in five or six courses a year, she “pretty much did most of my courses. I pretty much [ask students to] evaluate every one.”

The fifth type of program evaluation described by the ECE faculty and staff was a number of informal evaluation processes used by individual faculty members in various ECE classes. Sue explained:

I would say at least every other class I teach I’ll just kind of off the cuff say, ‘What did you think about today?’ Or, ‘Would you have changed anything?’ Even if I see them outside of class another time [I’d ask], ‘What did you think about seminar?’

Sue also used student journals as a way to garner feedback from ECE students. She explained, “I use journals. Sometimes students will say things in the journal that we journal back and forth.” Dawne, the ECE laboratory assistant, also noted Sue’s encouragement of student feedback regarding the ECE program. She said, “Sue makes her office very open. And, if students are not comfortable with an instructor or a course, she hears about it right away.”
A system of formal and informal evaluation of the ECE program at Beachline Community College ensured a systematic evaluation of the program. ECE faculty used these multiple evaluative processes to assist in the development of conceptual and curricular coherence within the ECE program. The ECE faculty quest for coherence is described in the following section.

**Conceptual and Curricular Program Coherence**

The ECE program at Beachline Community college exhibited a number of characteristics of conceptual and curricular coherence. There were many indications of a steady pursuance for conceptual and curricular coherence among the entire ECE faculty and staff. First, as described in the section of this chapter relating to the ECE faculty, Sue had consistently chosen part-time faculty who understood and demonstrated both valuing the individual and developmentally appropriate practices. A second indicator of curricular coherence was the carefully planned sequence of ECE and general education courses that comprised the ECE program. While students were generally encouraged to follow this sequence, Sue mentioned she does make exceptions on an individual basis. The final indicator of conceptual and curricular coherence in the ECE program was the consistent curriculum articulation established between the ECE program and core group of programs of early education and care most often used as practicum sites.

**The Subject Matter of the ECE Program: Summary**

The ECE program at Beachline Community College exhibited five of the six characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter of programs of
teacher education identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). The ECE faculty identified constructivism and valuing the individual as two clear curricular themes. The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience was satisfactorily balanced. While the structure of the ECE program encouraged some interdisciplinary approaches to the ECE curriculum, there were mixed descriptions by the ECE faculty of their effectiveness. The ECE faculty and staff agreed that the ECE program, especially those courses in which theoretical concepts were taught, was rigorous and academically challenging for an associate degree program. The ECE program was systematically evaluated by a number of external and internal processes. Howey and Zimpher (1989) found the programs in their study to have adequate time within the structure of the program. No disconfirming evidence could be found related to the issue of adequate time within the ECE program at Beachline Community College.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter a case study of a prekindergarten program of teacher education was presented through holistic description and analysis. The purpose of this case was to investigate the bounded phenomena in this study, the Early Childhood Education Program of prekindergarten teacher education at Beachline Community College. Multiple data sources were used to provide an extensive view of the case. An important part of the case of the ECE program at Beachline Community College focused on intrinsic (Stake, 1995) aspects of the case to enable the reader to better understand a prekindergarten associate degree program of teacher education. Intrinsic
aspects of this case study were important because of the lack of knowledge regarding associate degree program of early childhood teacher education, a point repeated in the literature.

Another important part of this case study was the focus on the instrumental aspects of the case. “Insight into an issue of refinement of theory” (Stake, 1994, p. 237) are offered in an instrumental case study. Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, identified 14 characteristics of quality and coherence in these program. In the instrumental aspect of this case, the ECE program at Beachline Community College was studied to identify what aspects of a high-quality, coherent program of teacher education, as noted by Howey and Zimpher (1989), were present, and how identified characteristics of quality and coherence were represented in the program. The conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978), the teacher, the milieu, the student, and the subject matter, was used to facilitate an understanding of the characteristics of quality and coherence in the prekindergarten program of teacher education at Beachline Community College.

Three characteristics of quality and coherence related to the ECD faculty at Beachline Community College. These characteristics were similar to those found by Howey and Zimpher (1989) in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. The characteristics of quality and coherence within the ECE program at Beachline Community College were: (a) ECE faculty identified with distinctive aspects of the program, (b) ECE faculty possessed a clear conception of
teaching and learning, and (c) ECE faculty clearly linked their program with research and development in the field of early childhood education.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified three characteristics of quality and coherence related to both the institutional milieu of Beachline Community College and the milieu of the Early Childhood Education program itself. The characteristics of the milieu found at Beachline similar to those described by Howey and Zimpher (1989) were: (a) the ECE program goals were clear, reasonable, and professional, (b) the ECE program had adequate resources, and (c) there was clear curriculum articulation with a core group of community programs of education and care for young children used as practicum sites.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) described two characteristics of quality and coherence related to the students in programs of teacher education. ECE students at Beachline Community College were encouraged to identify with informal cohort groups. There was no clearly recognized milestone or benchmark point identified within the ECE program.

Finally, five of the six characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter, as identified Howey & Zimpher (1989) were reflected in the subject matter of the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College: (a) the ECE program was rigorous and academically challenging as an associate degree program, (b) constructivism and valuing the individual, the conceptual orientation of the ECD program, was reflected thematically throughout the program, (c) there was a balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical
knowledge, and experience, (d) the ECE program was systematically evaluated through multiple internal, external, formal, and informal processes, and (e) there was adequate time within the structure of the program. A sixth characteristic of quality and coherence related to the subject matter, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), was a program structure that enabled interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum. Such a program structure was in place within the ECE program at Beachline Community College and its implementation and understanding appeared to be uneven and inconsistent. In addition to these characteristics of quality and coherence, the ECE program also exhibited multiple characteristics of conceptual and curricular coherence.
CHAPTER 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY AND COHERENCE IN PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of quality and coherence in community college prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. There was little if any research about these or any of the prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education found in community colleges nationwide. The literature clearly identified the lack of research related to associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education and many researchers indicated the need for research in this area (Bredekamp, 1996; Ott, Zeichner, & Price, 1990; Powell & Dunn, 1990; Saracho, 1993; Spodek & Saracho, 1990). Case study research of associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education could provide "a close-up and detailed look at particular teacher education activities and show what a teacher education program looks like from the inside" (Zeichner, 1999, p. 9).

Two case studies of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education were presented in this dissertation. The Early Childhood
Development (ECD) program at Mapleview Community College and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at Beachline Community College were selected as typical associate degree programs, each having a single full-time faculty member.

This chapter begins with a review of the research questions guiding the study of the ECD program at Mapleview Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College. A comparative analysis of the findings relating to the program characteristics of the ECD/ECE faculty, the milieu, the ECD/ECE students, and the subject matter is then presented. The findings supporting the characteristics of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), as found in the prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in this study, are then summarized. Next, a comparison is made between the findings in this study to statements in the literature regarding associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education. This chapter concludes with implications for future research and the conclusions drawn as a result of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the role of faculty in prekindergarten associate degree programs in at least two community colleges in Ohio?
2. What social, cultural, and/or environmental contexts contribute to understanding these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?
3. What are the characteristics of prekindergarten associate degree early childhood education students?

4. What is the nature of the curriculum in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education? How is the curriculum organized?

5. What is the structural and conceptual orientation of these prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education?

6. What aspects of a high-quality, coherent program of teacher education as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989) are present in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

7. How are the programmatic aspects of quality and coherence, as identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989), represented in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

8. What unique elements are contained in these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education?

The Commonplace of the Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education Programs

The first five research questions in this study related to the faculty, the milieu, the students, and the subject matter of the prekindergarten programs of teacher education at Mapleview and Beachline Community College. The four commonplaces of the curriculum as described by Schwab (1978), the teacher, the milieu, the students, and the subject matter, comprised one conceptual framework of this study. The findings associated with these questions comprised the intrinsic (Stake, 1995) aspects of both case studies. The goal of an intrinsic case study is “better understanding of this
particular case” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). Utilizing the conceptual framework of the
commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978), the faculty, the milieu, the students,
and the subject matter, two prekindergarten associate degree programs of early
childhood teacher education were examined to develop a better understanding of their
nature and characteristics. The findings related to each of these commonplaces are
summarized in the following sections.

The Faculty

The prekindergarten programs chosen for research in this study were selected
as typical programs in that each had a single, full-time faculty member. Chloe Evans,
the single ECD faculty member at Mapleview Community College, and Sue Ralough,
the single ECE faculty member at Beachline Community College, were both
enthusiastic supporters of this research. Chloe and Sue each dedicated a significant
number of hours from their busy schedules to this study including interviews, follow-
up questions and telephone calls, tours of campus facilities, introductions to other
campus professionals, program faculty, and students, and member-checking the case
study of their individual program.

The ECD/ECE faculty at Mapleview Community College and Beachline
Community College were all dedicated professionals. The ECD/ECE faculty in each
program had professional experience as well as a professional knowledge base in the
field of early childhood education. The entire ECD faculty at Mapleview Community
College held advanced degrees in early childhood education or a related field. The
ECE faculty at Beachline Community College had earned associate, baccalaureate, or
master's degrees in early childhood education or a related field. The American Association of Community Colleges (1998) reports that about a fifth of community college faculty have doctorates or professional degrees. None of the faculty in the ECD or ECE programs had earned degrees beyond a master's degree. The ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study expressed a personal and professional commitment to the profession of early childhood education. This commitment was indicated, in many instances, by their long-term interest in the profession.

Professional growth and development was an ongoing part of the professional lives of the entire ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College, in conjunction with other members of an established professional cohort of early childhood professionals in the community, had: (a) taken graduate classes in early childhood education, (b) earned master's degrees in early childhood education, (c) annually attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference, (d) participated in and supported the local NAEYC affiliate, and (e) attended other national workshops and training such as the NAEYC Leading Edge teleconference on developmentally appropriate practices, and Katz and Chard's summer workshop on the Project Approach. The faculty and staff of Beachline Community College's ECE program were especially interested in professional growth as it related to research and development related to current health issues in the field. Professional development of the ECE faculty and staff at Beachline focused on research related to the increased numbers of children with pulmonary
illnesses and the effects of prenatal exposure to drugs such as alcohol and crack cocaine.

Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECD/ECE faculty in each program of prekindergarten teacher education in this study, had extensive program responsibilities in addition to their teaching loads. Both Chloe and Sue were responsible for orienting ECE students to the program, advising all of the ECE students in the program, maintaining all required student documentation, acquiring and keeping all mandatory documentation for the Ohio Department of Education, conducting all prekindergarten student interviews, placing all practicum students, and evaluating all practicum sites for program eligibility. At Mapleview Community College Chloe was the director of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. At Beachline, the Rainbow Children’s Learning Center was directed by a full-time early childhood professional. In addition to program responsibilities, both Chloe and Sue participated in college committees as well professional activities within the community.

The workloads of both Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECD/ECE faculty members at each of the programs in this study, were extraordinary. Adjunct faculty at each institution as well as the external reviewer in the Program Review at Beachline Community College suggested that the ECD/ECE programs would benefit from the addition of second full-time faculty member. In the ECE program at Beachline Community College, Dawne O’Brien, an ECE program graduate had assumed the unique staff position of ECE laboratory assistant. Dawne actually
filled a role similar to that of an administrative assistant to Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECE faculty member, by taking on many of the routine, but essential, office tasks of the ECE program and assuming some of the ECE faculty program responsibilities.

The personal theories of action of Chloe and Sue guided their teaching practice both inside and outside of the classroom. Chloe’s commitment to quality programs for young children led her to participate in numerous professional committees at the local and state levels. Chloe had also written a number of grant proposals which had resulted in funded opportunities for quality improvement in community programs of early education and care for young children as well as the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center. Sue’s religious beliefs and personal theories converged with her work at the community program of early education and care, the Children’s Salvation Center. That commitment became so strong that, at the end of the academic year in which this research took place, both Sue Ralough and Dawne O’Brien resigned their positions at Beachline Community College to devote full efforts to their ministry.

Understanding the role of part-time adjunct faculty was important in both of the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study. Adjunct ECD faculty taught approximately 40% of the ECD courses at Mapleview Community College and over 60% of the ECE courses at Beachline Community College. Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough, the single full-time faculty members, had carefully recruited and retained a core group of adjunct faculty members who shared the conceptual orientations of each program. The adjunct ECE faculty in each program had professional experience in the
areas in which they were teaching and a degree in early childhood education or a
related field.

Both Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough sought ways to assist adjunct faculty
members to work together. The early childhood education professionals in both
communities in this study interconnected in many ways. These professionals served
on multiple committees within their local communities, participated in local, state, and
national professional activities, served on advisory committees, and taught in the
ECD/ECE programs. Chloe and Sue brought these professionals together in a variety
of meetings and activities to support their professional growth as ECD/ECE adjunct
faculty. The adjunct ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College found meetings
that focused on particular aspects of college teaching to be especially valuable.

Many of the areas of professional development engaged in by the ECE faculty
in this study were guided and supported by aspects of the institutional and program
milieu. A comparative analysis of the findings related to the institutional and
ECD/ECE program milieu is discussed in the following section.

The Milieu

The institutional and program milieu of the ECD/ECE programs included the
multiple cultural and/or environmental contexts affecting one another as well as the
development of the curriculum. The institutional milieu of each of the community
colleges in this study had a significant impact on the ECD/ECE programs. Each
program existed on community college campuses that were less than 30 years old and
recruited students from a four county area. Mapleview Community College served a
rural area of the state while Beachline Community College was located in a small city within a short driving distance from a number of large urban communities. At Mapleview Community College the change from a quarter to semester academic calendar had led to the complete revision of the ECD program curriculum. The institutional statement of "Core Values" at Mapleview Community College was fully integrated into the ECD program curriculum. The administrative focus at Beachline Community College was on programs reflecting contemporary trends and issues in the field. This aspect of the institutional milieu at Beachline Community College guided curriculum changes within the ECE program through both the program review process and the ECE Advisory Committee. The ECD/ECE program goals, as a part of the institutional milieu of each program, are discussed later in this chapter as a characteristic of quality and coherence.

The ECD/ECE program milieu included ECD/ECE program resource centers located in the college library, the programs of early education and care for young children located on each campus, and the dedicated ECD classroom at Mapleview Community College. These aspects of the ECD/ECE program milieu are considered later in this chapter in the discussion of the findings related to the quality characteristic of adequate program resources.

The Students

The ECD/ECE faculty and staff at Mapleview Community College and Beachline Community College described the students in their programs as "diverse" except for one, common characteristic. ECD/ECE students were almost entirely
female. Being a female was the single, common characteristic of almost all of the ECD/ECE students in the prekindergarten program in this study. None of the ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College interviewed in this study could recall ever having a male student in class. At Beachline Community College the ECE faculty recalled having three male students in ECE classes during the past 10 years.

The ECD/ECE students in the prekindergarten associate degree programs in this study reflected the diverse nature of community college students described in the literature (CCLO, 1996; Clowes, 1997; Foote, 1997). Curry (1988) points out many older students enroll in community colleges to prepare for a career change and the ECD/ECE students described in this study were of all ages, from recent high school graduates to mature, adult learners. The ECD/ECE students represented a broad range of economic groups. Many of the students in each program worked in either a program of early education and care for young children or in jobs such as retail sales and/or food service. ECD/ECE students often had multiple family responsibilities that sometimes affected their class attendance and ability to complete course work. Genzuk (1996) points out the challenge of working, attending classes, and fulfilling family responsibilities is a common barrier to success for community college students. A large number of the ECD/ECE students in this study had prior experiences with young children as childcare workers, babysitters, siblings, and/or parents.

The faculty and staff interviewed in this study described a wide variety of abilities among the ECD/ECE students. Each of the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study was an open admissions program. The single
admissions requirement was a high school diploma. All of the students entering both Mapleview and Beachline Community College were required, however, to take a test assessing their reading, writing, and computation skills. As a result of their assessment test scores, many ECD/ECE students enrolled in developmental courses to enhance particular academic skills. Other ECD/ECE students were described by the faculty and staff interviewed in this study as having little difficulty with any of the scholastic aspects of the program.

While the ECE program at Beachline Community College was open admissions, all of the ECD students at Mapleview Community College had to meet specific academic requirements and an application process for formal admission into the ECD program. These admission procedures were established as a part of the ECD program’s voluntary compliance with NCATE quality standards for programs of early childhood teacher education (NAEYC, 1994). All of the ECD students at Mapleview Community College graduated with the required academic requirements, a letter grade of C or better in all Early Childhood courses, mandated by the Ohio Department of Education for prekindergarten associate teacher certification. Due to the open admissions policy of the ECE program at Beachline Community College, a small number of ECE students at Beachline earned an associate degree in early childhood education but did not meet the academic requirements of a grade of “C” or better in all of their ECE courses in order to apply for Ohio Department of Education prekindergarten associate teacher certification.
ECD/ECE students' goals were also diverse, reflecting the typical goals of community college students identified in the literature. Tobolowsky (1998) found students enrolled in a community college to (a) complete course work equivalent to the first two years of a baccalaureate degree, (b) complete an associate degree, or (c) pursue specific course work in a chosen field. Some ECD students enrolled in the program at Mapleview Community College believing they could become kindergarten or primary teachers with their ECD associate degree. Many students in the ECD/ECE programs in both community colleges selected the program because they had previous successful experiences with young children. A large number of ECD/ECE students were in-service students who worked in a program of early education and care for young children. Professional development, an associate degree, and/or prekindergarten associate teacher certification were the goals of this group of ECD/ECE students. The faculty and staff in both the ECD and ECE program mentioned a group of students who chose early childhood education as a career field because they believed they could be successful. Some of these students perceived ECD/ECE as an easy major until they actually began taking courses in the program. The cultural diversity of the ECD/ECE students reflected the demographics of the Mapleview Community College and Beachline Community College's multi-county service areas.

ECD/ECE students scheduled and took classes based upon their diverse needs and circumstances. Approximately half of the ECE/ECE students could only take classes at nights and/or weekends because of job and/or family responsibilities. The
ECD/ECE faculty carefully scheduled classes as much as possible to meet the needs of the group of students described as “evening student.”

**The Subject Matter**

The subject matter of the prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education at Mapleview Community College and Beachline Community College was specifically developed to meet the Ohio Department of Education Prekindergarten Associate Teacher Certification standards. Each program also complied with the guidelines for associate degree programs mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents. As a result of following the same sets of standards, both programs appeared quite similar, as seen in Table 6.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECD Courses</strong></td>
<td><strong>ECE Courses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to ECD</td>
<td>Introduction to ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Activities for Young Children</td>
<td>Art &amp; Music for Young Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant/Toddler Education (elective)*</td>
<td>Infant &amp; Toddler Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources in ECE (elective)*</td>
<td>Resources in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Experiences in ECE</td>
<td>Language Experiences in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Issues in ECE</td>
<td>Current Issues in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing &amp; Guiding Young Children</td>
<td>Behavior Management in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Activities for Young Children</td>
<td>Sensorimotor Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Activities</td>
<td>Math &amp; Science Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Curriculum</td>
<td>Preschool Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Young Children with Special Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Safety &amp; Nutrition</td>
<td>Health, Safety &amp; Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration in ECE (elective)*</td>
<td>Administration in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Community Relations</td>
<td>Professional &amp; Legal Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age Curriculum (elective)*</td>
<td>School Age Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development Associate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Models in ECE (elective) *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum I</td>
<td>Practicum I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* two electives required in ECD program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)

Table 6.1 Prekindergarten Program Comparison: Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education
The subject matter of each of the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study, as published in the college catalog and detailed above in Table 6.1, comprised the program’s intended, explicit curriculum (Eisner, 1994, McCutcheon, 1995). The intended, explicit curriculum of each program was quite similar because they each followed the same mandatory standards of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents. It was the interconnections and interactions of the commonplaces of these prekindergarten programs, the full and
part-time faculty, the diverse ECD/ECE students, the institutional milieu, the program 
milieu and the subject matter, described in the two case studies of this dissertation, 
that helped develop a deeper understanding of the nature and characteristics of these 
two programs.

The process of curriculum development in the ECD program at Mapleview 
Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College reflected 
a practical orientation to curriculum development. Reid (1992) and McCutcheon 
(1995) term the practical approach to curriculum development a deliberative approach 
which uses aspects of solo and/or group deliberations in a process they both describe 
as a practical art. McCutcheon (1995) defines deliberation as “a process of reasoning 
about practical problems. It is solution oriented, that is toward deciding on a course of 
action.” Schubert (1986) concludes a practical orientation to curriculum development 
“is constantly renewing. It results in decision, action, and/or increased personal and 
professional meaning. This, in turn, brings into clearer sight other problems to be 
pursued, other needs to be met, and further meanings to be recovered” (p. 293). The 
ECD/ECE programs in this study clearly reflected the practical orientation to 
curriculum development as described by Schubert (1986), Reid (1992), Eisner (1994), 

The ECD/ECE programs, as described in each case study in this dissertation, 
were “constantly renewing” (Schubert, 1986, p. 293). As the commonplaces of the 
curriculum changed, practical curriculum problems arose, the early childhood 
professionals reflected upon the problems, then considered various solutions and
approaches. Multiple examples of the constantly renewing, practical orientation to curriculum development were found within the two case studies in this study. For example, the faculty and staff in the ECD/ECE programs explained that as the professional knowledge base in early childhood education changed, the faculty sought to reflect the growing professional knowledge base in the field within the ECD/ECE programs. The ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study mentioned the revisions in the 1997 NAEYC *Developmentally Appropriate Practices* statement, the social constructivist theories of Lev Vygotsky, and the emergent curriculum of the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy as examples of recent changes in the professional knowledge base in early childhood education. Other examples in this study of the constantly renewing, practical orientation to curriculum development included the revision of the entire ECD program at Mapleview Community College in response to the administrative change from a quarter to semester calendar and the integration of the latest research knowledge concerning young children’s pulmonary illnesses and treatments into Beachline’s ECE program curriculum.

As the ECD/ECE faculty and staff reflected upon the subject matter of their respective programs during the course of this study, they identified a number of problems and needs they were currently considering related to the subject matter of their programs. The ECD/ECE faculty believed students in each program demonstrated a need to develop specific interaction techniques, such as open-ended questioning, with young children. The ECD faculty at Mapleview continued to pursue program quality and curricular coherence with the Campus Childcare Center. The
ECE faculty at Beachline sought the most current professional knowledge related to the effects of prenatal drug exposure on young children. The Beachline ECE faculty and staff were also concerned with developing ECE curriculum for students seeking course work for renewal of their prekindergarten associate teaching certificate.

Characteristics of Quality and Coherence in Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

Howey and Zimpher's (1989) characteristics of quality and coherence comprised the second conceptual framework of this study. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified 14 characteristics of quality and coherence in six exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. These 14 characteristics of quality and coherence were used to frame the instrumental aspects of the collective case studies in this dissertation. Instrumental case studies are utilized when "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). This research explored the question as to what characteristics of quality and coherence, as described by Howey and Zimpher (1989), might be found in two prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education.

In the following sections of this chapter, the findings supporting these characteristics of quality and coherence in the associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education in this study are presented. Two unique characteristics of quality and coherence found in the prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in this study are also described and discussed.
Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to Faculty in Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

A comparative summary of the findings of characteristics of quality and coherence related to the early childhood faculty at Mapleview and Beachline Community College in this study is presented in Table 6.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Quality and Coherence as Identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989)</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program</td>
<td>Faculty identify with aspects of the program with which they have earned degrees and professional experience</td>
<td>Faculty identify with aspects of the program with which they have earned degrees and professional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Constructivism and developmentally appropriate practice comprise the conceptual framework for teaching and learning</td>
<td>Constructivism and developmentally appropriate practice comprise the conceptual framework for teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs link with research and development in teacher education</td>
<td>Faculty link with research and development in early childhood education</td>
<td>Faculty link with research and development in early childhood education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Characteristics of quality and coherence related to faculty in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education
The findings related to each of these characteristics of quality and coherence in the early childhood faculty in this study is discussed in the following sections.

**Faculty identify with distinctive aspects of the program.** Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough, the single full-time ECD/ECE faculty in the programs of prekindergarten teacher education in this study, identified with nearly all aspects of the program. Each of the full-time ECD/ECE faculty members had taught all but one or two courses within the ECD/ECE curriculum. Chloe and Sue taught the ECD/ECE courses with which they had both a professional knowledge base and experience. Neither Chloe nor Sue had taught the course on young children with special needs, which required a specific professional knowledge base. The adjunct faculty members in both programs perceived Chloe and Sue, the single full-time faculty members, as the person with full knowledge about their respective programs. The entire ECD/ECE faculty in both programs in this study identified with distinctive aspects of the program, taught in areas in which they had earned an associate, bachelors, and/or master's degree in early childhood education or related field, and had professional experience related to their teaching.

**Faculty possess clear conceptions of teaching and learning.** The ECD/ECE faculty in each program of prekindergarten teacher education in this study held, expressed, and demonstrated clear conceptions of teaching and learning. Constructivism and developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) comprised the conceptual framework for teaching and learning regarding both adults and young children in the ECD program at Maplevi...
Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College. The ECD/ECE faculty described active learning experiences for students that used varied opportunities and methods, combining prior knowledge with new opportunities for learning. Multiple examples of a variety of constructivist teaching and learning experiences were described by the ECD/ECE faculty and noted in ECD/ECE course syllabi. The ECD/ECE faculty identified the National Association for the Education of Young Children statement of Developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) as the “thread” that held all of the ECD/ECE courses together. The entire ECD/ECE faculty and staff concurred that developmentally appropriate practices were the foundation of teaching and learning in early childhood education.

Howey and Zimpher (1999), while noting the complexity of teaching and teacher education, indicate the need for greater conceptual coherence between teaching and learning in programs of teacher education. They call for teacher educators to “engage learners in multiple potent pathways to learning” that are “conceptually framed, problem-oriented, and experientially relevant” (Howey & Zimpher, 1999, p. 282), as opposed to teaching in a technical or craft orientation focusing on the transmission of discrete knowledge and the development of isolated skills. The ECD/ECE programs in this study clearly sought and demonstrated conceptual coherence in teaching and learning and young children and teaching and learning and adults. The ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study emphasized college teaching as a constructivist model of teaching and learning for
ECD/ECE students and multiple and varied learning opportunities for ECD/ECE were noted throughout both programs.

**Programs link with research and development in teacher education.**

Unlike the faculty in programs of exemplary elementary education, who linked with research and development in the field of teacher education (Howey & Zimpher, 1989), the ECD/ECE faculty members in the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study primarily associated with research and development in the field of early childhood education. The ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study belonged to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the national professional organization of early childhood professionals, and its local and state affiliates. Professional development activities among ECD/ECE faculty members specifically related to early childhood education or a related field.

The only evidence of a program link with research and development in the field of teacher education was found at Mapleview Community College. Chloe Evans, the single-full time ECD faculty member, had integrated the NCATE program standards for early childhood education (NAEYC, 1994) into the revised ECD program at the time of the quarter to semester curriculum revisions. NCATE does not accredit associate degree programs of teacher education and Chloe's use of NCATE standards for early childhood education programs reflected her beliefs in establishing and maintaining quality program for both young children and ECD students.
Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to the Milieu of Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education

A comparative summary of the findings of characteristics of quality and coherence related to the milieu of associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education at Mapleview and Beachline Community College is presented in Table 6.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Quality and Coherence as Identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989)</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program goals are clear and reasonable</td>
<td>Program goals are clear, reasonable, and professional</td>
<td>Program goals are clear, reasonable, and professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories</td>
<td>Program has adequate to exemplary resources including dedicated classroom, professional materials center, and campus program of early education and care for young children</td>
<td>Program has adequate resources including professional materials center and campus program of early education and care for young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs have curriculum articulation with the schools</td>
<td>Curriculum articulation with programs of early education and care used as practicum sites is in a process of development</td>
<td>Curriculum articulation with programs of early education and care used as practicum sites is consistent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 Characteristics of quality and coherence related to the milieu of associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education
The findings related to each of these characteristics of quality and coherence of the milieu of associate degree early childhood programs of teacher education in this study is discussed in the following sections.

**Program goals are clear and reasonable.** The ECD/ECE program goals were clear, reasonable, and professional. The ECD/ECE program goals were based on the State of Ohio Department of Education prekindergarten associate teacher certification standards and complied with the *Guidelines for preparation of early childhood professionals* (1996) developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**Programs have adequate resources including materials and laboratories.** The ECD program at Mapleview Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College each had adequate program resources including professional materials centers in the college library and the presence of a campus program of early education and care that could be used as a laboratory for students in the programs. These program resources, while adequate, varied in quality.

The ECD and ECE programs each had a professional materials center in the college library, a mandatory standard of the Ohio Department of Education. The Early Childhood Development Resource Center at Mapleview Community College offered exemplary resources for ECD students, ECD faculty, parents of young children, and community early childhood professionals. Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member, had garnered a combination of grant funding and local community
donations to update the professional materials in the center and develop the innovative prop box collection. The Early Childhood Education Curriculum Materials Center at Beachline Community College was adequate but in need of new and updated early childhood education curriculum materials and supplies.

Each program of prekindergarten teacher education in this study had access to a campus program of early education and care for young children which combined laboratory school and campus child care services, typical of two-thirds of campus programs of early education and care in community colleges (Thomas, 1996). The Mapleview Campus Childcare Center, which had begun as a babysitting service for students, was described by ECD faculty as being in the process of meeting the quality program standards of early education and care so that the Center could be accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC, 1991). Conceptual coherence between the staff of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center and Chloe Evans, the single full-time ECD faculty member who directed the Campus Childcare Center, was also developing. Chloe Evans had secured grant funding to improve the quality of the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center through the remodeling of the interior of the center and creation of an outdoor playground for the young children enrolled in the center. At the time of this study, curriculum articulation between the Mapleview Campus Childcare Center and the Mapleview ECD program continued to be uneven.

The Rainbow Children's Learning Center at Beachline Community College was only three years old at the time of this study. The Rainbow Children's Learning
Center, described by the ECE program review external evaluator as "state-of-the-art," had been specifically designed as a dual-purpose building. The Rainbow Children's Learning Center served as a laboratory school for Beachline's ECE program as well as the local Joint Vocational School's early childhood studies program while offering a program of early education and care for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. The building housing the Rainbow Children's Learning Center was beautiful as well as functional. The center was comprised of specifically designed indoor and outdoor spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschool children as well as the center administrator and staff. Areas with one-way mirrored glass were found between the children's rooms in observation spaces used by both JVS and ECE students. The center also housed an adult classroom used by both ECE and JVS faculty and students. The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College described a clear conceptual coherence between the program of early education and care at the Rainbow Children's Learning Center and the ECE program.

The final program resource available to the ECD faculty and students at Mapleview Community College was the dedicated ECD classroom. The classroom housed particular resources for ECD classes as well as a computer system with an internet connection for student and classroom use. The need for a dedicated ECE classroom at Beachline Community College was indicated by the ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study as well as the external evaluator of the ECE Program Review.
Programs have curriculum articulation with the schools. Each prekindergarten program of prekindergarten teacher education in this study had varying levels of curriculum articulation with the community programs of early education and care used as field and laboratory sites. At Mapleview Community College the ECD faculty clearly identified the goal of developmentally appropriate curriculum in the programs of early education and care used as practicum sites while describing a clear lack of suitable practicum sites with developmentally appropriate programs for young children within the four-county service area of the college. The ECD faculty interviewed in this study indicated that early childhood programs for young mentally retarded and developmentally delayed children operated by local MRDD boards as well as programs of early education and care with ECD program graduates were gradually increasing the pool of quality practicum sites.

At Beachline Community College the ECE faculty and staff described a consistent curriculum articulation between the core group of programs of early education and care regularly used for field and laboratory experiences, including Practicum I and Practicum II. Sue Ralough, the single ECE faculty member, had established and maintained a professional relationship with the administrators and/or teachers in this core group of programs of early education and care. Many of the early childhood professionals who directed or taught in these programs were members of the ECE Program Advisory Committee and/or ECE adjunct faculty. This interrelationship among ECE professionals in the community enabled the professional communications necessary to support the curriculum articulation between the ECE
program and the core group of programs of early education and care used for field and laboratory experiences.

**Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to Students in Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education**

A comparative summary of the findings of characteristics of quality and coherence related to early childhood students in this study is presented in Table 6.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Quality and Coherence as Identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989)</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students identify with a cohort group</td>
<td>Informal cohort groups supported by faculty and program milieu</td>
<td>Informal cohort groups supported by faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program</td>
<td>Students perceive practicum as the milestone or benchmark point in the program</td>
<td>No apparent milestone or benchmark point perceived by faculty or students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 Characteristics of quality and coherence related to students in associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education

The findings related to each of these characteristics of quality and coherence related to early childhood students in this study is discussed in the following sections.

**Students identify with a cohort group.** The ECD students at Mapleview Community College and ECE students at Beachline Community College scheduled and took classes in diverse ways due to factors such as job and family responsibilities
and personal economics. The formation of formal cohort groups was not possible in the ECD program at Mapleview or the ECE program at Beachline. Informal cohort groups did exist in each program and the ECD/ECE faculty used a number of techniques to support them.

The ECD and ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study offered multiple examples of how ECE students were encouraged to work in small groups in their ECD/ECE classes. The ECD/ECE student clubs at both colleges provided opportunities for the formation of informal cohort groups among students. At Mapleview, the dedicated ECD classroom provided an environment that brought ECD students together.

**Students recognize a milestone or benchmark point in the program.** ECD students at Mapleview Community College were described by the ECD faculty as recognizing the ECD Practicum course as the milestone or benchmark point in the program. The faculty and staff at Beachline Community College depicted no such milestone or benchmark point in the ECE program. The entire ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study described a number of different ECE or general education courses as rigorous and academically challenging. However, they declined to describe any course as a benchmark or milestone in the program.

**Characteristics of Quality and Coherence Related to the Subject Matter of Associate Degree Prekindergarten Programs of Early Childhood Teacher Education**

A comparative summary of the findings of characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter of the prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in this study is presented in Table 6.5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Quality and Coherence as Identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989)</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Development Program at Mapleview Community College</th>
<th>The Early Childhood Education Program at Beachline Community College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program curriculum is thematic</td>
<td>A practical orientation with a focus on problem solving/decision making</td>
<td>A personal orientation with a focus on valuing the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced</td>
<td>The relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced</td>
<td>The relationships among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience are balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum campus-wide</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum uneven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs are rigorous and academically challenging</td>
<td>Programs are rigorous and academically challenging associate degree programs</td>
<td>Programs are rigorous and academically challenging associate degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs are systematically evaluated</td>
<td>Programs are systematically evaluated by both internal and external processes</td>
<td>Programs are systematically evaluated by both internal and external processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs have adequate time within the structure of the program</td>
<td>Time is challenging and sometimes inadequate</td>
<td>No evidence of inadequate time within the structure of the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 Characteristics of quality and coherence related to the subject matter of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education
The findings related to each of these characteristics of quality and coherence in the subject matter of the prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in this study is discussed in the following sections.

**Program curriculum is thematic.** Constructivism and developmentally appropriate practice were the conceptual orientations or curriculum themes guiding teaching and learning throughout the ECD program at Mapleview Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College. While the two programs of prekindergarten teacher education in this study shared the curriculum themes of constructivism and developmentally appropriate practice, they displayed different program orientations. The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College described a theoretically pragmatic, problem solving conceptual orientation within the ECE program, a focus reflecting a practical orientation to the program (Carter & Anders, 1996; Doyle, 1990; Feiman-Nemser, 199; Tom & Valli, 1990). The ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College placed a special emphasis on valuing and respecting the individual, reflecting a personal orientation to the program (Carter & Anders, 1996; Doyle, 1990; Grow-Maienza, 1996; Feiman-Nemser, 1990). Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their study of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, also found different conceptual orientations among the six programs in their study.

**The relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience is balanced.** A clearly balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience was found in both the ECD program at
Mapleview Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College. Each program met Ohio Board of Regents guidelines for associate degree programs and had a balanced number of early childhood courses and general education courses. The ECD and ECE programs both met requirements for pedagogical knowledge in early childhood established by the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Human Services, and the early childhood core of professional knowledge identified by NAEYC (NAEYC, DEC/CEC. NBPTS, 1996; Willer, 1994).

The structure of both the ECD and ECE programs included the following categories of pedagogical knowledge: (a) knowledge and application of child development, (b) observing and assessing children’s behavior, (c) establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment, (d) planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, (e) demonstrating appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, (f) establishing and maintaining positive relationships with families, (g) supporting learning and development within a context of family and culture, (h) demonstrating professionalism (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996; Willer, 1994). The general education requirements of the ECD and ECE programs included courses in psychology, child development, sociology, English composition, speech, computer applications, and humanities. There was a mathematics and/or science requirement in the ECD program at Mapleview Community College while the mathematics requirement in the ECE program at Beachline was met through a course
in introductory accounting. Each program met or exceeded the 300 hours of supervised laboratory experience mandated by the Ohio Department of Education.

**Program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum.**

Interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum were evident in varying degrees in both the ECD and ECE programs in this study. The institutional milieu of Maplevieh Community College supported interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum campus-wide through their unique divisional composition and integration of “Core Values” into all programs at the college. The ECD faculty described multiple examples of interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum between the ECD program and courses in psychology, English composition, humanities, sociology, human biology, and speech. The ECD courses themselves offered ECD students an example of interdisciplinary approaches to early childhood curriculum through the ECD courses on cognitive and creative activities.

Interdisciplinary approaches to the curriculum were also evident within the ECE program at Beachline Community College. The planned ECE program sequence was supportive of interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum but its implementation by faculty and understanding by students was reported to be uneven.

Knowledge of child development, widely considered the predominant theme of programs of early childhood teacher education (Bredekamp, 1987, Bredekamp, 1996; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; NAEYC, 1985; McCarthy, 1990; Peters & Klinzing, 1990; Willer, 1994), was the common interdisciplinary approach to curriculum in both the ECD and ECE programs. Students in each program studied child development in
as a psychology course and were expected to integrate and build upon that knowledge in all of their ECD/ECE classes.

**Programs are rigorous and academically challenging.** The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College and the ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College described their programs as rigorous and academically challenging associate degree programs. ECD/ECE courses and general education courses focusing on theoretical concepts seemed to be the most readily identified with intellectual challenge within the two programs. ECD/ECE students in each program studied major theorists influencing the field of early childhood education including Dewey, Maslow, Piaget, Erickson, Vygotsky, Dewey, Adler, Rogers, Bandura, and Gardner. ECD/ECE students also studied learning theories including behaviorism, constructivism, and social constructivism, and early childhood program models including Anti-Bias Curriculum, the Creative Curriculum, High Scope, Bank Street, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Head Start.

**Programs are systematically evaluated.** The ECD and ECE programs were systematically evaluated by a number of internal and external processes. The Mapleview Community College and Beachline Community College were each evaluated and accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The ECD and ECE programs had each been evaluated and approved by the Ohio Department of Education to offer courses for the prekindergarten associate teaching certificate. Both the ECD and ECE programs participated in a regular process of program review for their respective college administrations. At Mapleview
Community College each program also completed a yearly formal program self-assessment. ECD and ECE students evaluated ECD/ECE faculty through a standardized evaluation form. The ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study also described a number of informal evaluation processes used by individual faculty members in various ECD/ECE classes.

**Programs have adequate time within the structure of the program.**

Adequate time within the structure of the program was described as challenging and perceived as sometimes inadequate by the ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College. While all of the ECE faculty and staff at Beachline Community College interviewed in this study mentioned time as a frequent personal and professional challenge, they offered no indications that time within the structure of the ECE program was inadequate or challenging.

**Unique Characteristics of Quality and Coherence in Prekindergarten Associate Degree Programs of Teacher Education**

Two unique characteristics of quality and coherence were found in the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study. The first characteristic was the on-going goal of conceptual and curriculum program coherence found in both ECD program at Mapleview Community College and the ECE program at Beachline Community College. Chloe Evans and Sue Ralough, the single full-time faculty members in their respective programs, actively recruited adjunct ECD/ECE faculty members who shared beliefs in (a) constructivist learning theory for adult learners and young children and (b) developmentally appropriate practices in programs of early education and care for young children. The ECD and ECE programs had each planned
a carefully coherent sequence of ECD/ECE and general education courses. At Mapleview Community College, Chloe Evans and the ECD adjunct faculty members met over the course of a summer to develop consistent, coherent ECD class policies and syllabi as well as allocate audiovisual resources among the various ECD courses. At Beachline Community College Sue Ralough had established a consistent curriculum articulation between the ECE program and a core group of programs of early education and care used as practicum sites.

The second unique characteristic of quality and coherence found in the prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study were the professional cohorts of early childhood professionals within each community. Howey and Zimpher (1999) identify the separation between schools and colleges of education and the public schools a problem to be addressed by teacher educators. At Mapleview and Beachline Community Colleges, the ECD/ECE faculty and staff interviewed in this study described their connections in multiple, interrelated roles as early childhood professionals in the community. The professional connections of these early childhood professionals included: (a) teaching courses in the ECD/ECE program, (b) serving on the ECD/ECE advisory committees, (c) participating in ECD/ECE program curriculum development, (d) serving on advisory committees/boards for community programs related to young children and their families, (e) writing grants to fund activities to improve the quality of programs of early education and care for young children, (f) participating in professional development activities such as graduate courses in early childhood education and local, state, and national conferences, (g)

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leading professional development activities at local, state, and national conferences, (h) directing programs of early education and care used as practicum sites, and (i) serving as cooperating teachers for practicum students. These interactions among the professional cohorts benefited many aspects of early childhood education in their communities, including the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview Community College and the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline Community College.

**Statements in the Literature**

As indicated in the first two chapters of this dissertation, there was very little research regarding associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education located in the literature. During my literature search I did, however, locate a number of statements regarding associate degree programs. The questions raised by these statements and the comparative analysis of each of these statements with the findings in this study are discussed below.

Two statements in the literature indicated prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education were similar to programs of vocational training. Spodek and Saracho (1990b) described programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges as consisting simply of “vocationally oriented courses (p. 214)” while Filimon-Demyen (1997) wrote that such programs were primarily “concerned with practice and application” (p. 3). The two prekindergarten programs in this study exhibited a clear and balanced relationship among general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and experience. Both of these associate degree programs established ECE
students’ pedagogical knowledge on a firm theoretical foundation, which included Piaget, Vygotsky, Erickson, Maslow, Montessori, Dewey, and others.

Willer (1994) described associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education as “technical program in which transfer of credits is not the primary objective” (p. 8) which are “designed to articulate with a baccalaureate program in which it is presumed that more professional course work will be taken at the upper levels” (p. 12). Up to half the early childhood education students in the prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in this study planned to transfer to a baccalaureate program at some point in their career. The course work in the two prekindergarten programs in this study met multiple external standards, including those of the Guidelines for preparation of early childhood professionals (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996). These guidelines clearly establish professional course work in child development and learning, curriculum development and implementation, family and community relations, assessment, professionalism, and field experiences for associate degree institutions. These guidelines have been fully integrated into both of the ECE programs in this study. The differences between guidelines for associate and baccalaureate programs in early childhood teacher education are the greater depth of professional knowledge, increased application of pedagogical knowledge, and a broader base of general knowledge required for baccalaureate programs (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996). In Ohio the guidelines for supervised field experiences are the same for associate degree and baccalaureate programs, 300 clock hours. Finally, both of the programs of prekindergarten teacher
education in this study were described by all participants as rigorous and academically challenging associate degree programs.

Saracho (1993) indicated that community college programs of teacher education only prepare "teachers in child care programs along with assistants and aides" (p. 412). In Ohio the minimum credential to be the lead teacher in a Head Start classroom or public school preschool classroom is the prekindergarten associate teaching credential. All of the ECD graduates at Mapleview Community College and most of the ECE graduates of Beachline Community College met the Ohio Department of Education requirement for prekindergarten associate teaching certification.

Spodek and Saracho (1990b) described community college early childhood education faculty members as "often certified vocational home economics teachers or persons with experiences in the child care field" (p. 39). All of the ECE faculty at the two community colleges in this study had experience in the child care field, one of the recommendations for ECE faculty in the Guidelines for preparation of early childhood professionals (NAEYC, DEC/CEC, NBPTS, 1996). None of the ECE faculty at either institution had a professional certification in vocational home economics. The entire ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College held advanced degrees in early childhood education or a related field, such as early childhood special education or pediatric nursing. The entire ECE faculty at Beachline Community College held associates, baccalaureate, or master's degrees in early childhood education or a related field, such as child development or special education.
Willer (1994) noted “programs in two-year institutions or community colleges typically stress working with younger children” (p. 8). While that statement was supported by the case studies of the programs of early childhood teacher education in this study, it neglects the focus of the course work available in both programs related to school-age children.

Finally, Beatty (1995), in her historical study of early childhood education in the United States, concluded there was a trend for “preschool teacher education to be marginalized in community colleges and two-year Associate Degree programs” (p. 206). The community college early childhood education faculty and staff interviewed in this study offered no indications that they or any of the early childhood education students in their programs felt marginalized. The ECE faculty members in the prekindergarten associate degree programs in this study were clearly professionals who were committed to the field of early childhood education. Zeichner (1999) points out the broader field of teacher education has often been undeservedly marginalized by both educational researchers and other members of the academy. As described in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the profession of early childhood teacher education, which has a strong historical, theoretical, and pedagogical base, is in the process of developing new scholarship in the field through research such as this dissertation. The associate degree faculty in this study were dedicated professionals who had developed programs of prekindergarten early childhood education that exhibited most of the characteristics of quality and coherence of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education.
Implications for Early Childhood Teacher Education

The knowledge base related to aspects of early childhood teacher education is in a process of growth as research related to the field, such as the case studies in this dissertation, is developed. This study offers three implications for those in the field of early childhood teacher education. Each of these implications is discussed below.

First, early childhood teacher educators are affected by multiple, sometimes conflicting regulations, varied levels of professional development within the field, and diverse types of early childhood professionals and programs of early education and care. Program coherence, a characteristic of quality programs of teacher education, can be difficult to achieve when a single full-time faculty member, the typical early childhood faculty member, endeavors to maintain a current professional knowledge base while meeting multiple standards and the diverse professional development needs of her students. Further research could help develop a deeper understanding of the complex roles of early childhood teacher educators.

Second, as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two of this dissertation, the field of early childhood education, including the programs in this study, is impacted by a complex national milieu. Additionally, both the Early Childhood Development program at Mapleview and the Early Childhood Education program at Beachline, were affected by the institutional and programs milieus of their programs. For example, the change from a quarterly to a semester academic calendar at Mapleview Community College resulted in a complete curriculum revision of the Early Childhood Development program. At Beachline Community College, the system of program
review focused on identifying current trends and issues in the field which the Early Childhood Education faculty integrated into the ECE program curriculum. The influence of the institutional and program milieus on each of the programs in this study was clearly described. Future study could help develop a deeper understanding of the role of institutional and program milieus in programs of early childhood teacher education.

Third, each of the single, full-time faculty members in this study were conversant with the national and state standards for associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education (NAEYC/DEC/CEC/NBPTS, 1996) as well the statement of developmentally appropriate practice for programs of early education and care for young children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These conceptual frameworks for teaching, learning, early childhood professionals, and young children reflect the national discourse of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the professional organization of early childhood education. The faculty and staff interviewed in this study indicated little linkage to research and development in the broader field of teacher education. Closer associations, dialogue, collaborations, and research among early childhood teacher educators and kindergarten/primary teacher educators will be necessary as more educators and standards define early childhood as birth through age eight.

**Implications for Future Research**

Due to the lack of research regarding prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education, many opportunities exist for future
research. Implications for future research based upon the two case studies of prekindergarten associate degree program of early childhood teacher education in this study fall into three broad areas. Each of these opportunities for future research is described and discussed below.

First, additional research is needed related to the intrinsic aspects of associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education. Such research would build the knowledge base regarding the nature and characteristics of prekindergarten associate degree programs. In this study the characteristics of two prekindergarten associate degree programs of teacher education in Ohio were described. What are the characteristics of associate degree prekindergarten programs of early childhood teacher education in other states? What are the attributes of larger associate degree prekindergarten programs? Are there differences between prekindergarten associate degree programs who seek voluntary program approval, when it becomes available through ACCESS, and those who do not? What increased understandings can be developed related to the four commonplaces of the curriculum: prekindergarten associate degree faculty, community college early childhood education students, the institutional milieu of community colleges, the milieu of individual programs, and the growing subject matter of early childhood education?

Second, as noted by Howey and Zimpher (1989) and Zeichner (1999), more case studies of programs of teacher education are needed to contribute to greater understandings of such programs as well as identify the factors related to quality, coherent programs. Howey and Zimpher (1989) identified 14 characteristics of
quality and coherence that were shared by all six exemplary programs of elementary teacher education in their study. In the two case studies presented in this dissertation, two typical associate degree programs of prekindergarten early childhood teacher education were studied to identify characteristics of quality and coherence. Neither of the two programs in this study exhibited all of the characteristics of quality and coherence identified by Howey and Zimpher (1989). The ECD faculty at Mapleview Community College identified a lack curriculum coherence with the programs of early education and care used as practicum sites while the ECE faculty at Beachline described clear curriculum articulation with a core group of programs of early education and care used as practicum sites. What are the factors that influence curriculum coherence between associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education and the programs of early education and care used for field and laboratory experiences? Adequate time within the structure of the program was a challenge at Mapleview Community College where the ECD program at operated under a semester academic calendar. At Beachline Community College, where the ECE program was on a quarterly system, there were no indications offered by the ECE faculty of inadequate time. Do associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education have adequate time within the structure of the program on both semester and quarterly academic calendars? While both programs in this study demonstrated interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum as it related to knowledge of child development and supported interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum through a planned program sequence, implementation of by faculty and understanding by
students was reported to be uneven within the ECE program at Beachline. What program structures enable interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum in associate degree prekindergarten programs of teacher education?

Third, research is needed regarding the roles of associate, baccalaureate, and advanced degree institutions of higher education in the preparation of early childhood professionals. Coplan, Wichmann, Lagace-Seguin, Rachlis, and McVey (1999), in their Canadian study, found no significant differences in the development of social and cognitive skills in young four-year-old children who were in classrooms with teachers who had earned four-year degrees in early childhood education and teachers who had earned two-year degrees in early childhood education. What level of professional development is best for prekindergarten early childhood educators? Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, and Fideler (1999), as teacher educators, point out the need for creating articulation agreements between community colleges and baccalaureate degree institutions and call for research regarding the nature of successful articulation agreements. They also note that there is a need for greater knowledge and understanding regarding the nature of associate degree programs. Hutchinson (1994), Morgan (1994), and McCarthy (1994), as early childhood educators, concur with the need for articulation agreements between community college and baccalaureate degree institutions as well as articulation among other areas of professional development within the field. Do successful articulation agreements among areas of professional development in early childhood exist? What are the characteristics of these articulation agreements?
Conclusion

As the field of early childhood education has grown, research has shown the level of professional knowledge of the early childhood professional is a key factor influencing the quality of programs of early education and care. Many of those in the field of early childhood acquire professional knowledge in prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education in community colleges in the United States.

Two case studies of prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education comprised this dissertation. The intrinsic aspects of these two programs were explored using the conceptual framework of the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1978). The faculty, the students, the milieu, and the subject matter of each of these prekindergarten associate degree programs of early childhood teacher education were described to provide an extensive view and increased understanding of the programs. The instrumental aspects of these two programs were examined to identify characteristics of quality and coherence. Howey and Zimpher (1989), in their study of six exemplary programs of elementary teacher education, identified 14 characteristics of quality and coherence. The associate degree prekindergarten programs of teacher education in this study exhibited most of the characteristics of quality and coherence of exemplary programs of elementary teacher education. Knowledge and understanding of associate degree programs of prekindergarten teacher education can assist teacher educators with developing and articulating quality associate degree programs.
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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What types of courses are in this program of early childhood teacher education? How do these courses fit together?

2. What concept of teaching and learning in early childhood education is reflected in this program of early childhood teacher education?

3. How are field and laboratory experiences a part of the program of early childhood teacher education?

4. What other opportunities do students have to participate in early childhood settings?

5. What continuity exists between the program of early childhood teacher education and the field and laboratory experiences?

6. How would you describe the intellectual challenge of the curriculum in this program of early childhood teacher education?

7. What type of research and evaluation has been conducted related to this program of early childhood teacher education?

8. What is the background and experience of the early childhood education program faculty?

9. How do the faculty describe their commitment to early childhood education?
10. How do the faculty participate in the development of the program, including curriculum development and evaluation?

11. How do faculty view themselves as supporting learning?

12. What types of interactions do faculty have with students both in and out of the classroom?

13. What are faculty beliefs concerning teaching, learning, and early childhood education?

14. What kinds of students are enrolled in the program?

15. Why have students enrolled in this prekindergarten associate degree early childhood program selected this major?

16. How do students schedule and take classes in the program?

17. What other commitments do students have in addition to their program of study?

18. How do students evaluate the quality of the program?

19. How do the courses in the early childhood education program relate to one another?

20. How does the coursework relate early childhood education courses and field experiences?

21. How are the field sites and cooperating/supervising teachers selected?

22. How are the field sites and cooperating/supervising teachers prepared?

23. What continuity exists between the program of teacher education and the field sites and cooperating/supervising teachers regarding beliefs about teaching and learning?
24. How does the program relate early childhood education courses with courses in general education?

25. What is the conception of teaching and learning within the early childhood teacher education program?

26. What types of sequencing of courses or systems of prerequisites are present?

27. Are there ways in which the program encourages faculty to work together?

28. Are there ways in which the program encourages students to work together?

29. How has the program changed over time?

30. What types of changes in the program might occur in the future?
APPENDIX B

QRS NUD*IST CODING DEFINITIONS

Mapleview: Coding Nodes With Definitions

(1) students: The early childhood education students enrolled in the program of teacher education.

(1 1) students/cohorts: Characteristics indicative of cohort groups among the ECD students.

(1 1 1) students/cohorts/UVAEYC: Upper Valley Association for the Education of Young Children, the local NAEYC affiliate

(1 1 2) students/cohorts/cooperative learning: Formal and informal opportunities for cooperative learning experiences for ECD students

(1 2) students/beliefs: Beliefs about children, teaching, and learning held by students.

(1 3) students/types: Descriptions of the types of students enrolled in the ECD program.

(1 4) students/ECE major: Considerations of why students have selected ECD as a major.

(1 5) students/schedule classes: How students schedule and take classes within the ECD program.

(1 6) students/student services: Services available for students on campus

(1 7) students/commitments: Commitments students have in their lives in addition to their studies

(1 8) students/evaluate program & faculty: ECD student opportunities to evaluate aspects of the ECD program including classes and faculty
(19) students/perceived benchmarks: Aspects of the program that are perceived by students to be a benchmark — once you’ve gotten pass this gate you will complete the program

(2) faculty: The early childhood faculty in the program of early childhood teacher education.

(2 1) faculty/chloe: The single full-time early childhood faculty member in the program. The primary informant for this site.

(2 1 1) faculty/chloe/prof development: References to specific professional development activities in which Chloe has participated.

(2 1 2) faculty/chloe/PTA: Indications of Chloe’s personal theory of action

(2 1 3) faculty/chloe/committees: References to service on Early Childhood and college committees

(2 1 4) faculty/chloe/advising: ECD program advising

(2 1 5) faculty/chloe/future changes: Perceived opportunities for future changes in the ECD program

(2 2) faculty/adjuncts: All of the adjunct faculty in the ECD program.

(2 2 1) faculty/adjuncts/Jean: Comments specific to ECD adjunct Jean, the second person interviewed at Mapleview

(2 2 2) faculty/adjuncts/Jayne: Comments specific to ECD adjunct Jayne, the third person interviewed at Mapleview

(2 3) faculty/grants: References to grants awarded to ECD at Mapleview

(2 4) faculty/commitment: Describing commitment to the profession of early childhood education

(2 5) faculty/support learning: How faculty members believe they support early childhood students' learning

(2 6) faculty/interactions: Descriptions of faculty/ECD students interactions both in and out of the classroom
(2.7) faculty/beliefs teaching and learning: Faculty beliefs about teaching and learning as they relate to both ECD students and young children.

(2.8) faculty/work together: Opportunities for ALL faculty to work together

(3) subject matter: Characteristics specifically relating to the curriculum in the program of early childhood teacher education.

(3.1) subject matter/structure: How is the basic structure of the program of teacher education organized?

(3.1.1) subject matter/structure/syllabus: How are syllabi organized and utilized in the program. May contain specific references to particular syllabi.

(3.1.2) subject matter/structure/program goals: The stated goals of the ECD program of teacher education

(3.1.3) subject matter/structure/KSAVs: Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values -- the curriculum criteria of the Ohio Department of Education

(3.2) subject matter/prerequisites: How is the program organized? How do the courses fit together?

(3.3) subject matter/field & lab: How are field and laboratory experiences integrated and utilized in the program?

(3.3.1) subject matter/field & lab/continuity: Indications of continuity or lack of continuity between the program of teacher education and the field and laboratory experiences

(3.3.2) subject matter/field & lab/Head Start: Discussions related to local Head Start programs

(3.3.3) subject matter/field & lab/site & coop teacher prep: Descriptions of how field and laboratory sites are prepared for ECD students

(3.3.4) subject matter/field & lab/building relationships: How relationships with field and laboratory sites are built

(3.3.5) subject matter/field & lab/ECD grads supervise: Discussions related to having ECD program graduates as supervisors at field and laboratory sites

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subject matter/field & lab/accredited centers: Discussions related to the voluntary accreditation process of NAEYC's National Academy of Early Childhood Programs

subject matter/constructivist: Examples and references to constructivist teacher education practices within the program.

subject matter/constructivist/assignments: Types of assignments that are examples of active learning/constructivism

subject matter/child development: Specific references to teaching and learning practices within the program related to knowledge of child development.

subject matter/gen ed: How are general education courses are part of the program?

subject matter/gen ed/writing: Comments specifically related to the development of writing skills

subject matter/gen ed/speech: Comments specifically related to the development of speech skills

subject matter/gen ed/science: Comments specifically related to the development of science education

subject matter/journals: Student use of journals, faculty feedback through journals

subject matter/intellectual challenge: Indications of intellectual challenge in the curriculum

subject matter/textbooks: ECD textbooks used in various courses

subject matter/pedagogy: Specific references to ECE teaching practices

milieu: What are the contexts impacting the program?

milieu/core values: The statement of Core Values integrated into the ECD curriculum.

milieu/core values/critical thinking: One of the identified Core Values at Mapleview
(412) milieu/core values/communication: One of the identified Core Values at Mapleview

(413) milieu/core values/human diversity: One of the identified Core Values at Mapleview

(42) milieu/concept T&L: What is the concept of teaching and learning within the program?

(421) milieu/concept T&L/Piaget: Specific references to teaching and learning and Piaget.

(422) milieu/concept T&L/DAP: Specific references to teaching and learning and the NAEYC statement of developmentally appropriate practices.

(423) milieu/concept T&L/constructivism: Specific references to teaching and learning and constructivism.

(424) milieu/concept T&L/Vygotsky: Specific references to teaching and learning and Vygotsky.

(425) milieu/concept T&L/Maslow: Specific references to teaching and learning and Maslow.

(426) milieu/concept T&L/Erickson: Specific references to teaching and learning and Erickson.

(427) milieu/concept T&L/Gardner: Specific references to teaching and learning and Gardner.

(43) milieu/childcare center: The campus childcare center at Mapleview Community College.

(44) milieu/time: Comments concerning time and its relationship to particular courses as well as the total program.

(45) milieu/ECD community: The network of early childhood professionals in the area served by Mapleview.

(451) milieu/ECD community/Advisory Committee: Comments specific to the ECD Advisory Committee.

(46) milieu/program review: The ECD program review process and documentation.
(4 7) milieu/dedicated classroom: The college classroom dedicated for use by ECD faculty and students

(4 7 1) milieu/dedicated classroom/ECD resource room: Professional resources for students and the ECE community located in a room within the college library

(4 8) milieu/Licensing Rules: The Ohio Department of Human Services Licensing Rules for child care centers

(4 9) milieu/articulation: Articulation agreements between the ECD program and JVS programs, baccalaureate programs, etc.

(4 11) milieu/division organization: The administrative organizational structure of divisions at Mapleview

(F) /Free Nodes: Coding categories that transcend two or more root nodes

(F 1) /Free Nodes/semester: The quarter to semester conversion at Mapleview

(F 2) /Free Nodes/NAEYC: References to the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

(F 3) /Free Nodes/PreK: References to the Prekindergarten associate teaching certificate process through the State of Ohio Department of Education.

(F 4) /Free Nodes/Theory: References to the use of theory in the program. Theoretical basis of the program and use of theory within the program.

(F 5) /Free Nodes/textbooks: References to use of specific textbooks.

(F 6) /Free Nodes/curriculum models: Curriculum models in early childhood education (Montessori, Reggio, Creative Curriculum, etc.)

(F 7) /Free Nodes/creative curriculum: The Creative Curriculum, a specific curriculum model developed by Dianne Tristor Dodge.

(F 8) /Free Nodes/licensing rules: The State of Ohio Department of Health and Human Services Licensing Rules for Childcare.

(F 9) /Free Nodes/misconceptions cc: References and comments related to perceived misconceptions regarding community colleges.

(F 10) /Free Nodes/coherence: Specific characteristics of program coherence.

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(F 11) /Free Nodes/decision making: References to the role of decision making/problem solving in the program of early childhood teacher education

(F 12) /Free Nodes/critical thinking: References to the development of critical thinking skills by ECD students

(F 13) /Free Nodes/learned societies: The professional knowledge base informing the program of teacher education

(F 14) /Free Nodes/admission criteria: The criteria for admission to the ECD program

(F 15) /Free Nodes/program handbook: The ECD program handbook

(F 16) /Free Nodes/Harms scale: An environmental rating scale for ECE classrooms

(F 17) /Free Nodes/Reggio course: Comments related to the ECD course on the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy

Beachline: Coding Nodes With Definitions

(1) students: The early childhood education students enrolled in the program of teacher education.

(1 1) students/cohorts: Characteristics indicative of cohort groups among the ECE students.

(1 1 1) students/cohorts/ECE Club: Beachline's Early Childhood Education student club

(1 2) students/beliefs: Beliefs about children, teaching, and learning held by students.

(1 3) students/types: Descriptions of the types of students enrolled in the ECE program.

(1 4) students/ECE major: Considerations of why students have selected ECE as a major.

(1 5) students/schedule classes: How students schedule and take classes within the ECE program.

(1 7) students/commitments: Commitments students have in their lives in addition to their studies
(1 8) students/evaluate program & faculty: ECE student opportunities to evaluate aspects of the ECD program including classes and faculty.

(1 9) students/perceived benchmarks: Aspects of the program that are perceived by students to be a benchmark -- once you've gotten pass this gate you will complete the program.

(2) faculty: The early childhood faculty in the program of early childhood teacher education.

(2 1) faculty/Sue: The single full-time early childhood faculty member in the program. The primary informant for this site.

(2 1 2) faculty/Sue/PTA: Indications of Sue's personal theory of action.

(2 1 4) faculty/Sue/advising: ECE program advising.

(2 2) faculty/adjuncts: All of the adjunct faculty in the ECE program.

(2 2 1) faculty/adjuncts/Dawne: Comments specific to ECE adjunct Dawne, the second person interviewed at Beachline.

(2 2 2) faculty/adjuncts/Kelley: Comments specific to ECD adjunct Kelley, the third person interviewed at Beachline.

(2 3) faculty/grants: References to grants awarded to ECE at Beachline.

(2 4) faculty/commitment: Describing commitment to the profession of early childhood education.

(2 5) faculty/support learning: How faculty members believe they support early childhood students' learning.

(2 6) faculty/interactions: Descriptions of faculty/ECE students interactions both in and out of the classroom.

(2 7) faculty/beliefs teaching and learning: Faculty beliefs about teaching and learning as they relate to both ECE students and young children.

(2 8) faculty/work together: Opportunities for ALL faculty to work together.

(3) subject matter: Characteristics specifically relating to the curriculum in the program of early childhood teacher education.
(3 1) subject matter/structure: How is the basic structure of the program of teacher education organized?

(3 1 1) subject matter/structure/syllabus: How are syllabi organized and utilized in the program. May contain specific references to particular syllabi.

(3 1 2) subject matter/structure/program goals: The stated goals of the ECE program of teacher education

(3 1 3) subject matter/structure/KSAVs: Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values -- the curriculum criteria of the Ohio Department of Education

(3 1 4) subject matter/structure/new professional issues: Comments related to current professional issues in early childhood (expose to drugs, asthma, etc.)

(3 2) subject matter/prerequisites: How is the program organized? How do the courses fit together?

(3 3) subject matter/field & lab: How are field and laboratory experiences integrated and utilized in the program?

(3 3 1) subject matter/field & lab/continuity: Indications of continuity or lack of continuity between the program of teacher education and the field and laboratory experiences

(3 3 2) subject matter/field & lab/Head Start: Discussions related to local Head Start programs

(3 3 3) subject matter/field & lab/site & coop teacher prep: Descriptions of how field and laboratory sites are prepared for ECE students

(3 3 4) subject matter/field & lab/Rescue Center: References to the Children's Rescue Center, the religious outreach program for young children

(3 3 7) subject matter/field & lab/video tape: Video taping practicum students at their practicum sites

(3 4) subject matter/constructivist: Examples and references to constructivist teacher education practices within the program.

(3 5) subject matter/child development: Specific references to teaching and learning practices within the program related to knowledge of child development.
(3 6) subject matter/gen ed: How are general education courses are part of the program?

(3 6 1) subject matter/gen ed/writing: Comments specifically related to the development of writing skills

(3 7) subject matter/journals: Student use of journals, faculty feedback through journals

(3 8) subject matter/intellectual challenge: Indications of intellectual challenge in the curriculum

(3 9) subject matter/textbooks: ECD textbooks used in various courses

(3 11) subject matter/school age course: The ECE course on school age child care

(3 12) subject matter/Current Issues class: The ECE course on current issues in early childhood education

(3 13) subject matter/Effective Ed class: The course in the social work department required for all ECE students

(3 14) subject matter/special needs: The ECE course on children with special needs

(3 15) subject matter/behavior management: The ECE course on behavior management

(4) milieu: What are the contexts impacting the program?

(4 1) milieu/self esteem: References to building self-esteem in ECE students and in young children

(4 1 2) milieu/self esteem/value the child: References to valuing the individual child/individual ECE student

(4 2) milieu/concept T&L: What is the concept of teaching and learning within the program?

(4 2 1) milieu/concept T&L/Piaget: Specific references to teaching and learning and Piaget.

(4 2 2) milieu/concept T&L/DAP: Specific references to teaching and learning and the NAEYC statement of developmentally appropriate practices.
(4 2 3) milieu/concept T&L/constructivism: Specific references to teaching and learning and constructivism.

(4 2 8) milieu/concept T&L/creativity: References to the development of importance of creativity for ECE students and young children

(4 2 9) milieu/concept T&L/play: Play and early childhood education

(4 3) milieu/childcare center: The campus childcare center at Beachline Community College.

(4 4) milieu/time: Comments concerning time and its relationship to particular courses as well as the total program

(4 5) milieu/ECE community: The network of early childhood professionals in the area served by Beachline

(4 5 1) milieu/ECE community/Advisory Committee: Comments specific to the ECE Advisory Committee

(4 6) milieu/program review: The ECE program review process and documentation

(4 7) milieu/dedicated classroom: The planned dedicated classroom at Beachline

(4 7 1) milieu/dedicated classroom/ECE curriculum center: Professional resources for students and the ECE community located in a room within the college library

(4 11) milieu/division organization: The administrative organizational structure of divisions at Beachline

(F) /Free Nodes: Coding categories that transcend two or more root nodes

(F 2) /Free Nodes/NAEYC: References to the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

(F 3) /Free Nodes/PreK: References to the Prekindergarten associate teaching certificate process through the State of Ohio Department of Education.

(F 4) /Free Nodes/Theory: References to the use of theory in the program. Theoretical basis of the program and use of theory within the program.

(F 10) /Free Nodes/coherence: Specific characteristics of program coherence.
(F 11) /Free Nodes/decision making: References to the role of decision making/problem solving in the program of early childhood teacher education

(F 12) /Free Nodes/critical thinking: References to the development of critical thinking skills by ECD students

(F 17) /Free Nodes/Reggio course: Comments related to the ECD course on the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy