THE CHALLENGES AND PROMISES OF APPLYING INTENTIONAL CHILD OBSERVATION STRATEGIES: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SIX KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS IN SAUDI ARABIA

A Dissertation in
Curriculum and Instruction

by

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The purpose of this qualitative method case study was to explore teachers’ observational practices and beliefs about child narrative observation. The participants were six early childhood teachers and 15 children—two teachers and five children in each of three classrooms. The study was conducted in a private kindergarten. Teachers’ classroom practices were seen via participant observations in the first phase. Qualitative structured individual and group interviews, field notes, and teachers' personal logs were used in this multiple case study to generate the data set and for narrative assessment analysis. In accordance with the literature on child-observation which asserts that systematic narrative observation facilitates the establishment of a quality relationship between the teacher and the child (Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Jablon, Dombro, & Dichtelmiller, 2007), the second phase included an intentional observation (IO) program designed by the author. The whole study lasted nine weeks, including both field observation and training in the IO program, which is a training program with distinct steps designed to foster observational skills, sensitivities, and behaviors in teachers.

Before the researcher provided IO training, the six teachers drew their own logos and sketches of the children, and wrote lines of poetry describing the children. These activities were included to encourage the teachers to talk about individual children who were participating in the study; they were also encouraged to speak about their perceptions of and beliefs about teaching in early childhood education (ECE). Each teacher was interviewed three times over the course of the study upon completing the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) (Pianta, 2001) for the five children in her
classroom chosen for the case study. The STRS was administered to generate some of the interview questions about assessing and working with individual children. The participant teachers’ satisfaction with and perceived usefulness of the IO training program were estimated via interviews. Finally, more information was gained in a reflective group dialogue session upon the termination of the study. Estimates of satisfaction with the program and its potential were based mainly on teachers’ self-reported changes in their perspectives, along with discernible change patterns that surfaced over time in their personal logs.

The data were used to describe the teachers’ beliefs and practices. Results showed that five teacher-participants believed they were improving their relationship with their students, as well as their self-conceptualization and confidence as teachers. The sixth teacher was an exception—she, occasionally, showed resistance to apply the techniques, citing job demands.

This study suggests that IO may be a useful means of enhancing a teacher’s feeling of self-worth. The program might help the teacher to establish a better relationship with children, as well as being useful in improving teachers’ attitudes towards and practices relating to ECE and the teacher-child relationship in ECE settings. Many challenges exist in applying the IO program in Saudi Arabia. Educational administrations have high expectations and make demands of teachers, requiring them to perform in certain ways. Another major challenge is the resistance of some teachers to surrender their pre-existing perceptions of and values relating to the nature of child-teacher interaction.
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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Effective teacher preparation and teacher professionalism are part of a continuous discourse in educational settings and the early childhood education (ECE) literature. As topics of significant concern in ECE, they received continuing attention and in fact the interest in them is increasing due to the growing numbers of new teachers in the ECE field and the retirement of seasoned teachers. Further, there is a strong relationship between the number of years of a teacher’s related education and the “appropriateness of that teacher’s classroom behavior”, which are factors in effectiveness. A teacher’s “qualifications make a difference in the student’s achievement outcomes” (Saracho & Spodek, 2006, p. 424).

All educators acknowledge the challenges confronted by new and experienced teachers in adapting to developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) codes. DAP is a set of guidelines for practices and policy developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (Bredekamp, 1997). DAP reflects a philosophy influenced by the theories of Vygotsky, Dewey, Piaget, and other theorists, that emphasizes an interactive, constructivist view of learning. The focus of this philosophy is the child as a developing human being and life-long learner. The key to this philosophy is that the child constructs his or her own knowledge through interactions with the social and physical environment, motivated intrinsically by his/her innate drive to explore and experiment in order to make sense of the world around him/her. Within the philosophy,
those practices are both age-appropriate and individually appropriate for each child. In their daily interaction with children, teachers attempt to support and scaffold the children to ensure that they become intrinsically motivated learners. According to DAP, teachers are involved in the daily decision-making process by combining their knowledge of child development with an understanding of the individual child in their classrooms in order to achieve preferred and meaningful effects valuable for the child’s well-being, learning, and safety (Bredekamp, 1997). According to Vygotsky, a teacher can create natural opportunities in the child’s environment to “scaffold” his or her learning and cognitive growth through observing, guiding, facilitating, stimulating, and extending the experience for the child (Berk & Winsler, 1995).

Besides the challenges of adopting DAP standards, the ECE teacher is expected to cope with multiple tasks. As Martin (1994) stated:

Teaching doesn’t get easier over the years. The pressures and demands of a teaching job continue to be intense and unrelenting. No matter how long you have taught, the workday never really ends, even after school hours or on weekends. The daily concerns of the classroom nag at us and won’t let us go. Teaching inevitably runs over its allotted time into a teacher’s thoughts at home and dreams at night—something that is extremely hard to explain to those who sneer about a job with short hours and long vacations. While vacations area necessary relaxing time replenish our inner resources, most teachers still keep their teaching closely in mind, sometimes with summer courses or workshops, but also with informal planning for the next year. My trips to the beach, to the mountains, to foreign countries (or only my backyard!) usually involve collecting nature finds and other materials to introduce into the classroom (p. 98).
These are typical challenges of all hardworking ECE teachers in the United States as well as in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). In the KSA the major challenges facing the ECE teacher are as follows. First, there are the higher performance expectations imposed by the administration to meet national standards. Some principals and coordinators are meticulous and unusually demanding even at the expense of the educational experience. There are greater concerns with filling out and responding to endless forms concerning each child and the classroom than with teaching and attending to child’s needs. They also require the teachers to present elaborative lesson plans. Planning for daily lessons consumes a great deal of the teachers’ time. Many teachers do the planning at home in order to accomplish the school’s requirements such as child’s assessments forms.

The second challenge which represents a daily headache for the Saudi teachers is children’s behaviors inside the classroom and the best ways to manage them. This challenge pertains to both disruptive behaviors and classroom adjustment-related behaviors. These two challenges often influence teachers’ self-perception and affect their job satisfaction. Teachers lose confidence and begin to question their own competence and become unhappy with their work.

No one denies that children come to school with different backgrounds. Some come from homes that cherish learning and offer a high motivation to learn. Others come from disadvantaged households that discourage them from learning and foster neglect. However, many are oblivious to home-based neglect of their children’s interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities or natural motivations to learn. Since ECE begins in preschool, societies count on teachers to compensate for child-learning losses and rearing.
deficiencies due to parenting styles. Teachers also come from diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds and have distinct belief systems that constitute different learning and scaffolding styles. This complicated situation calls for more effective ongoing teacher training, preparation, and coaching in order to assist children to regain or maintain their natural learning drives. Implementing a new program is not easy. Nevertheless, there is a need to alleviate the burdened teachers of their ordeal. There is a need in Saudi ECE settings to apply programs that help the teachers to regain their self-confidence, self perceptions as teachers and find personal meaning for the daily happenings within the walls of the ECE settings.

**Focus of the Present Study**

In this study, the focus is on teacher training using effective narrative observation strategies. Narrative observation is a popular strategy that involves recording child observations and preparing “narrative recordings,” or a written description of a child’s actions. Narrative observation is an important component in teachers’ preparation and professionalism because it has a significant beneficial impact on the teacher’s role in the classroom and on the child. When the teacher observes, she\(^1\) slows down, listens to the child more carefully, and pauses to reflect before leaping in to offer some direction or a helping hand (Jablon et al., 2007). She sees and responds to who a child is and what a child needs. Observing helps her build relationships by revealing the uniqueness of every child needs. Observing helps her build relationships by revealing the uniqueness of every

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\(^1\) In this dissertation and Saudi ECE literature all adult participants are females; hence, ‘she’ is used, not ‘he/she’, throughout the dissertation even when reference is made to teachers or parents or other adults in cultures other than the Saudi culture.
child, including the child’s temperament, strengths, personality, work style, and preferred mode of expression (Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Jablon et al., 2007).

Traditional child observation places teachers at the center of the curriculum development and assessment process. Teachers are responsible for making careful observations of children in the context of their classrooms, converting these observations into meaningful explanations “for what children are experiencing and how they are reacting to the activities of the curriculum, and then tailoring future plans to best meet the needs of the children. This process involves complex thinking, professional judgment, and considerable insight. It places teachers in a position of responsibility for keeping up with the whole range of child’s interests and needs” (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002, p. 230).

To be able to love and enjoy the qualities of each child, the teacher must do more than just teach and interact with the child. What the teacher needs to do may not be accessible to the teacher in the absence of the narrative observation. The teacher should also get to know a child’s family in order to discover more about the child. A teacher needs to exchange information, ask questions, and listen carefully to the parents. Observation can help a teacher get to know a child better, and families will appreciate this effort. Observation helps her find a point of entry into effective and productive relationships with parents (Dombro, Jablon, & Dichtelmiler, 2000).

Most teachers have students who exhibit unappealing or annoying behaviors. They must endure these behaviors to the end of the school year if they do not find a way to assist themselves in accepting and liking them. Observation helps to find ways to make connections with children who exhibit bothersome behaviors. Overall, the practice of
observation and its use in several meaningful contexts can transform the teaching experience into one that offers personal and intellectual satisfaction (Jablon et al., 2007).

Preparation and professional development of early childhood teachers requires improvement. Unfortunately, this is a worldwide problem, especially when “the assessed outcome of most professional development is whether teachers attended a given professional activity, took the course, or completed a degree program, not whether the practices and quality of care offered to the child in their classroom were improved” (Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006, p. 237). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) summarized the standards for early childhood professional preparation into five core standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2002; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006). These five standards indicate the well-prepared early childhood educator’s willingness to perform professionally in these areas:

1. Promoting child development and learning
2. Building family and community relationships
3. Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families
4. Teaching and learning
5. Growing as a professional

Note that observing and assessing are third on the list of standards, before teaching. This placement leads to the question of whether observation receives the emphasis in teachers’ professional preparation worldwide which is granted by the NAEYC. In early childhood settings, improved child observation training has a significant impact on the teachers’ professional development. We care about having
better teachers and energetic adults who are interested in children. It has been shown that investment in teachable moments with children is one of the most valuable and memorable of learning experiences. Such moments may not occur as frequently, if at all, in the absence of teachers’ sensitivity and attentiveness to each child’s needs and breakthroughs. Teachable moments are initiated by close observation (Hyun & Marshall, 2003). Greater attention leads to a more productive student-teacher relationship. This relationship may contribute to better understanding of behaviors and more effective managing of problems in the classroom. One recent study involving 283 children indicated that the quality of the teacher-child relationship predicted the increase or decrease in classroom externalizing behavior (Silver, Measelle, Armstrong, & Essex, 2005).

The present study proposes a training strategy that would establish this warm relationship between the teacher and the child. The strategy’s foundation is a technique found in an assessment tool generally neglected or avoided by teachers: narrative observation. This tool is now placed in a new perspective called intentional observation (IO). Intentionality in education is a stage in professional development in which the teacher has a vision and is able to explain it to others. Intentionality can be seen in program awareness and awareness of effective practices (Mitchell & Daniel, 2007). When teachers observe with intentionality, it enables them to establish a warm and close relationship with students.

Early childhood teachers sometimes struggle to manage numerous tasks within classroom walls. This results in a certain degree in inattentiveness. An effective way to assist them in this common compromising situation and to assist them to reach a state
of greater focus is the effective implementation of a strategy that emphasizes observation for the sake of observation—as a way I like to put it.

My personal professional experience in a kindergarten classroom, as just one example, was filled with enormous overload of required paperwork and record keeping, that it became a great burden. I altered my approach, however, in the last five years of my experience as a teacher. It became my intention to practice a certain method of observation, which I developed. I began to observe with passion and not stress, for the sake of enjoying observation. I freed myself mentally from the pressures of referrals, documentation, reports, and charting. I employed all of the aforementioned practices, but they were no longer my priority. My priority was to be present with the children and to observe them as they grew and flourished. Helping other similarly exhausted teachers to enjoy this same freedom in teaching is now an exigent issue for me.

Teachers should learn how to observe for the sake of observation and do so with intention (Doge, 2007). A teacher needs intentional observation more so than does the child. The teacher’s status as a professional would crystallize readily if she were to include observation as the cornerstone of her professional passage (Borich, 1999). To achieve this state, teachers must observe intentionally and systematically. Otherwise, their goals will be confused with their objectives. One teacher summed it up clearly by saying, “I feel as if I were inside a ditch, surrounding a garden, and I am running around unable to step out or see the garden.” The absence of effective observation hinders teachers’ achievements of their goals in their classroom. At the same time, “it is easy to get caught up in the “how-tos” of observation and lose sight of its power to make a difference” in the child as well as in the teacher (Jablon et al., 2007, p. 151).
The assumption underlying this study was that teachers would improve their effectiveness in the classroom if they engaged in intentional observation.

**Study Rationale**

Going to school for the first time is a “celebratory event” in the life of a child and his/her family (Ramey & Ramey, 1998). In the school milieu, the child becomes attached to the first person they meet and to the one they spend the most amount of time with. The attachment period is a “critical period” in childhood. This period is similar to imprinting found in newborn ducklings who instinctively, in their first 24 hours, “follow and become attached to any large animal in their vicinity” (Entwisle & Alexander, 1998, p. 352). The early non-parental adult-child relationship represented in teachers is a salient factor in the child’s future school adjustment. An effective relationship between the teacher and the child acts to cultivate the best outcomes for the child’s school experience. The teacher-child relationship is a factor, which determines social competence and influences adjustment in the school experience. “Improvement in the teacher-child relationship in kindergarten has been associated with more positive adjustment for the child at the end of first grade” (Hamre & Pianta, 2001, p. 626). There is a unique and fundamental relationship between the quality of the adult-child relationship and future behavioral and academic success (Pianta, 1999). Intervening to improve the quality of the attachment is imperative. Hamre and Pianta (2001) valued the role of early in-service and prevention efforts in improving the quality of the adult-child relationship. Child observation is a valuable medium in establishing a strong mutual relationship between the child and the teacher (Jablon et al., 2007).
Findings from this study will contribute to the professional education of early childhood teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Currently, teachers are not implementing narrative observation strategies effectively, while others do not use any type of narrative observation strategies at all. They are at ease with the use of evaluation checklists at the end of each thematic unit and with the checklist used upon each child’s completion of a task or skill. Some teachers are aware that child observation is a crucial part of their role inside the classroom, but view it as a burden.

According to findings from a study by Alameel (2005) conducted in Riyadh, teachers collectively agreed that the academic programs in colleges of ECE do not qualify them to perform observation tasks. Often, their only experience occurred in a mentoring situation. All of the 30 teachers interviewed for this study stated that they received no in-service training on child observation. In the aforementioned study, observation situations included handling a problem with a child, preparing for a conference with a mother (ECE cultural milieu is feminine), or monitoring the efficiency of an activity. Laboratory pre-Ks, which are kindergartens established adjacent to teachers’ education programs and created for training purposes too, did not even include expanded workshops or training in child observation. This situation is parallel to that of the student practicum, which concentrated on the curriculum and visual aids rather than on child observation. Other reasons for failure to engage in observations, in addition to those provided above, include the following:

- Lack of awareness of the benefit of the observation for the child and teacher
- Lack of implementation skills
- Large number of children in the classroom
• Insufficient number of teachers in some classrooms
• Daily occupation in implementing the curriculum
• Short school day (half day) in public schools
• Occupancy with didactic practices
• Administrative requirements of the teacher

In one of the few schools to use narrative observation, teachers collectively stated that they felt burdened by the implementation, and would welcome easier methods.

Given this background, the present study included a training component to improve ECE. The training component consists of the following features: coaching, keeping of teachers’ logs, and reflecting on the recorded observation. This training component began at the beginning of the third week of the study and continued through the nine weeks of the study.

The Purpose of the Study

The conceptualization of the importance of teachers’ self-actualization through a training that facilitates better child classroom-adjustment outcomes through improved teacher-child relationships necessitates having teachers practice the strategies that could achieve this purpose. The study assumes that training teachers on IO as a narrative observation strategy might achieve that long term goal. The reality is that teachers are reluctant to, and have difficulties in applying systematic narrative observation (Curtis & Carter, 2000; Jablon et al., 2007). Since training teachers facilitates academic and social readiness for children (Rudasill, Rimm-Kaufman, Justice, & Pence, 2006), the present study, in a similar vein, proposed using a training program for teachers that enables them
to feel professional and effective in their functioning with children and in return they would feel comfortable and satisfied with their practices. The IO training program was used with teachers in order to answer the questions developed for this research.

The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher-child relationship and how child observation facilitates this kind of relationship. However, there were also other interests in relationships that surfaced in the field. This included evaluating each teacher’s self-relationship, teacher-teacher relationship and teacher-administration relationship. A final purpose was to discuss the case study and the use of the IO training program with ECE teachers in the KSA cultural context and discuss its promises and challenges.

**Research Questions**

This study involved a look at the journey of six teachers as they experienced the transition from assessment-bound classrooms to intentional observation-oriented classrooms. IO emphasizes focused attention on student for the sake of observation. These six teachers participated in the formulation of this study by involving themselves in observation practices and logs that dynamically demarcated the effectiveness of the intended training. The importance of these teachers’ anticipated evolution was made unequivocal by Jablon and associates who proposed that observation not only serves to highlight ways to connect with children who exhibit behaviors that impede their learning, but also transforms the teaching experience into one that holds more personal and intellectual satisfaction. In order to better see individual children as they are, teachers
should replace the different centers’ checklists with useable procedures and methods to secure in-depth authentic observations (Jablon et al., 2007; Martin, 1994).

Assessing children’s learning through observation, recording, and reflection are an alternative to the more common way of evaluation by checklist and testing. The advantage of narrative reports is that they are a thoughtful description of the whole child, where as checklists only emphasize isolated skills that often seem unrelated to each other. It is hard to give a view of the child from a collection of checklist items that may miss the child’s particular strength and personality altogether or from a bunch of number scores from standardized tests (Martin, 1994, p. 103).

This study was guided by five major research questions:

1. How do Saudi teachers observe and then describe their own observational practices and communicate their perception of observation? How do they think about their existing observational practices? How can they improve their observational skills and knowledge of observation of young children?

2. What are the teachers’ reactions to the training workshops about IO and how do they think about it in respect to altering their observational practices?

3. How much satisfaction did teachers demonstrate after applying the training? What are the difficulties and what did they like about it? How confident are they in using it? What are their concerns about implementing it? How do teachers perceive their observational practices?

4. How do the participating teachers see the relationship between IO training application and their perception of their relationship with their children?

5. What are the challenges in applying the IO approach?
Significance of the Study

Traditionally, employment of narrative observational strategies has been strongly linked to assessment, documentation, and classroom management objectives. However, the connection between narrative observation strategies and quality teacher-child relationships has been overlooked in the literature.

This study utilized narrative child observation strategies in an attempt to reinforce the teacher-child relationship. Through implementation of observation and constructivist teacher practices, the relationship between the child and the teacher may improve. The teacher may become more accepting of the child and appreciate him/her more readily. When the teacher observes the child and builds a stronger relationship with her/him, the teacher becomes more able to promote learning without “undermining motivation and self-confidence” (Stipek & Byler, 2004). A great deal of evidence shows that children benefit from close relationships with their teachers (Jablon et al., 2007; Pianta, 2006; Stipek & Byler, 2004). Yet, there is limited reference in the literature to the role of narrative observation in facilitating the teacher-child relationship. To best of the researcher’s knowledge, no research study has evaluated this kind of training or examined how observation can improve the teacher-child relationship. This study addressed this issue by observing patterns of improved relationships with children in a multiple-case study involving six teachers.
Overview of the Study

This dissertation continues in chapter two with a review of the literature about quality in ECE and related topics. This information provides background for the study. The literature suggests the need for this study. Factors related to quality in ECE programs as identified in the next chapter include observation, and professionalism that provide direction to the study design and analysis. The third chapter describes the methodology employed in the study. This chapter includes a comprehensive description of the study’s procedures and analysis methods. The fourth chapter contains a description and analysis of each individual case and dyad involving these six teachers. The purpose of the chapter is to capture the nature of teachers’ perceptions of the teacher-child relationship and to generate from the data the thematic schemes that best describe the teachers’ perspectives on teaching young children and ECE.

The fifth chapter contains discussions of the data and provides interpretations of the change patterns and relationships that emerged from the data analysis from the teachers’ perspectives. The last chapter summarizes all of the chapters and highlights the main findings. Discussion of the benefits of the IO training, strengths of the study, limitations, and general implications are presented in this chapter. Finally, a discussion is offered of the challenges in and promises of including IO training in the Saudi context.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant information is provided to establish a context for the study structure. The researcher’s work on child narrative observation may be best understood in relation to the significant role of in-service training in polishing teachers’ skills. Accountability pressures on teachers that might hinder the effectiveness of the training are discussed next. This chapter includes coverage of the relationship between observational practices and professionalism. Since child-sensitive and constructivist practices facilitate a close relationship between child and teacher, observation may be regarded as a constructivist and child-sensitive practice.

Teachers’ attainment and maintenance of professionalism require excellence in ECE. Such excellence involves understanding the core body of knowledge and gaining a skill set compatible with current research on and best practices in teaching. These are key ingredients in the mastery of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP)—a set of guidelines on practices and policies formed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Quality Early Childhood Programs

In an attempt to define the characteristics in ECE programs that are identified with quality, six international early childhood researchers included programs’
philosophies and goals as the first components in contributing to early childhood program quality (Jalongo et al., 2004). The second component they discussed was the provision of a high-quality educational environment. The third reflects developmentally appropriate and effective curricula and pedagogy. The researchers chose to discuss attending to children’s needs in the fourth position; respect to families and the communities, fifth; employing professional teachers and staff, sixth; and implementing rigorous program evaluation practices, seventh. They never mentioned that these factors are ranked, but throughout the article they were repeatedly stated in this sequence.

In general, the literature has consistently shown that the professional development of teachers and their bachelor’s degree are the main factors in a quality early childhood program (Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Saracho and Spodek emphasized the importance of attaining educational standards for early childhood educators.

**Teachers’ Qualifications**

Evidence links the quality of early childhood programs to the qualifications of early childhood teachers (Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Tout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006). Tout et al. (2006) examined 16 studies that affirm the connection between teachers’ qualifications and program quality. These studies administered different validated instruments and scales such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R). Among the study findings is the assertion of the importance of training in helping teachers to “sharpen” their observational skills. In order “to be able to identify when children are spontaneously engaging in activities that support the development of
skills in each area and how to foster or extend these activities through structuring of the environment and interacting with children” (Tout et al., 2006, p. 102).

**Teachers’ Beliefs as a Determinant of Early Childhood Program Quality**

Teachers need knowledge and the ability to reflect on the knowledge in order to increase their sensitivity to children’s needs. When teachers are introduced to developmentally appropriate practices DAP and are given chances to reflect on them, they develop natural tendencies to be sensitive to children’s needs. McMullen et al. (2006) observed 57 preschool teachers with teaching experience ranging from 1–25 years. The team employed qualitative strategies such as time-sampling to record teacher-directed versus child-initiated incidences, and sketching of the “physical layout of the settings.” They also employed the quantitative approach, which involved use of a survey to measure the teacher’s beliefs about the DAP. The main research question focused on the relationship between the teacher’s beliefs that were associated with the DAP, and actual practices. Findings showed no clear dichotomy between the behaviors of the DAP teachers and the traditional teachers in practice. These findings call for an in-service preparation accompanied by training and coaching.

Unfortunately, there is a significant difference between teachers’ beliefs and practices. Much of what teachers do in their daily routine does not necessarily have a professional basis because it does not require reflection-in-action. Teachers need the “why” as well as the “how” to function independently in helping children to adjust in the classroom and follow classroom rules (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000). In a qualitative study of 12 child care teachers, Cassidy and Lawrence (2000) videotaped each one of the
participants for approximately 60 minutes. They interviewed the teachers as they watched the videotapes, asking them to provide rationales for their activities and practices. Results demonstrated that teachers employed behaviors targeted at the children’s socioemotional development more so than their behavioral management practices.

**Training as a Definer of Program Quality**

Since there is a strong link between the teacher-child relationship and future classroom adjustment (Hamre & Pianta, 2001), a kind of training is requisite for improving this kind of relationship. The quality social involvement with adults that comes early in the life of children has multiple effects on their well-being—more so than when and/or if it comes later in their life. In a longitudinal study, Hamre and Pianta (2001) followed a sample of 179 children from kindergarten to eighth grade to study the connection between teachers’ evaluation of the quality of their relationship with the children and future school outcomes. A sub-sample of children remained in the school district, of the 436 children. Earlier in the study, the children were tested using a screening battery. The battery included cognitive development tests. Teachers responded to a teacher-child rating scale known as Hightower’s (TCRS). They also completed the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) (Pianta, 2001). The results have implications for theories that might determine school success and calls for early intervention and preventive endeavors. The quality of the relationship between the child and the teacher, whether based on connectedness, dependency, or conflict, predicts each child's future behavior rather than academic outcomes.
Teacher-Child Relationship and Daily Interaction

Teachers interact with children all of the time. The quality of each single interaction determines the quality of the relationship (Jingbo & Elicker, 2005; Palermo, Hanish, Martin, Fabes, & Reiser, 2007). Jingbo and Elicker (2005) examined the daily interactions between 12 teachers and their students in three centers in China. Their goal was to decide whether the interactions were teacher-initiated or child-initiated. The researchers labeled the emotional tone of the teachers as positive, neutral, or negative. They coded the children’s emotional tone towards their teachers as confident, peaceful, or fearful. Daily school requirements and individual feelings, for both the teachers or and the children, usually determined the nature of the interaction. The study yielded distressing results. Teachers’ interactions fell into two categories: interactions related to daily classroom routine, and interactions based on the feelings of the individual child or teacher. The first category constituted the majority of the types of interactions between teachers and children, with little room left, then, for interactions that fell into the second category.

Teachers should seize the opportunity to try to render interactions with a child into a chance to promote emotional or intellectual growth. This is not an easy task for either novice or more experienced teachers, and necessitates effective training opportunities that may include coaching and reflective supervision.

What constitutes effective teaching in early childhood settings? This is the question that Howes, James and Ritchie’s study posed in (2003). The researchers interviewed and observed 80 African American and Latino, White, and Asian-American teachers. Among the findings, the study stressed the role of mentoring and supervision of
teachers’ development. Major factors in teachers’ effectiveness included their high standards as lifelong learners seeking avenues for advancement and training (Weaver, 2002). The teachers’ main role is to facilitate each child’s personal growth. When teachers are equipped with adequate professional knowledge and personal practical knowledge, they become active curriculum planners (Wong, 2003).

**Attachment and Teacher’s Qualities**

Can a child build a positive relationship with a caregiver in the absence of a secure attachment to a primary caregiver? A Slovenian study of 178 children examined the link between the attachment of a child to a main caregiver, and a child to a kindergarten teacher (Cugmas, 2007). The study showed no concordance in the presence of the two types of attachments. The children were able to develop a secure relationship with the teacher in the absence of secure attachment with a primary caregiver. A close teacher-child relationship may compensate for an insecure parent-child attachment.

In another study of teacher-child attachment and social behavior, 95 children participated in a drawing activity as part of the study procedures (Cugmas, 2004). The teachers instructed their children to draw their teachers, themselves, and a toy. No further instructions were given to the children. Immediately after completing the drawings, the teachers interviewed the children about the drawings. As expected, children’s attachment and social behaviors toward their kindergarten teachers were reflected in the drawings.

Ahnert, Pinquart and Lamb (2006) carried out 40 investigations based on reports from 1977–2003 involving 2,867 children from a variety of cultures to assess the dimensions of their attachment to their care providers. The findings revealed that children
develop an attachment to teachers who demonstrated both individual-related and group-related sensitivity to children’s needs. This attachment was based on a need for security—a security founded on the mother-child attachment that leads to secure behaviors in the child.

The teacher-child relationship involving those at risk served as a protective factor in the acquisition of academic skills (Burchinal, 2002). Burchinal conducted a study of 551 day care center children—the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study—for two years (CQO). Data about the children’s academic skills and their relationship with their teachers were gathered (Burchinal, 2002). The study confirmed that children’s acquisition of academic skills was positively correlated with the emotional and social aspects of the teacher-child relationship.

The previous studies assumed that relationships between teachers and children are at the core of quality early childhood settings. Kugelmass and Ross-Berstein postulated that observation facilitate positive relationships between teachers and children (Kugelmass & Ross-Bernstein, 2000). The prior assumption led to a framework on the significance of observing for both children and teachers.

**Obstacles to Quality Early Childhood**

Teachers know that observation is important, but do not necessarily view themselves as effective observers. Thus, teachers either avoid observation in the classroom or do it to please administration and parents (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). Moreover, program evaluation is taking a toll on teachers’ effort and time. The use of observation as a tool in designing a child-responsive curriculum is lost when
accountability issues come to the surface. Children who are assessed according to a narrowly defined set of curricular objectives do not benefit from these practices, which are used to gauge the curricular objectives validity and the teachers’ accountability (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002).

In the United States, the pressure to be accountable is a significant force. The “back to basics” mentality is contextually promoted in the “making schools accountable” mantra (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). “No Child Left Behind” is a living example of the accountability movement. This national perspective has had a great influence on observation strategies and methods. In Saudi Arabia, the situation is a little different. The government supports child-centered strategies as a way to benchmark accountability. School ratings are based on their effectiveness in performing according to accountability measures, but the “externally imposed expectations” of parents put an additional workload on teachers, leading them to abandon or significantly minimize their reliance on child observation and assessment as a tool in guiding and knowing the children.

As a result, accountability pressures and the dependency on outcomes-based evaluation measures position many early childhood teachers in “philosophy-reality conflicts” (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). This turmoil has influenced “observation” and has modified it in favor of an academically oriented approach. Substituting observation for checklists and preoccupation with academic achievement has made teachers into “technicians of proficiency” (Kozol, 2000), whose task is to monitor children’s progress through discrete lists of instructional outcomes. What is lost is the view of the whole child; its replacement is the suspension of teachers’ thinking, judgment, and insight (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). Because the competencies of young children are often
unstable and situationally dependent, the reliability and validity of direct assessments are not as good for young children as for older children (Pianta, 2006).

In their important study, Hatch and Grieshaber (2002) interviewed 127 teachers who expressed concerns about the increased pressure to teach and assess more. “Systematic assessment for accountability challenges the fundamental nature of the teacher’s role in early childhood school” (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002, p. 230). Teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have experienced increased obligations along with the responsibility of assessment and evaluation for accountability. They are asked to do the impossible: to engage in dialogue and prospective-taking when their own (mostly inadequate) pre-K–12 educations did not prepare them to think critically, or reflectively, or encourage them to construct, value, and voice their ideas and beliefs. Instead, many of the teachers received an education that taught them to be passive consumers of knowledge (Dagistani, 2004; McCarthy & Duke, 2007).

In a qualitative case study, the researcher attended 52 professional teacher meetings in different primary schools in Vietnam (Saito, 2008). He described in depth specific cases in schools that had applied new government curricula. The new child-centered educational approaches required teachers to change their typical teaching approaches. The researcher discussed a few problems that were arising in the discourse between teachers. One was the evaluative attitude during discussions. The pressure on the teachers to finish the entire syllabus was another issue. The lack of learning and dialogue between teachers was further playing an important role in retarding teachers’ pedagogical growth.
Narrative Observation as a Method of Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment refers to the practices used to assess children in naturalistic environments. In these naturalistic practices, teachers use multiple methods that connect the objective of the assessment with its use. Furthermore, teachers should link the assessment with the curriculum. This approach creates a criterion-referenced measure for accountability. Using these alternative methods in assessment has been proven to have a positive bearing on the child’s outcome (Grisham-Brown, Hallam, & Brookshire, 2006).

Authentic assessment creates more chances for the children to have closer relationships to the teachers (Stipek & Byler, 2004). Stipek and Byler (2004) performed a study of 127 kindergarten and first-grade teachers from 99 schools. They used teachers’ reports, assessments of children, two kinds of teachers’ questionnaires, videotapes of classroom practices for 30 minutes, and trained observers as the sources of data. Each observation included math and literacy periods and lasted for 3 hours. The goal was to compare the outcomes and the classroom climate in constructivist, child-centered classrooms and in didactic, teacher-centered classrooms. Observations showed that children were inhibited by practices that were more didactic and were facilitated by constructivist practices. An inhibition situation might undermine motivation and self-confidence.

The most popular strategy—recording child observations—involves “narrative recording,” or a written description of a child’s behaviors in action. Narrative observation is considered an authentic assessment because of the ongoing documentation of a child’s progress. Some of the narrative methods are recounted below:

Running Records is a method of observing children in their natural setting. In this method, the assessor records all events happening around a targeted behavior as they
occur during the period of observation. Running records are detailed and continuous descriptions. Staff members observe unobtrusively and utilize detailed narrative records of behaviors as they occur over a 20- to 30-minute timeframe. The assessor can embed notation of these behaviors within the records. The running records strategy is a popular form because of its versatility (Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).

Anecdotal notes are brief narrative-recorded accounts describing an event or child’s behavior after it occurs: observe first, and then write. Anecdotal notes range from notations about developmental competencies to behavioral descriptions. The observer specifies the events, timeliness of the record, and the importance of details. Anecdotal records need to be objective, factual, and followed up with supportive information (Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002). Running and anecdotal recorders are like written movie scripts, exactly describing actions, facial expressions, and the exact words of children (Nilson, 2001).

Diary observations, or journal entries, are the oldest method of observation. These observations are written narrative accounts over a brief timeframe; they include what happens at school as well as at home during a certain period of time. Entries vary from a short daily commentary to a detailed report (Head-Start, 1998; Marion, 2004).

Time sampling, or frequency count, is a method of recording how often a specific event or behavior occurs within time intervals. It provides a frame for the observation before it actually begins. The teacher tallies behaviors based on time intervals or frame elapses (Borich, 1999; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).
Event sampling is another type of narrative observation in which a record is kept of every target behavior occurrence. Use of the ABC method embedded in this strategy makes event sampling a very informative strategy. The ABC method uses the antecedent-behavior-consequence categorization to look at behavior (Lidz, 2003; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).

Checklists are the simplest form of observation. They are observations of a specific list of items, skills, or behaviors to be performed. Completion of checklists will show if the observed child has performed the skill or behavior. Checklists can be completed during the observation period or later. They generally contain responses such as yes, no, or sometimes. Basically, checklists are useful with safety- and health related observations (Borich, 1999; Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004).

These observational methods specify the target behaviors to be observed in a way that is both precise and noninferential in order to maximize objectivity and reliability (Lidz, 2003). It is necessary to observe positive behaviors and not just the referral-oriented behavior. All of the aforementioned methods focus on a target behavior or objective; however, the observation strategy that this paper is promoting does not require an objective.

In a review of the main text used by early childhood teachers in Saudi Arabia (Samadi & Murowa, 2001), it was surprising not to find any reference to the significance of observation and the role of the relationship between the teacher and the child in facilitating the child’s development and learning. Nevertheless, there is an increasing awareness in Saudi Arabia about the role observation plays in teachers’ professionalism
(Alameel 2005). Clearly, these areas of great importance need to be developed and promoted for the sake of the people that they impact. Also, Dagistani—a Saudi ECE specialist—(2004) stressed the importance of child observation and habitual recording of the child’s norms of development and emotional adjustment.

**Observation and Professionalism**

To define professional development, Maxwell, Field and Clifford (2006) reviewed 23 studies published between 1988 and 2003. One of the criteria for including a study was to have 50 or more participants. After extensive analysis of the original measures in these 23 studies, the researchers concluded that professionalism in ECE refers to: education, training, and credentials. Education is professional development of various types that takes place in a formal system. The aforementioned study focused on training, which is defined as “the professional development activities that occur outside the formal education system” (Maxwell et al., 2006, p. 23). Credential refers to the institutional licensing done by national or international boards or associations (Maxwell et al., 2006).

When the early childhood teacher is able to articulate or refer to a theory of child development in defending or explaining classroom practices, she is exhibiting components of professionalism (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000). Pianta (2006) considered classroom observation to be the linchpin of professional development. “The end result of the observationally based system is the redefining of teacher professional development and in-service training from a coursework/generic approach to a teacher-focused approach, which concentrates on aspects of classroom practice and has direct and
demonstrated links to child outcomes and teacher well-being” (Pianta, 2006, p. 231).

Since systematic observation of children can provide teachers with new ways of thinking, it can be said that “observation inspires good teaching” (Curtis & Carter, 2000).

In a recent study, (Early et al., 2006), early childhood teachers with more than a bachelor’s degree received higher scores on teaching and interaction skills and their children achieved higher scores on math skills. Their advanced education helped the teachers to attain greater sensitivity and increased their abilities to create more responsive-learning environments. A four-year degree in ECE or child development leads to a teacher with better skills, knowledge, and practices (Early et al., 2006; Saracho & Spodek, 2006). Therefore, the first step in professionalism for teachers is to hold at least a bachelor’s degree. For early childhood teachers, one of the issues that expedite the process of professionalism is the regular practice of intentional observation.

Observation assists the teachers to be reflective and think beyond the daily events in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, teachers should agree on what constitutes achievement. Doing so will ensure agreement and harmony in their collected records from observation. Observation helps the teachers’ discourse to be highly professional by discussing the issues that they observe and by an analysis of those observations (Borich, 1999; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006).

Early childhood educators are being held accountable for desired outcomes, especially since public money is being used to fund centers for children (Pianta, 2006). Child observation places teachers at the center of the curriculum development and assessment process.

Teachers who are warm, sensitive, and responsive not only show warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with children, but also individualize
their responses. Individualized responsiveness to children requires the teacher to observe and reflect on the interactions with each child in the classroom (Howes & Ritchie, 2002, p. 77).

Social distance between the child and the teacher can lead the child to gain lower standard of achievement and socialization in the school. This is considered “inequality of educational outcomes” (Entwisle & Alexander, 1998, p. 353).

One way to influence this relationship positively is by training teachers in effective narrative observation techniques. The current study provided evidence that observation in natural settings increases teachers’ sensitivity. When teachers interact with sensitivity to children’s emotional and intellectual needs, they pave the road for a unique relationship with their children (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004, p. 213). “Teachers’ sensitivity is the ability to recognize children’s individual needs from the most basic to the complex and to respond contingently with a positive approach that scaffold development and learning” (Gerber, Whitebook, & Weinstein, 2007, p. 328).

The pre-K setting is an appropriate one for nurturing children’s natural motivation because it is a stress-free environment. There is a rare chance that each child’s achievements will be compared with those of their peers. Success is measured by how hard they work and how much effort they have exerted (Nolen, 2001 ). Preschool teachers should provide a sensitive, responsive environment in which toys, activities, and teachers’ feedback allow the child to sense the effect he/she has on the environment. When the teacher is consistently responsive to the child’s needs, the child will develop a sense of efficacy towards him/herself and towards life. When teachers invest in establishing a close relationship with the child and support his/her autonomy in choice
and exploration, they help the child to construct intrinsic motivations that will withstand the complexities he/she might encounter in the learning process. The teacher should be a role model in all of her behaviors. She should provide children with opportunities for self-evaluation so they reflect on their products (Carlton, 1998).

A positive relationship and emotional support from teachers play an important role in primary-grade children’s achievement scores (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). These researchers followed, for one school year, 910 children “identified in kindergarten as being at risk of school failure”. They demonstrated externalizing behaviors, attention seeking, social and academic competence problems. Initially, the children were part of a longitudinal study that involved them from birth to the first year of school. The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale was administered with their teachers. Observers went through extensive training and reliability testing before participating in this study, using the Classroom Observation System for first grade (COS-1). The findings showed that the quality of instructional and emotional support moderates the risks young children might face. These finding parallel those from a study by Henricsson and Rydell (2004) in which 95 children in the primary grades took tests to measure their perceptions of themselves. Results showed that some of the children had externalizing and internalizing problems. The researchers administered the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale with the 23 teachers. An observer observed the interactions within the classroom according to an observation sheet developed by the researcher after a pilot study. As expected, those children with externalizing behavior had a less positive self perception and at the same time were experiencing negative teacher-child relations. Children with internalizing behaviors had higher dependent teacher-child relations. Gerber, Whitebook and
Weinstein (2007) conducted a study that included 41 head teachers at child care centers located in Northern California to determine the predictor of teacher sensitivity. Teacher training was one main predictor of teachers’ sensitivity. Gerber et al., stated that training could improve teachers’ sensitivity.

**CLASS as an Observational Measure**

Several practical approaches are helpful to teachers as they seek to meet educational observational and sensitivity measures. The first is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Framework, which is an observational measure of classroom quality from preschool to third-grade classrooms. Its reliability and validity was tested on a sample of 224 prekindergarten classrooms (La Paro et al., 2004). This approach is included in this review because it shares a focus on the classroom interaction with the present study. Its focus was on three major domains of classroom interaction between the child and the teacher. It is a theory-driven assessment Framework. Its theoretical grounding, empirical validation, and inclusion of early childhood and elementary grades render it a unique program despite the fact that it shares many aspects with the other assessment approaches. “The CLASS Framework suggests that, within the school environment, student’s academic and social development is mostly affected by interactions in the classroom” (Hamre & Pianta, 2006, p. 58). These areas of interaction are described as emotional supports, classroom organization, and instructional supports.

The first area—children’s social and emotional development—is considered an integral indicator of school readiness. Teachers who are able to support children’s social and emotional functioning own an integral component of effective classroom practices.
As mentioned earlier concerning the theories on which this area is based, social and emotional support is founded on attachment theory and self-determination theory. The social and emotional support influences the classroom climate, characterized by the quality of the teacher-child relationship. Further, the teacher’s ability to develop a context that facilitates positive relationships across multiple children is an indicator of owning an essential part of effective classroom practice. Teacher’s sensitivity, responsiveness, and attunement to children’s needs are indicators of her high quality as a teacher. According to the CLASS Framework, the early childhood teacher should also possess a high regard for students’ perspectives, follow their leads, ask for the children’s opinions, and provide opportunities for them to have formative roles in the classroom (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). The CLASS Framework defines high-quality learning opportunities in order to provide an agenda for teachers and administrators as they translate these learning opportunities into practices.

The second area of the CLASS Framework is the classroom organization. This includes the teacher’s abilities to manage children’s behaviors, time, and attention in the classroom. This area of quality is based on the self-regulated learning perspective (Winne & Winne, 2005), which refers to the regulatory skills in classrooms in which learners set goals, and monitor, regulate, and evaluate their own learning. Among the dimensions of classroom levels of organization are: behavior management, productivity, and instructional learning formats. When the teacher manages class behavior positively, the children develop positively and progress throughout the learning process. A productive teacher manages activity times and daily routine jobs so that minimal time is lost in transition. She is always well prepared for instructional activities. The children
understand the classroom routines and directions. The instructional learning format refers to the degree to which the teacher provides activities and materials that engage children and maximize their learning abilities (La Paro et al., 2004).

The third area of interaction is instructional support. When teachers facilitate interaction in the two previous areas, they create a supportive atmosphere and opportunities for effective learning. The idea of this support is based on research on children’s cognitive and language development. This research pertains to Vygotsky’s theory, which signifies the importance of the social interaction between an adult and a child in scaffolding the latter’s learning (Hamre & Pianta, 2006).

The components that assist teachers in establishing this area of support are concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. The teacher should apply a higher order of concept development within her instructional methods. Examples include providing opportunities for children to make connections between new and previous knowledge, enabling them to apply knowledge in new situations, and familiarizing them with deeper thinking. These concept development practices of teachers are connected to greater achievement gains (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). The second dimension in instructional support is the quality of the feedback. When teachers provide some comment to the child about any kind of performance, the child benefits from the aforementioned instructional opportunities. This feedback should be instructional. In other words, it should provide the child with specific information about the content and process of his/her learning. The last dimension of instructional support is language modeling. The teacher employs language modeling to allow children to experience instructional and social opportunities. The teacher converses with children, facilitates
peer conversations, asks open-ended questions, expands on their responses, and uses 
more advanced words and language linked with what the children already know.

Unfortunately, there is evidence of a study conducted in eleven states that during 
the school day “children are not engaged in constructive learning or play a large portion 
of the day. Children have relatively few meaningful interactions with adults” (Early et al., 
2005, p. 31). CLASS Framework defines the high-quality learning opportunities to 
provide an agenda for the teachers and administrators to translate these learning 
opportunities described previously into practices.

**Bridging as an Observational Measure**

The second example of practical approaches in classroom assessment for the sake 
of accountability is the *Bridging* approach. This approach is included in this review 
because recently its creator trained teachers on this approach in Saudi Arabia and because 
it is a new approach to assessment that focuses on tasks and contexts and not the 
individual child to avoid pressuring the child or more importantly perhaps the teacher-
child relationship. The notion of Bridging guides the transition that starts with assessment 
and leads to teaching. This performance-based assessment was designed for use with 3-
to 8-year-olds and includes 15 activities in seven domains: language, math, music, art, 
sciences, movement and, social understanding. *Bridging* requires teachers to go through 
both reflection and planning processes. Reflection involves looking carefully at the 
assessment results and planning for activities that would have effects on children’s 
performance. Assessment in *Bridging* does not stop with knowing a child’s 
developmental position; it crosses over to use this knowledge in curriculum planning. It
basically integrates assessment and curriculum. One of the characteristics that reflects the beliefs in Bridging is the use of easy and accessible materials because assessment and curriculum are two sides of the same coin (Chen & McNamce, 2007a, 2007b). Another characteristic of the Bridging assessment approach is that the unit of analysis focuses on the child’s engagement in a joint rather than isolated activity. When assessing using the Bridging approach, teachers examine how the different activity parameters influence each child’s performance. While the traditional assessment goal (during the process of computing scores) is to minimize any difference in implementation for the sake of standardization, Bridging employs many “right ways” to implement a process. There is no “scripted procedure.” “The teachers understand the content knowledge represented by each activity and what scores mean in relation to the child’s current level of development” (Chen & McNamce, 2007b, pp. 20-21). Its flexibility allows the teachers to play an active role in the assessment process, which in return contributes to the integration of assessment with teaching and learning. Chen and McNamce (2007b) evaluated the experience of 75 teacher candidates at the Erikson Institute who implemented the Bridging assessment approach. The teachers expressed their new understanding of individual children and an understanding of their level and range of achievement. In addition, they reported an increase in content knowledge in a range of curricular areas.

As opposed to traditional assessment, Bridging takes time neither from children’s play nor from their engagement in sustained activities and projects. Bridging is a process guided by specific rubrics that detail the trajectories of children’s learning development (Chen & McNamce, 2007a).
Regional Background of the Study

Quality early childhood programs are in demand worldwide. Parents leave their loved ones and pay significant amounts of money to secure programs that promise unique emotional and intellectual experiences to children and parents as well. In the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the number of children enrolled in early childhood centers jumped from 5,607 in 1972 to 62,079 in 1997 (Dagistani, 2004). The increase stems in part from changes in lifestyle and the growing passion for better education. Family characteristics are shifting from those of the extended family to those of the nuclear family. More women are enrolling in the work force. Those who are homemakers are sending their children to early care centers and preschools, as well, as awareness of the privileges and advantages of early learning has increased.

It is possible to classify the quality of ECE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as “outcome-determined.” Yet, there also is a growing awareness of the developmentally appropriate quality. Lee and Walsh (2004) conceptually defined program quality in three modules: (K) (a) outcome-determined quality; (b) standard-based quality; and (c) quality as developmental appropriateness. The first module refers to programs that use assessment tools that continually frustrate teachers and deter them from achieving developmental and psychological goals. Standard-based quality is found in programs that use standardized scales to evaluate programs; such as the Early Childhood Environments Rating scale (ECERs-Revised). The last quality module refers to programs influenced by the NAEYC’s Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP).
ECE Policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The child-centered or constructivist kindergarten movement began in the early 1980s in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since that date, the Ministry of Education has implemented a continuum of reform strategies in the sector of ECE. The departments of ECE are popular and have a high enrollment in most women’s colleges and universities. Five highly equipped training and laboratory centers were established around the country at the beginning of the 1980s. Recently, the Ministry of Education established the General Bureau of ECE to assume the development of this division and to act as a liaison between preschool and elementary education. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has idiosyncrasies in its educational system because of its culture. For example, ECE teachers are all females and teachers have contact with mothers only. Contact with fathers is rare and, if they occur, are by phone only. The teachers and the administrative staff in all kindergartens are females. The enrollment in kindergarten is co-ed and single-gender education in elementary grades.

The ECE policy in Saudi Arabia’s training centers was established in 1986 to qualify Saudi teachers as professionals and enable them to resume their roles in preparing other teachers to work with children (Samadi & Murowa, 2001).

ECE Uniform Curriculum

The Ministry of Education established a unified and uniform curriculum as a resource for all teachers and it was published and refined twice. The curriculum consists of seven books. The main book is a manual for the teacher that contains the general guidelines for working with children, such as arranging the classroom environment and
providing behavioral management guidance. One book has five concise thematic units. The other five books contain the detailed thematic units on water, sand, food, home and hands unit. As an example, in the hand unit, through activities, stories, and songs, the child is made aware of the importance of his/her hands and the occupations that people perform with their hands. The units’ books contained detailed daily activities, and thus are accessible for the teachers. The teachers may add items to the thematic units to strengthen them.

Supervisors from the Ministry of Education visit the classrooms twice a year or more depending on the teachers’ need. These supervisors guide the teachers and ensure they are teaching and interacting with the children according to the Saudi ECE standards.

**Kindergarten Classrooms**

Since the start of the ECE reform movement in Saudi Arabia the classrooms environments have been mandated to be *constructivist environment* in which learning is fun—an environment that inspires children to learn about themselves and the world around them. It is to be an environment that stimulates children to develop problem solving skills and positive relationships and one that encourages creativity and helps develop a child’s personality (Samadi & Murowa, 2001).

The Ministry of Education has done little to require or provide teachers with the capacity and skills to work with families. This includes training in observational skills to build better relationships with children, which would lead to a better relationship with families. Parents value the teacher who loves and cares for their child. “It is very hard for
parents not to like a teacher who really appreciates and likes their child” (Doge, 2007, p. viii).

Among the recent hot topics in ECE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is observation as a developmentally appropriate assessment strategy. The belief is that chaos is caused by a lack of child observational practices. Within few hours of writing these lines, Dr. Jie-Qi Chen from the Erickson Institute in Chicago, presented her new and the aforementioned assessment approach, which was called Bridging (Chen & McNamce, 2007a), and relative materials in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Overview of the Research Topic**

Observation is the process of “watching to learn”. Observing creates an “attitude of openness and wonder that allows the teacher to know and understand the children she works with” (Dombro et al., 2000 p. 23). When the teacher discovers, through observation, for example, that a child in the class has an interest in insects, the teacher should be accepting of that child’s attitude towards insects. A good teacher knows that children replicate her attitude. It sounds difficult at the beginning, but the teacher is expected to espouse an attitude that distinguishes her as a responsible teacher who ensures that the children have the freedom to appreciate things around them in their quest for learning, even if these things are not appealing to the teacher personally. In that respect, the teacher’s scope and experiences will expand, and this will in return facilitate her future interactions with other children (Dombro et al., 2000 ). Even though observation of natural behaviors is an effective tool that is accessible to every teacher, few know how to observe competently and how to use the information gathered. Once
the teacher masters the techniques of effective observation and enjoys its elements, she will never survive without it inside the classroom (Jablon et al., 2007).

Observation is one of the main assessment practices that are highly recommended for use with young children. Features of high-quality assessments include the following characteristics:

- Conduct within naturalistic environments
- Use of multiple methods
- Connection between the intent of the assessment and the way it is being used
- Participation of families in the assessment process (Grisham-Brown et al., 2006).

There are numerous methods and strategies of observation. Each one could be utilized to target specific outcomes (Nilson, 2001). Systematic observation can be standardized observation, narrative observations, or tailor-made for the situation (Lidz, 2003).

**Standardized Observation**

Standardized observations are naturalistic assessments that involve sets of extensively field-tested procedures. They assess programs that are in action in ECE setting. It is a sort of “temperature taking” (Pianta, 2006). They are standardized in the sense that teachers use the same forms and follow the same procedures during observation and analysis. An example of a standardized observation is the Child Observation Scale (COS) or the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R).

According to a study by Hatch and Grieshaber (2002) regrettably, the majority of teachers use observation mainly to assess academic progress. Most of these teachers
describe observation as a set of skills check-lists provided to assess academic progress. Even when teachers stated that observation was used to adjust curriculum/teaching strategies and diagnose instructional needs/readiness, their emphasis, when interviewed, was on diagnosing deficiencies in children’s academic progress. Some of the teachers spoke about the use of the observations in the *child’s progress report and in parent conferences*. Few teachers used observations to facilitate the child’s *social adjustment* or to alter *disruptive behavior*. Finally they used observation to collect *documentation for special education placement*. The overall concern of the teachers was outcomes-centered rather than child-centered. Generally, the use of child observation as a tool for developing emergent curricula based on children’s interests and needs seems to be fading.

Strategies for narrative observation were explained earlier in this chapter. We turn next to intentional observation, which is *tailor-made* for the Saudi context.

**Intentional Observation (IO)**

Intentional observation or observation for the sake of observation gives the teacher a holistic base on which to view all aspects of the child’s personality and behaviors together to reach concrete decisions about the child’s developmental well-being and assist in teacher decision-making in interaction with children. It is “beyond a set of skills. It is an attitude of openness” (Jablon et al., 2007, p. 6). When the teacher shifts from merely applying skills to looking for opportunities to learn to construct her make-up and identity as a teacher, she makes observation an integral part of herself. In intentional observation, the focus is not on the child but on the teacher (Jablon et al., 2007).
Intentional observation does not happen by chance—rather, the teacher observes “thoughtfully, planfully, and purposefully” (Epstein, 2007). Intentional observation is the main daily ritual for the intentional teacher who has an extensive knowledge about how children develop and learn. The method is comparable to ethnographic observation in the sense that the teacher starts observing without having a targeted behavior to start with (Borich, 1999).

Teachers should have or should be trained on the following characteristics to engage in intentional observation successfully:

1. High expectation of children. They assume children are capable of achieving meaningful educational goals. Teachers who expect children to learn will deliberately engage in instructional and observational practices to enhance children’s knowledge and skills (Epstein, 2007)

2. Effective planning and management capacities

3. A belief that any experience is a learning opportunity for them and their students, and they are passionate about these teachable moments

4. They are capable of asking children questions that stimulate their thinking

5. These teachers consistently provide feedback to the children, whether in a form of questions, and/or comments, or posing the magical “what if” to gracefully challenge them (Epstein, 2007)

6. They assume that parents are always doing the best of their abilities for their children.

The present study focuses on IO and the training that leads to opportunities for teachers to evolve, enjoy different perceptions, and adapt the aforementioned characteristics.
Child observation has been used in early childhood as an active strategy for developing curricula based on children’s interests and needs (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). Observation is strongly connected with effective teaching (Jablon et al., 2007). Teachers must be willing to be systematic observers. Ideally, they will seek out this practice. The predominant notion among teachers is that they should observe for the sake of the child. Now is time to promote the slogan, “observation for the teacher’s salvation.”

**Benefits of Observation for the Child and the Teacher**

Observation can help the teacher to determine the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for each child in order to scaffold him/her (Jacobs & Crowley, 2007; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002). Planning for learning opportunities for the children and assessment should go in a continuum. Teachers should record their observations while children are engaged in play and daily activities. Children often demonstrate their growing understandings as they try out roles in the dramatic-play area, create artwork, build, and tell stories. Standardized paper-and-pencil observations are not adequate measures in these situations (Jacobs & Crowley, 2007).

Through observation and constructivist teacher practices, the relationship between the child and the teacher improves dramatically. The teacher becomes more accepting of the child and tolerates him/her behavior more readily. There is much evidence that children benefit from close relationships with their teachers (Jablon et al., 2007; Pianta, 2006; Stipek & Byler, 2004). When the teacher observes the child and builds a stronger relationship with her/him, the teacher becomes better able to promote learning without “undermining motivation and self-confidence” (Stipek & Byler, 2004).
Since classroom practices include observation to facilitate children’s love for learning and effective communication between student and teacher, *a fortiori*, teachers should passionately adapt observation strategies as daily practices in order to appreciate their students, communicate effectively with them, and scaffold their growth. Observation helps the teacher to find answers to different kind of questions, such as what makes a child uncomfortable, what the child does well, or what the main themes of his/her dramatic play are (Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).

Observation is not only intended to reveal opportunities to build and extend on experiences and events in which children have shared interests, but also to highlight the importance of observing the interests of individual children that might be utilized to develop curricular activities for them and their peers. Observation is also a chance for teachers to practice personal reflection—identifying what each child is doing well, and what needs to be improved (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). Currently, assessment is viewed as much more important and necessary than actual observation.

**Theoretical Framework**

DAP and quality in ECE are the two faces of a coin. Quality assessment, observation and teacher training must be consistent with DAP. This chapter contained an examination of issues pertinent to quality in ECE from different perspectives. Teachers’ qualifications and beliefs received extensive consideration in the literature. Since systematic child observation is considered one of the main standards of DAP, this review suggests that failing to engage in observation affects the quality of early childhood settings. The discussion caveats from the unprofessional implementation of observational strategies.
The chapter goes thorough a few observational strategies. The review links professionalism in ECE to being effective as an observer. The chapter stresses the importance of training in attaining quality in ECE. Two recent observational approaches were discussed in details. CLASS is discussed in relation to stressing the social and emotional development of the child which is greatly determined by the relationship between the teacher and the child. The Bridging approach is now being implemented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after the creator of this approach visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and gave one-week workshop and series of lectures there. The chapter concludes with an overview of the intentional observation—the current research topic.

For this research, more than 70 studies on the contribution of observation and relevant topics were reviewed and many were discussed in this chapter. Very few were qualitative in design. There are studies about the contribution of observation to the child’s cognitive and social development. No one focuses on the benefit of the observation to the teacher-child relationship. The only two references—but not studies—to the connection between observation and teacher-child relationships, were books (Jablon et al., 2007; Pianta, 1999). The literature review in chapter two showed the importance of observation to the well-being of the child. There has been a lack of focus on the benefit for the teachers. The literature has a call for the present study because it is about the use of observation in enhancing teacher-child relationship and it is a qualitative study with multiple data resources.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Naturalistic Approaches

Naturalistic qualitative approaches focus on everyday settings and utilize naturalistic strategies as tools to fit the worldview of the researcher within a constructivist paradigm. “Constructivists assume that absolute realities are unknowable and the objects of inquiry ought to be individual perspectives that are taken to be constructions of reality” (Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006, p. 499). They are called naturalistic approaches because they are conducted in natural settings of everyday life to investigate the social phenomena as they take place. The main natural instrument that is utilized in the constructivist inquiry is the researcher him/herself (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006).

One well-known example of a naturalistic qualitative approach is the case study, which is acknowledged to be an effective research strategy. Its focus is on comprehension of the dynamics present within a single environment. Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases. Usually, the analysis goes through numerous levels (Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2002).

The qualitative study undertaken here takes the form of a multiple-case study with a training program, designed to gain a better understanding of how the applied
observational method is assisting the teachers in establishing an effective relationship with the children in a kindergarten in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study highlights the need to direct the trajectories of teachers’ training towards improving their observational skills in order to improve the teacher-child relationship. The study brings to light the power that teachers can attain from a collaborative relationship with children.

This case study offers vital insights into educational reform policy, which is continually supported by the Saudi Ministry of Education. The demand for educational excellence in ECE is increasing. This study sought information that might serve as the foundation for future teacher training programs with a focus on orienting attitudes toward child-observation and its vital impact on teachers’ self-perception, on the teacher-child relationship, and in return facilitating the management and planning of their daily routine.

**Case Study and Authentic Assessment**

The case study in itself is based on authentic practices of data collection. The researcher enters the field and observes as a participant in order to authentically depict the dynamics of daily interaction at a given site. The case study is based in a constructivist paradigm. In this approach, researchers usually join the observees to construct reality through mutual engagement within the research process. The contribution of both gives depth to the study (Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006). In this study, the researcher trained the teachers, and the daily teachers’ feedback contributed to constructing “realities” in the case study record. The training program was based on teachers’ reflections as well as the researcher’s analysis of their interviews and
observations. To have lasting effects from this research experience, teachers’ feedback was one of the sources of the training program.

**Pilot Study**

Prior to immersion in the fieldwork for the qualitative study, a pilot study foreshadowed the probable obstacles awaiting for the researcher (Stewart, 2004). The primary goal of this pilot study was to determine the sample size of children with whom the teachers would implement the observational strategies. It was also intended to help the researcher assess her role and practices as a participant observer. The pilot study lasted for one week.

**Sample Size**

The sample included four kindergarten teachers who taught in the same classroom. Three had majored in ECE while the fourth was an older teacher who had majored in history but had lengthy ECE experience. Three of these teachers were the researcher’s former colleagues. These teachers were asked to choose five children who represented any kind of challenge to them or children with whom they hoped to achieve greater progress.

**Site**

The site was a kindergarten similar to the one in which the researcher planned to conduct the primary study. The teachers were from the same ethnic background. The children in the school were middle-and upper-middle class. The classroom environment
and design were similar to those in the primary study. Each classroom in both kindergartens had a direct exit to the playground. Each classroom had almost similar curricula. Both sites had a decent observation room adjacent to each classroom. The only major differences were the length of the school day—the primary study was to take place in a bilingual school, while the pilot study took place in a kindergarten where the children were dismissed at 11:30. The children in the bilingual kindergarten were dismissed at 1:00. The researcher met the participants in the meeting room and discussed the study’s focus on child observation and how teachers should perform observation in a manner that advances the relationship between the teacher and the child. The teachers were asked to draw sketches of the chosen children during classroom interactions and to complete Pianta’s Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) in order to orient their focus on each of the five children they had chosen, and to talk about the children.

Discussion of the Pilot Study

The piloting of the scale confirmed that assigning five children to each teacher was more than enough. Some chief themes and issues colored the pilot study—these were identified during the four days of observations of the teachers. They were mostly parallel to themes that emerged in the original study. An objective assessment was that the teachers were experiencing epidemic problems that were burdening them. They were over-skilled in teaching strategies and visual aid-making, and had not yet acquired behavioral management techniques.
Benefits of the Pilot Study

1. The pilot study allowed the researcher to make methodological decisions, test protocols, and use participation scripts.

2. The researcher made some preparatory investigation of the original site before beginning the study. The researcher checked the age and work experience of the primary study participants. She also checked the classroom environment.

3. The researcher was more cautious and polite about asking for responses to the research requirements expected of participants, such as logs and sketches. The researcher avoided being as pushy. Whenever they felt unable to do something she would say “your comfort is important for me.”

4. The emergence of equivalent themes between the pilot study and the original study assured the researcher that outcomes would benefit similar sites.

The Primary Study Setting

A qualitative single-program case study was conducted at one private bilingual kindergarten approved by the Ministry of Education and accredited by the Commission on International Trans-regional Accreditation (CITA). The kindergarten had a single program that all the teachers followed. The population of children in the school was mostly upper class or high middle-class children. The school was luxuriously equipped, and the fiscal resources were high. The established curriculum was child-centered and falls under the constructivist approach. The nature of the study did not require a school
with special properties. The study could be done in any other school. The researcher could have chosen from several different kindergartens, but she was advised to conduct the study in a kindergarten in which she was not known by the kindergarten teachers, in order not to contaminate the data. During the pilot stage, the researcher visited a few schools and was intrigued by the diverse range of social adjustment problems in this private school in particular. Teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia generally face similar types of challenges due to either behavioral problems or social emotional adjustment problems. The field of the study was also chosen for convenience reasons.

In the school in which the study was conducted, there were five kindergarten classrooms of children age five. The children spent one third of the school day in the English classroom, one third in the Arabic classroom, and the last third divided among meal time, playground, physical education, or computer time. There was a half hour each week for library time. Each classroom had an adjacent observation room with a separate entrance equipped with auditory apparatuses. Unfortunately, the selected classrooms’ apparatuses were all out of order. The study took place in the three kindergarten classrooms in the school whose teachers agreed to participate. Six teachers were involved in the study—three were lead and experienced teachers and three were novice teachers. In each classroom, there was a dyad that included a teacher and a lead teacher. These six teachers had the same training in college.

The kindergarten had a unique system in order to accommodate more children—two Arabic teachers and two English teachers were assigned to 30 children, who were divided into two groups of 15 children. The two groups only met during meal time and on the playground. The children had a stable schedule. Each dyad of teachers taught two
half-day classes—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The study was conducted with three morning classes. Two classrooms were from 7:30 to 10 a.m. and one was from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Later in the study, this shift in time enabled the researcher to observe two classrooms in one morning. The researcher was mainly interested in observing center time rather than circle time in order to capture information about the teachers’ classroom practices. The researcher reached saturation in data collection and analysis with circle time in the observation. Circle time refers to the morning meeting between children and the teacher when the teacher introduces new topics to them. Center time refers to children’s interactions inside the working areas, such as dramatic play, blocks, and art areas.

Sample and the Method of Selection

It was a convenience sample of six teachers who accepted the invitation to participate. They worked in three classrooms. Gaining access to the participants was planned by the school principal. The original sample had four chosen participants, but they withdrew for cultural reasons. Because the study was classified by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as a full review study because it included teachers’ logs, the structuring of the full review consent form was culturally intimidating to the teachers (Refer to Appendix B). Statements such as “risk and discomfort” expedited their resignation from participation in the study, as did the multiple written requirements of the study.

Subtracting four of the ten possible teachers left only six teachers for this age group’s teachers. The principal was upset about the four teachers’ quick withdrawal and
advised the remaining teachers to participate in the study in case someone else might withdraw later. Some expressed reluctance at the beginning because they were anxious about the requirements such as writing logs. But later the six teachers expressed their satisfaction and enthusiasm in participating in the future. When submitting her logs, Hana wrote, “I am willing to participate again in any future studies.”

See Table 3.1 for demographic and personal information on the six teachers and the names of the children they focused on in this study (not their real names). The six teachers had degrees in ECE and had regularly received in-service training. All were effective teachers according to an evaluation by peers, the school coordinator, the principal, and parents’ testimonials. The reason these teachers were not identified initially by the administration for participation in this study, was that some of them were considered to be among the best teachers. The administration thought other teachers needed the training. The researcher was honored to have these teachers participate in this study. During the first workshop, there were three professional attendees at the workshop other than the participants, one of whom took the role of researcher’s confidante. She was a professional chosen to acquire first-hand experience with the researcher and with the participants as a group. The confidante acted like a co-researcher who negated or validated the interpretations. She was a bias-proof liaison and a consultant for the researcher. She was greatly involved in the study process for training purposes. As a result, portions of the data she contributed were included in the analysis.

The children sample was composed of 15 students. Five children were selected from each classroom by teachers. During the recruitment meeting (see Appendix C), the teachers in each classroom were advised to choose five children who represented some
sort of teacher-specific challenge—not necessarily challenges due to behavioral
problems, but challenges that left the teacher confused or unable to advance in the child’s
progress. These challenges included shy children, children with social adjustment
problems or children who were cognitively advanced and needed more challenging
curriculum plans to fit their needs.

Table 3.1
Demographic and Personal Information on Teachers and Selected Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dyads</th>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Educational Institute</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Selected Children</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Classroom Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fawzia</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Married with 2 children</td>
<td>Abdulla Layan Dalal Hamad Rayan</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>8 girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Teacher’s Institute</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td>F F M M</td>
<td>6 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Teacher’s Institute</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Layan Dalal Hamad Rayan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Omar Yara Ahmed Raed Yousef</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>6 girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Shoug</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td>F M M M</td>
<td>9 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madawi</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Mai Ali Rasha Khalil Saud</td>
<td>F M</td>
<td>6 girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td>M F M M</td>
<td>8 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Bachelor in ECE</td>
<td>Leadership University</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Lead Teacher=LT, Teacher=T
Confidante (Naima): Administrative staff who was fully involved for training purposes
All names are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants
Study Design

Qualitative methods were used to sum the complexities of the daily interactions between teachers and children. Since the research questions required extensive observation and training over substantial time, the researcher chose to implement a nine-week exploratory and multiple-case study design that involved descriptions of the cultural views in the three classrooms. The design explored the three cases of the three dyads as well as the six sub-cases of each individual teacher. The case study was designed to provide a wealth of information in order to create a case record (Creswell, 2007). This information could be used to develop a descriptive case on the teachers.

Researcher’s Role and Experience

The nature of this research necessitated a dual-role for the researcher: as an observer at one stage, and trainer at a later stage. When arriving at the site, the first and main role for the researcher was as an observer. To observe, she had to be in proximity to the site population and study participants most of the time. The researcher “mapped out initial strategies for building rapport with the various gatekeepers” (Corsaro, 1985, p. 13). She memorized the names of teachers, children and administrative staff. She tried not to be obtrusive when entering the classrooms. She was familiar with observation in general and the ways it can make the observed feel during the experience. Teacher Shoug wrote in her log of the researcher’s presence: “her presence was beautiful. Even the children liked having her with us” (Logs, 3/11/2008).
The researcher became familiar with the program and the schedule. She rarely had lunch in her office. Most of the time, she had it in the teachers’ lounge. She took turns providing food supplies, such as bread and drinks. Her goal was to have a sense of the school culture.

With time, she felt that the teachers began to trust her when she became a consultant for the principal, a mentor for the coordinator, supporter of teachers and a consoler of mothers. Her interaction in these relationships assisted her in learning about their roles in and contributions to the school.

The researcher discovered that none of the equipments in the observation rooms for the three classrooms was working and that there was no way to fix them quickly. She struggled in the first observation to put aside her role as a principal and supervisor, which she’d been for 17 years. The researcher tried to eliminate her filters and observe objectively. The filters are the mechanisms that hindered the observer from seeing the real persons she/he observes. With filters the teacher became judgmental of her children. In the third observation, teacher Madawi was enthusiastic to have a researcher in the school, and she asked if she could share with her any corrective feedback after the center time. It was a challenge for the researcher to assume the roles of observer and supervisor together, so the researcher declined, in order to observe objectively. The way in which the goal of an approach determines the broadness of the view was interesting. The researcher felt at that moment that observation creates a wide window through which to view and capture moments.

Throughout the early stage of the research, the work was mostly exploratory. The study design allowed the exploration of the classrooms culture without manipulating the
planning and daily routine of the participating teachers during the first stage of the study for the duration of the first two weeks. The researcher was a “passive participant.” She was present in the classrooms without participation. She was like a “spectator” (Spradley, 1980, p. 59). During observations, the researcher sought to depict the actions and key events that were shaping relationships between teachers and children, and to ascertain whether that the final results of the teachers’ actions were disappointing or successful. The fieldnotes included information on each teacher’s actions inside the classroom and her interaction with the children. The researcher sought to describe quotes as close to verbatim as possible as distance allowed. The “condensed” recording was like “casting the nets broadly, and focus later in the study” (Emerson, Frerz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 29). The filednotes could be expanded later. The researcher’s fieldnotes during the first phase of the study were richer than in the later stage. In the second phase, the recordings were interrupted by interactions and coaching with the teachers.

In the second phase the researcher actively participated in classroom activities due to the training in IO, which required review of the teachers’ records in the child observation notebooks, and feedback to the teachers. Her involvement in classroom actions was high due to these interactions with teachers and children. This is considered “complete participation” according to Spradley (1980).

_A Day in the Kindergarten_

The researcher’s mornings started with greeting the teachers in the three classrooms to decide which of the three dyads was available and receptive to observation. She asked them about the topic of the day as a way to smooth the atmosphere for her
presence in their classroom for over an hour. She sat on one of the tables to record. She concentrated during each session of observation on one of the classroom teachers. She never intervened in the classroom process during the observation phase. She had lunch in the teachers’ lounge with the available teachers; some of whom had playground duty on specific days of the week. She observed the teachers in the children’s lunch-lounge and on the playground to gain a feeling for the interaction between teachers and children outside the classroom walls.

There was one full observation in the classroom each day. Every other day there was one extra observation daily of the classroom of the shifted time. The researcher felt that she had obtained a full picture by the end of the second week because the observations were recorded every day as opposed to what was planned in the proposal for every other day. This enabled the collection of more fieldnotes. Since the participant classrooms’ interactions only occurred in the mornings, the researcher had the afternoon in which to transcribe and reflect on observations. The researcher obtained similar notes and captured the same patterns over and over in the three classrooms due to the nature of the program content which was mandated by the administration of the school (refer to regional background). When the researcher had completed the workshops’ materials to match the needs of the teachers, she informed the school coordinator that the workshop would begin during the following week (March 15, 2008), in the afternoon after her field observation. Later during the training and coaching stage, the researcher was in the classrooms observing the teachers and coaching them on using the new techniques in observing the children.
Preliminary Procedures

Prior to the study phases, teachers responded to three non-traditional assessments (NTA) that attempted to capture each teacher’s conceptions of herself as a teacher and her views of specific individual children in her classroom. Assumed is that these conceptions and views might reflect her interaction with children and her teaching and management style in the classroom. The NTA consisted of:

1. *Drawing their logos*. Each teacher drew a coat of arms or logo as teachers preferred to call it. The logo was supposed to represent the teacher as an early childhood teacher.

2. *Drawing sketches of children in the classroom*. Each teacher drew sketches of the five selected children in her classroom while they were playing or interacting with others in the classroom.

3. *Writing poetry about each participant child*. Each teacher wrote lines of poetry about each of the five selected children in her classroom.

The purpose of these NTA was to prompt the teachers to discuss their views about ECE in general and about participating children in particular. These activities were employed to capture a glimpse of the teachers’ beliefs. They were—along with Pianta’s Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) (Pianta, 2001) — used as acquainting activities and to draw the teachers’ attention to the importance of observing children and thinking about them. They also served as warm-up activities to establish rapport with the
participating teachers. They also served to generate follow up questions during the interviews.

Teachers completed Pianta’s STRS before the beginning of the study. The scale includes 28 items that reflect 3 areas of relationships between teacher and child; 12 items measure conflict, such as “This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other,” and “This child feels that I treat him/her unfairly.” There are 11 items that measure closeness, such as “I have an affectionate, warm relationship with this child,” and “If upset, this child will seek comfort from me.” The third area has 5 items that measure dependency, such as “This child asks for my help when he/she really does not need help, and “This child expresses hurt or jealousy when I spend time with other children.”

Study Phases

The study had two phases. The first phase lasted two weeks. The researcher’s role was mainly that of observer. During the second phase of the study and for four weeks, the researcher began to assume a second role as a trainer and a coach for these six teachers—training them in intentional observation (IO) strategies. This exploratory case study was conducted to describe the process of reflective coaching. The fieldnotes were collected for approximately three hours every day for two weeks, followed by four weeks of guiding, coaching and observing. During the remaining weeks of the study the researcher observed the teachers working independently on IO strategies.
**Phase I**

During this phase and for two weeks the researcher sought to capture information on existing daily practices, interactions, and relationship patterns that had been established between teachers and children since the beginning of the school year. Throughout this phase, the researcher collected data through observation sessions and interviews after the observation sessions. During this phase, the available child observations and checklists, observation forms, check-lists, assessments of children were analyzed using document analysis. Check-lists related to the curricular units, such as the food unit, were completed by the teachers four times during the school year. One item read, “the child can group types of food in the food pyramid.” Or the items were related to academic skills, such as “the child writes the letter F.” These were achievement-based assessments. There were also items related to the child's personal skills, such as, “the child takes care of his personal hygiene.” All the check-lists contained approximately 320 items. Teachers were also required to fill out a single-page when reporting behavioral problems to the administration. The coordinator admitted that the school assessment forms needed development since they were not satisfied with them.

**Phase II**

This phase represented the core of the study, when the teachers were introduced to the strategies of narrative observation through the program of IO training, which was implemented for two hours at the end of the school day over three days. This part of the
training provided the teacher with a rationale for the child observation, IO strategy and the other observation strategies. This training assisted the teachers in comprehending the reasons for the child’s behavior. In the following weeks, the researcher entered the classrooms with the teachers to coach the application of the new strategies. The training program is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

At the onset of this phase, teachers began to keep personal logs in which they recorded their reactions, perceptions, attitudes, daily applications, challenges, successes, resentments, and obstacles they might face during the course of the application. This phase ended with individual interviews and a reflective group session with the teachers in which they evaluated their overall satisfaction with the materials presented in the training program. In this stage of the study, the researchers resumed taking fieldnotes, based on participant observations. This methodology helped to generate comparative descriptive data on each teacher’s perspectives and practices.
Figure 3.1
The Two Phases of the Study Plan

PHASE I

- Descriptive Observation
- Teachers’ First Interviews
- Document Analysis of Child’s Observations
- Teachers’ Second Interviews

PHASE II

- Intentional Observation Training
- Teachers Kept Personal Logs Simultaneously from the Beginning of the Training to the End of the Study
- Third Interview after Application
- Focused and Selected Observation

- Teachers Continued Personal Logs
- Reflective Group Session
An Overview of the Training Topics

Intentional Observation Training

Intentional observation training was used in this study. It was covered in three workshops (refer to Appendix A for details). It involved the training for child observation and targeted the building of better relationships between teachers and children. The training focused on increasing teachers' sensitivity to each child's needs by broadening the scope of teachers' awareness.

The training provided the teacher with a rationale for the child observation, IO strategy and other observation strategies, such as time sampling. The training helped them, too, in comprehending, interpreting and diagnosing the reasons for the child’s maladjustment through the use of observational strategies—mainly the IO strategy.

Data Collection

In this study, there were major and minor sources of data (see Table 3.2). These included the following:

Demographic data on teachers (refer to Table 3.1)

Field Observations

The researcher collected data during descriptive, focused, and selected observation sessions. Descriptive observation refers to the process of attempting to obtain an overview of the social situation at a given site. It involves approaching observation practices with only general questions and without particular questions in mind. The focused observation takes place after selecting a study focus. It focuses on the
elicited relationships that emerge during the answering of particular questions. Selected observation involves going to the social situation to identify contrasts and existing differences (Spradley, 1980). The field observations were direct observation and participant observation (Yin, 2003). The focuses of the observations were on physical, intellectual, and social engagement, in addition to child-adult interactions and the spatial classroom environment. There were opportunities for teachers and children to engage in meaningful dialogue. Since positive regard in teacher-child relationships is inferential, the researcher inferred its existence from related behaviors of children and teachers. However, the main source of information on the improved relationships between teachers and children were the reported statements of the teachers. After the IO training was offered on March 15, 2008, the researcher took on the roles of trainer and coach in addition to participant observer. There were fewer recorded fieldnotes at this stage due to the high involvement of the researcher (Spradley, 1980).

The fieldnotes helped the researcher to understand the culture in the classrooms and to make connections between the inferred themes that emerged from the data from the teachers’ reports. The data used in the analysis were mainly from teachers’ perspectives. They were captured in the following sources of data: interviews, teachers’ personal logs, child observation notebooks, and reflective meeting session.
### Table 3.2
Major Data Sources: Dates of Participant Observations, Interviews, and Logs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Fawzia**</th>
<th>Rana***</th>
<th>Hana</th>
<th>Shoug</th>
<th>Madawi</th>
<th>Nora****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview (In.) 1</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In. 2</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>3/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Reflective Session</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logs (began)</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: All dates are in 2008
The three days of training were in Mach/15, 16 and 18/2008
**Fawzia was very late in the morning for 3 days: 4/20, 21, 22
***Rana was absent for 8 days: 3/11, 3/22, 3/23, 3/24, 4/1, 4/22, 4/26, 4/29 during the study
****Nora hurt her back and was absent for 4 days: 4/23, 26, 27, 28
**Interviews**

Data were collected three times during the teacher interviews (see Table 3.2). During the initial formal interview, the researcher made explicit the *purpose* of the interviews. The teachers knew where the conversation would go (Spradley, 1979). Hana wrote on the first page of her log, on 3/4/08, that “the researcher talked extensively about the confidentiality of the research. This made me comfortable and I had a sense of relief.”

The researcher repeatedly posed *ethnographic explanations* even before the informant would ask. Ethnographic explanations include general statements about what the study was about (Spradley, 1979). The second interview took place right after conceptualizing the first interview responses. The third interview generated a wealth of information. It took place after the application of IO strategies. The interviews' questions were as follows:

1. When do you observe the children?
2. Why do you observe the children?
3. How good do you think you are in the observation?
4. How often do you use observation strategies in comparison to your other daily practices; such as teaching, planning, arranging the class materials, and preparing reports?
5. What is your reaction to the training?
6. How do you think and feel about the training with respect to changing your observational practices?
7. What use do you see yourself making of “intentional observation”?
8. What are the pros and cons of “intentional observation” in your opinion?
9. What difficulties do you perceive in applying what you have learned among your daily practices?

10. Do you see your observational skills should help you understand each child? Can you explain how?

Each teacher was asked the questions in the same form. Follow-up questions were asked to get teachers to clarify their responses. Throughout the study, there were few informal interviews which resembled friendly conversations. This type of interview usually generates data without alerting the informants (Spradley, 1979). As expected, a reflective group session was needed after the application of IO strategies and after the third interview. (Refer to Figure 3.1)

Teachers’ participation in a field trip with the children allowed the researcher time to immerse in the data. Immersion allows oneself to be taken over by the culture of the study until patterns and themes start to emerge (Spradley, 1979). One interview was added after immersion in the data and research culture. This interview took place with one of the participants since she was the only one who had had extensive training in narrative observation. There was also a long interview with the confidante. Her contributions were acknowledged. She accompanied the researcher throughout the study.

**Personal Logs**

Teachers put into words their ongoing perceptions of the training in their personal logs. (Refer to Table 3.2). They are considered significant sources of data. They included in their logs interpersonal and intrapersonal thoughts and challenges. The researcher was
touched immensely by some of what they included—e.g., “I had days when I wanted to cry” (Rana’s log, 3/12/08).

**Child Observation Notebooks**

Teachers’ daily observations of the children were kept in individual notebooks—these were related to IO training. In other words, through these recorded observations, teachers changed their perception of the children through understanding the children’s behaviors and actions. In these notebooks teachers kept running records and anecdotal notes on the children during interactions. Then teachers took segments from this notebook to share with parents. The notebook, which used to go to the parents, was entitled by the teachers, “Recorded Moments,” notebook. The teachers had earlier explained to the children the protocol for this “Recorded Moments” notebook in case a mother might start a conversation that might astonish the child about his/her day at school before he/she would know that this information had been sent to him/her. The teachers showed the “Recorded Moments” notebook to the children during circle time and told them that every time a notebook for one of the children went to his parents, they could see how hard their child had been working. In the recruitment protocol, all of the children in the classroom were informed of the reason for including only five children in the study. (Refer to Appendix C) The researcher shared the recruitment protocol with the children at the outset of the study.
Reflective Group Session

After the application of IO strategies for four weeks a reflective meeting was held with the teachers that proved to be a valuable source of data. In this session they expressed their needs and thoughts. The meeting lasted for more than one hour. The researcher intended to build researcher-teacher quality relationships by demonstrating an interest in the teachers’ perspectives, thoughts, and ongoing efforts to make the study effective (Howes, Shivers, & Ritchie, 2004). The researcher also worked with the teachers as a team to raise their sense of professionalism, which they needed to mitigate their daily pressures.

Additional Sources of Data

There was an analysis of the classroom artifacts and material culture evidence. The analysis of these materials usually generates connections between themes. In the three classrooms, paper was placed high above on a shelf so that a child would have to ask permission before using paper for activities. This lack of trust gave mixed messages to the child. The organization of materials in the art center made dependency on teachers’ help inevitable. Different materials were mixed and they needed maintenance. The blocks areas in the three classrooms were moderately equipped. The materials and visual aids in the cognitive area were not presented on the table. The children’s preference was for the dramatic play area, computers, blocks, and lastly the writing center. Except for Madawi’s and Nora’s class, no one cared to enter the dramatic play area. This is discussed later in chapter four.
Data Analysis as a Research Strategy

Data analysis is the process of organizing all of what a researcher has seen, heard, read, and comprehended in order to make sense of what could be learned. During the process of analysis, it was “crucial to have understood the dynamics” of each particular narrative observation before proceeding to the cross-narrative explanation (Glense, 2006).

During the analysis, causes, effects, outcomes, and their temporal sequence (case configurations) should not be altered; however, some clarification and simplification were necessary. Chain reactions occurred in which multiple effects led to further causes and then effects. Unexpected or surprising narratives were helpful because they led the researcher to rethink, enlarge, and rework his/her theories (Mills & Huberman, 1994).

The Coding Process

The reflection on data began in the field and during transcription. The transcribing and translation of the interviews were done simultaneously. The fieldnotes were written in English. Data completed by the participants were read twice in the mother language to generate thoughts. In the field, the researcher used a notebook to record any thoughts that arose during the course of the observations or interviews. Recording was helpful in accumulating evidence. The researcher was overwhelmed by the accumulation of data. The hardest part was to move from piles of data to coding. In other words, it was difficult
to make connections between the research questions and the raw text. A few categories emerged but did not lead to clear evidence immediately.

To prepare the data for analysis, the researcher printed the data twice. The first time was to underline and write notes. She started reading from the full-sized hard copy. When the researcher came up with conceptual thoughts, ideas or queries, she recorded the thoughts in the margin. This was the open coding for the text (refer to Figure 3.2). It was the first step in the analysis in order to translate the themes to the readers (Spradley, 1979). The thoughts were not necessarily interrelated. Open coding refers to the examination of individual words, phrases, and sentences. It is the process of fracturing the data to allow for the identification of categories (Creswell, 2007). The defining moment in this analysis and one that gave the researcher a sense of control over the data was the moment when she read that it was better to “keep only the relevant text and discard the rest” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 37). Nothing was more motivating and powerful than the moment of coding the data in order to generate themes. The researcher’s “ultimate goal was to produce a coherent, focused analysis of some aspects of the social life that has been observed and recorded” (Emerson, Frerz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 142)
Figure 3.2
Selection of open coding from Hana’s 3rd interview, 3/22/2008

Q 4. How do you think and feel about the training with respect to changing your observational practices?
Int. #3/4- The training did not just affect me it totally changed (in the sense of transformed) my practices.
Q 5. You have observed a child. Is there any dimension revealed through the observation?
Int. #3/5 Hana: Yes. I used to see Omar only as a hyperactive child. I never captured any creativity like artistic abilities, play, or even language skills. I was not used to talking to him. The only conversation that goes between me and him is to discipline him when he hits others. Now we sit together, start conversations, and ask him his opinion about things. I am in the being of entering inside him (Omar), living his personality. I have a different attitude than my attitude before as police-like teacher, watching that he does not misbehave.
Int. #3/6 Ahmed I used to think that he is an angry child because of his situation. Now, even though he is still angry, I noticed today that he is calm. I was calm today since I started the term “leave the cattle graze,” (a slogan raised in the workshop.) Shoug said that the children are quiet today. I told her “we are calm so they are too. Usually you are in the in the art center and I am in the writing center. We only look at the children to order them, return blocks-put this away. We have never left them to do what ever they liked to do.” Today what happened in the block area is different. When the children wrecked the block structure I looked and laughed.
Researcher: I liked that you did not interfere.
Int. #3/7 Hana: I am telling you, I left them because now it is an enjoyment for me to observe complete situations not just when something disruptive happens which entail misunderstanding and misinterpretation.
Q 6. What use did you make of IO training?
Int. #3/8 Lately, I started losing interest in early childhood education because of the nature of the work. Now, I have regained my feelings as an ECE teacher, rather than just finish this work, notebooks, and administrative work, which is endless. These things abolished my shine as ECE teacher. Now I am polishing my shine and I wrote in my log. I will raise the logo ‘Leave the cattle graze’ and give me space to keep my shine shining again. This is what I felt in me personally, I am quiet positive it will be reflected on my children.
The second time, the data were printed in a column format. In order to make the data manageable for cutting, colorful ball-point pens, coloring pens, and highlighters of different widths and colors were used to encompass the multiple sources of data from the six teachers. The column-like prints were coded using pens and highlighters, and the print-outs had lines on the side, so that when the researcher looked at a piece, she would know that a certain piece of information’s source was, for example, “for teacher Rana, 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview.” The researcher cut out the color-coded columns of text and grouped the cut out statements that supported each code and arrived at categories for these codes. She fixed them under each category on a big sheet of cardboard.

In Table 3.3 and throughout questioning around the emergent concepts, the researcher identified each of the categories on which to focus, linked it to the other categories, and represented it in a visual representation known as *axial coding* (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This step usually follows the open coding. The researcher identifies central phenomena and then returns to the data to decide the causes, number of occurrence and consequences (Creswell, 2007). Table 3.3 shows the first stage of grouping the codes.


Table 3.3

Axial Coding Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Happenings related to the categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stagnation</td>
<td>Feelings of boredom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of Fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>That teacher’s actions instigate child reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of the role observation plays in the classroom culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Lack of confidence in children’s abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of connectedness to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social/emotional</td>
<td>Failing to empower children efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>Failing to be assertive with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failing to delegate tasks to children in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categories are short labels given to events, happenings and instances of phenomena. The analysis leads to the formation of open codes that are categorized and labeled. The interrelation of the categories form an axial coding (Creswell, 2007). After revisiting the data a few times, a group of more specific categories was generated. The codes are defined and discussed in more details in the next chapter. The tabulation table containing the categorical codes that are linked to these categories is presented in the fourth chapter, too.

During the focused coding process, the researcher looked for more statements that supported specific thoughts or codes, through extensive reading of the hard copy of the data. The researcher went code by code in order not to confuse herself coming up with categories. The initial list of generated categories read as follows: teacher’s role, teacher’s passion, teacher’s self perception, teacher’s hardship, teacher’s attitude toward the child, and teacher’s conceptualization of the child behavior. These categories aided
the researcher in refining the codes and ideas. The refining of codes continued until the researcher was able to see the relationships between categories and came up with themes. Eventually, the researcher settled on seven categories and sixteen codes defined and supported with examples in chapter four. Through grouping the codes around the categories, the researcher came up with four major themes. The rich data allowed for more analysis focusing on different perspectives, which are discussed in chapter five. Her strategy during the analysis was inductive. She identified categories within the data (Rossman, 2003) and revisited the research questions to organize a theoretical narrative. 

The taxonomy analysis process simplified the transition from codes and categories to themes. Taxonomical analysis is the process of organizing a set of categories “on the basis of a single semantic relationship” (Spradley, 1980, p. 112). For example repeated statements read as, “I feel tired and I am longing for the weekend” (Madawi’s logs 3/5/08). “I am suffering from work and stress and the administration is doing nothing.” (Fawzia’s logs, 3/10/08). “I felt strangled and angry because I cannot help in solving children’s aggressiveness” (Rana’s logs 3/10/08). Semantically, these statements signified the codes of boredom, fatigues, and failure consecutively. With the repeated patterns of these thematic codes, categories were developed. The emergent categorization from these codes would be stagnation since they expressed the unchanging conditions in the classroom using these statements.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS ACROSS THE THREE CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, data and analysis are presented related to important features of each of the six teachers’ beliefs and practices. Plausible interpretations of these practices and beliefs are provided, too. Table 4.1 shows the grouping of information related to the generated categories. The grouping generated four thematic topics from the data analysis. They were as follows: (1) teacher's unprofessional roles, (2) teacher's professional roles, (3) teacher's stagnation, and (4) teacher's transformation. Chapter five provides further data analysis that allow for additional interpretations.

As shown in Table 4.1 each of the four thematic topics was generated and grouped from categories developed from sets of open codes. For example, the category “stagnation” was based on the codes of boredom, failure, and fatigue. Table 4.1 provides a visual presentation of the analysis with definitions of the codes and selected examples on these codes from teachers' reports.

The discussion of the data analysis will take the form of discussing each theme of the four major themes individually across the three cases of the three dyads. The focus of the discussion is the views of the teachers with respect to self-perceptions, impressions, relationships with children, and their feedback on how the IO training influenced them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Definition of codes</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s unprofessional roles</td>
<td>Police-like</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s or researcher's reference of misuse of power</td>
<td>“The only disadvantage of IO is the anxiousness of losing control.” Hana's 3rd interview, 3/22/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watcher</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s act of looking at the children without recording</td>
<td>During the first interview 5 teachers referred to observation as “watching”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intruder</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s behavior of interrupting children’s involvement obliviously</td>
<td>Shoug said, “I noticed how the practicum student <em>intruded</em> in Ahmed's play when he was building in the block center. We obliviously used to do so.” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s act of waiting on a child while he does an independent task in order to monitor the process of the task</td>
<td>“I used to sit in the art center waiting for a child to come.” Shoug 3rd interview, 2/23/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s professional roles</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Refers to any reference that implies improvement in relationship between teacher and child</td>
<td>“Now we sit together and start conversations “ Hana's 3rd interview, 3/22/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual trust</td>
<td>Refers to actions showing mutual trust</td>
<td>“I communicate to Haya that I trust her in returning the toys.” Hana's 3rd interview, 3/22/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles that helps the teacher and the child</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s act of watching while recording</td>
<td>“I am just starting observation… I felt that I understand the child better.” Nora's 3rd interview, 3/22/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s act of giving children space and relaxing (while observing)</td>
<td>“Now I am calm while I observe the children…I felt connected with the child I observed.” Nora's 3rd interview, 3/22/08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s stagnation</td>
<td>Stagnation</td>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s awareness of lack of progress when she faces boredom.</td>
<td>“I feel despair with the onset of every day. Everything gets harder and tasks increase…The general atmosphere is boring and I am thinking of resigning.” Fawzia’s logs, 3/12/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Refers to situations where teacher faces failure</td>
<td>One time, Bana made Rana cry because “I could not protect the children from Bana’s aggressive behaviors.” Rana stated. Field observation, 3/10/08.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s expression of fatigue during work</td>
<td>Madawi wrote about her daily sense of fatigue 6 times in her logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative duties and job demands</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s reference to tasks required by the administration or classroom jobs</td>
<td>“Everyone expects you to be giving like the sun. I felt that the requirements are more than a teacher can handle.” Fawzia’s logs, 3/11/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s transformation</td>
<td>Self-image</td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s sense of competence after an achievement</td>
<td>“I felt competent in mothers' conference due to the information I collected from the observation.” Madawi’s logs, 3/30/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Refers to the teacher's sense of confidence as an ECE teacher</td>
<td>“I feel myself shining again…I want to live again as an early childhood teacher.” Hana's logs, 3/19/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of change</td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>Refers to teacher's reference to change in attitude and perspectives</td>
<td>&quot;At the beginning, I wasn't enthusiastic for the workshop at all… Oh my God another day for delay, but after the workshop my attitude completely was different….I was very enthusiastic for the topic of the workshop-and the topic is really important for my job.” Hana's logs 3/15/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Refers to teacher’s awareness of the advancement in her practices</td>
<td>“I went to benefit as much as I can from the workshop to learn practices that would advance me professionally as a teacher of early childhood.” Shoug’s logs, 3/18/08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 contains the tabulation of the categorical codes. These were recurring patterns in the data sources. For example, when looking at Table 4.2, *failure* references were coded four times in the case records for Rana and none in the case record for Hana, while the code of *connectedness* was manifested four times in the data related to Madawi and seven times in the data related to Shoug.

The discussion of the major themes will include the reference to all the categories in the multiple-case study. But the discussion in each case of each dyad will not necessarily include all codes to avoid redundancy because the goal is to give examples that will explain the concepts of the codes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Fawzia</th>
<th>Rana</th>
<th>Hana</th>
<th>Shoug</th>
<th>Madawi</th>
<th>Nora</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's unprofessional roles</td>
<td>Roles that helped neither teachers nor the child</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watcher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intruder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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Case One: Fawzia and Rana

Fawzia was a motherly figure to the children and teachers. She was tender and humorous. She had a passion for knowledge. “I always tell my supervisor, if you see me doing something wrong just give me feedback” (informal interview, 4/29/08). She had a high sense of commitment. Although she faced challenges in obtaining babysitting for her own infant, she was never absent from school.

Rana was a young lady who had graduated from a community college two years prior. As the analysis showed, Rana became anxious when something did not go as she had expected. “When I observe I do not see who left or entered a working center” (3rd
interview, 3/30/08). She was a hard-working teacher lacking basic classroom management skills. Her logs showed melancholy when she described her tough moments in the school as survival moments. “I felt strangled and angry because I cannot help in solving the children’s aggressiveness” (Logs 3/10/08). Despite this situation, it was hard for her to practice observation effectively. She employed observation much less than did the other teachers. She would have advanced more if she had applied IO strategies because they help teachers see the whole picture and find clues from the observations for solutions to problems. Her feedback in the interviews and logs besides the fieldnotes of the participant observation suggests that she can be considered the counter-example among the participant teachers.

**First Theme: Teacher's Unprofessional Roles**

Through looking at the fieldnotes, it was clear that Fawzia and Rana assumed roles that helped neither the children nor themselves. These unprofessional roles were as follows: acting like a police, a watcher, an intruder, and a waiter.

“I cannot leave them. They might hurt each other” (Rana 3rd interview 3/30/08). Rana here was assuming the role of police perfectly. Consequently, the children ran from her or acted out in front of the police, and yet she continued in her belief. When a teacher continually speaks to children using words such as “sit down” and “do not do this”, it seems to give them the invitation to defy her. She wept and said, “If I turn around, they fight.” Three of her sketches, which she drew for the children as part of the non-traditional assessments (NTA), contained
a figure of a teacher. The teacher figure signified authority and power. I used the NTA to invite the teachers to talk about their children during the second interview.

Both teachers referred to observation in the first interview in the sense of watching. “I observe children from the first day of school (but without recording)” Fawzia's 1st interview, 3/5/08. It was clear that the teachers were not aware of their role during center time. Rana and Fawzia were observed four times intruding children's involvement in constructive play and interrupting their concentration. Fawzia called Hamad while he was absorbed in preparing a meal in dramatic play center. She said “Return the cups in the cabinet and come to do the activity sheet.” Participant observation, 3/12/08

There were patterns of the role of “waiting” on children to accomplish tasks throughout the fieldnotes before the training. “Teachers Rana and Fawzia sat and held the erasers. If someone makes mistakes, they erase for him/her” (Participant observation, 3/3/08). The teachers chose to have the children dependent on them for trivial tasks such as using the eraser. How much time would be available to the teachers to perform professional tasks such as observation if the teachers acted as delegators of task performance to the children and let each child take care of rubbing out his or her own mistakes or serve his/her lunch on his/her own?

The unprofessional roles of “teacher as a waiter” and “teacher as an intruder.” were coined by me as a reflection on the fieldnotes which described specific behaviors inside the classrooms. These terms were brought to the discussion table during the reflective group session in order to increase the teacher’s awareness of her roles in the classroom. The teachers elaborated on the
terms by citing more incidents referring to this semantic relationship. Shoug, a teacher from another room, said, “I noticed how the practicum student intruded in Ahmed's play when he was building in the block center. We obliviously used to do so” (Reflective group session, 4/28/08). My observation of these six teachers as intruders and waiters is echoed in Martin’s chapter (1994) who saw similar patterns of these themes, especially with novice teachers:

I have learned increasingly over the years how to observe and listen carefully. In their eagerness to be active educators, beginning teachers end to jump in too quickly, interrupt children’s talk and play, correct mistakes, and take charge of all situations. It takes experience and trust in children to learn to stand back, allow gaps and silences while children think, let children help work put solutions to classroom problems, and accept children’s inaccurate theories with respect for their process of learning. I am ultimately responsible for the safety of the children, the quality of instruction, and the social climate, I like to think of myself more a constantly active consultant in the classroom than the big boss who controls everything. (p.102)

In the previous excerpt, Martin liked her role as a consultant, which was equivalent to that of delegator as used in this chapter, which has an empowerment connotation.

Second Theme: Teacher's Professional Roles

Fawzia and Rana demonstrated extra professional roles that they reported they had not resumed before. These roles and attitudes improved their relationships and were helpful to the participant children in particular and the whole class children in general and were helpful to the teachers themselves, too. These roles and attitudes are as follows: the
sense of connectedness, sense of mutual trust, and the roles of observer and relaxer. Fawzia described her experience as an observer and Fawzia said, “With observation, I know what is going to happen and that’s why I was calmer.” 3rd interview 3/30/08

Observation led Rana to connect with the children with whom she used to be annoyed. “After observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom” (3rd interview, 3/30/08). When a teacher feels the connection between her and a child, she identifies with that child and she interacts with him/her on a more effective level. In the previous quote, Rana was describing her first complete or full day observation for Hamad. Her success in this observation made her adjust her attitude towards observation to some extent, but she continued believing that observation “takes away form the teacher's time.”

Third Theme: Teacher's Stagnation

When I arrived in the site I noticed signs of unhappiness with the profession in the school. This was caused by the sense of stagnation due to the feeling of boredom, failure, and fatigue. There was an atmosphere of stagnation enveloping the three classrooms, especially Fawzia's and Rana's. “I had days when I wanted to cry, but I kept telling myself that this is the end of the school year” (Rana's logs, 3/11/08). The next day she wrote, "I feel exhausted, tired, depressed, disappointed and helpless because I have a lot of responsibilities, and they are priorities, but I don't know where to start” (Rana's logs, 3/12/08). Fawzia showed similar sings of unhappiness in her logs. It seems some of the children in Fawzia’s class led her to feel despair and failure:

Today I felt failure when Bana—from the noon group—hit Abdulla without a reason. I tried to speak to her and she let my hands out and
went to hit him again. All the children were gazing at me and at Bana, who was running towards Abdulla to hit him again and again. “Teacher she will hit me,” cried Abdulla. I could not contain the situation. I held Abdulla and ignored Bana ... Later on, we went to the playground and then I went for my break in the teachers’ room. I could not stop thinking about what had happened, and I had not even had my breakfast yet. . . . In the afternoon, I went home with a sense of failure, despair, and loneliness.” Logs 3/9/08

This is the daily turmoil that Fawzia and Rana went through, apparently due to their children’s multiple behavioral problems and to the teachers’ lack of basic social/emotional support and effective assertiveness.

One major cause of stagnation was the huge number of daily obligations, including administrative duties and job demands. In the interviews, logs, and daily participant observations, teachers never stopped mentioning “the requirements.” For them, requirements were like a demon always following them. This theme was dominant throughout the study period, both before and after the training. Their requirements were to file children’s work, send written messages to parents, do thematic child assessments, arrange portfolios, and correct the notebooks. The children could do part of the work, such as checking their own work or each others’ work in a creative manner. The children could decide what to include in their portfolio folders rather than having this be the teachers’ decision. The school was supposed the place where the children learned to be responsible and accountable. The children could be taught to file the announcements and do “grown up” work. Hana (the second case) was a devoted teacher with a unique vision, and a different agenda. If she was not convinced to do what the administration said, she did it her way. “Occasionally, some indifference does not harm,” She stated.
Fawzia wrote. “Today there were a lot of activity sheets which required such a long time to complete that they took away from the center time. The children felt bored and I felt tired, too” (Fawzia's logs, 3/10/08). One of the annoying requirements for them was filing the announcement papers that were sent to parents as a part of their accountability for parent communication:

Observation has many positive aspects. The negative side of observation is that it takes away time from the teacher. It's nice when the teacher is done with her paperwork. She enjoys observation but it's hard when she has a lot of required work.

(Fawzia’s 3rd interview 3/30/08)

It was evident that Fawzia did not seem convinced about surrendering her daily duties to do observation when she made this statement. Teachers need alternative avenues to reduce daily pressures. Rana also complained from the excessive paperwork assigned by the administration, “As a teacher, I have a huge burden that will take me away from observation” (Rana's 3rd interview, 3/30/08).

**Fourth Theme: Teacher's Transformation**

After the training, the teachers exhibited signs of awareness through their interpretations of their practices and perceptions. They reported statements of improved self-image as they spoke of their sense of competence. Rana described her approach of connecting to children, “Observation affected me in the sense that now I describe children's behavior rather than praising them” (Rana's 3rd interview, 3/30/08).

Fawzia realized that some of her practices were helping neither her nor the children. “I used to be judgmental with children… I am able now to choose my vocabulary” (Fawzia’s 3rd interview 3/30/08). Rana was the least of the teachers to enjoy the IO
strategies. She used to do observation reluctantly. The depressant tune continued in her logs. The IO training contributed marginally to her self-satisfaction in the classroom. When she sat to observe, her tranquility was shattered by the behavioral problems of Hamad from the morning group or Bana from the noon group. “I was enthusiastic to observe after the first workshop, but now I feel that when I observe the classroom will become disruptive” (3rd interview 3/30/08).

Fawzia reflected her satisfaction with the IO strategies. “With observation, I know what is going to happen. That is why I was calmer. I knew the children can manage most of the problems. With observation, I learned when to intervene” (Fawzia's 3rd interview, 3/30/08). All of the teachers, in general, felt that the children became calm when the teachers became calm. This was a transformation for all of them. Fawzia's sense of competence is revealed in this statement: “I started practicing observation at home with my husband and children” (Fawzia's 3rd interview, 3/30/08).

Fawzia expressed her satisfaction with the workshops’ content. “I feel I benefited a lot from the workshops. They were fun and enjoyable. I felt ashamed when the researcher asks me about the application. I did not apply it in a way that satisfies me yet. I always wished that we had had the training at the beginning of the school year” (Fawzia, Logs 3/18/08).

In her third interview, Fawzia reported that IO training helped her to see children from a different perspective. “I benefited a lot from the workshop. I used to be judgmental with children when I described them as good or excellent. Now I am describing what they are doing (” 3rd interview 3/30/08).
Hana was a creative and educated teacher. Shoug was an ambitious, shy young teacher. She was open to any new idea. The experience affected her so immensely that by the end of the study, she was no longer the silent teacher in the workshops. At the group session, she contributed, negotiated, and gave feedback more so than she had before and more than the other teachers.
First Theme: Teacher's Unprofessional Roles

The behaviors that were manifested in this case were intrusion at the wrong moment, watching instead of observing, waiting on the children until they finish a project, and acting police-like. These behaviors helped neither the child nor the teachers. An example from the researcher's participant observation of teacher's intrusion in child's play at the wrong time was when Shoug saw Ahmed building in the blocks center and so she brought the camera and asked him to stand next to his structure. She was not aware that she interrupted his creativity. The picture taking scenario took a long time because the children came to be in the “pose.” Ahmed got so excited that he did not continue his structure (From participant observation 3/18/08).

To avoid repetition, five of the teachers referred to observation, in the first interview, in the sense of “watching” except for Hana. But Hana and Shoug resumed the role of ‘waiters” perfectly, as if the children were banned from doing tasks and art work independently. “I used to sit in the art center waiting for a child to come. Now, I sit calmly and observe them working in the art center” (Shoug 3rd interview, 2/23/08). Fortunately, she was aware of this unprofessional role as well as Hana in the next example. Hana used to interact with children like a police-officer, “I have a different attitude now than I had before as a police-like teacher, watching that he (referring to Omar) does not misbehave” (Hana's 3rd interview, 2/2/08). The police-like role encouraged children to defy her strict scrutiny.
Second Theme: Teacher's Professional Roles

A look at the logs and other qualitative data sources revealed that Hana reported improvement in her relationship with her children: “Now I feel that I have become close to the children. Observation is fun for me” (Hana's 3rd interview, 3/22/08). After the IO training, Hana enjoyed the body language she had with the children, conveying the mutual trust she had with them. “Usually, Shoug sits in the art center and I am in the writing center. We just look at them to order them, “return the block,” “put this away. “We have never let them do whatever they liked to do. Today, what happened in the block area is different. When children wrecked the structure, I looked and laughed” (Hana's 3rd interview 3/22/08). Here Hana and Shoug signified their new role as delegators. They trusted the children and delegated tasks usually limited to the teachers in this school.

In her logs, Shoug described her experience after practicing observation on a daily basis. “I felt I am closer to my children, and I understand them more. I know their problems, and I can help them solve them more easily and flexibly” (Shoug's logs 3/18/08). She expressed the improvement in her relationship with the children, “My relationship with the children is much better now” (3rd interview, 3/23/08). Another professional role was to sit calmly in the class and avoid rushing children. “I told shoug, today we are calm so the children” (Hana's 3rd interview 3/22/08).
**Third Theme: Teacher's Stagnation**

All the categories and codes of stagnation theme were seen in Shoug's and Hana's reports. Only the code of failure does not apply to Hana's records. Shoug reported a sense of failure in an informal interview. “Every morning I come and I feel sick before I enter the classroom. There are problems in the class that I do not know how to resolve.”

The boredom is obvious in Hana's statement. “Lately, I started losing interest in ECE because of the nature of the work” (Hana’s 3rd interview, 3/22/08). Both teachers mentioned fatigue with the work in the kindergarten, “I feel tired today.” Fatigue was not reported as elaborately as in Rana's and Fawzia's reports which showed that they seemed to have chronic fatigue as a result of working with children, “All the time, I feel exhaustion and incompetence” (Rana's logs, 3/11/08).

Obligation was one of the recurring themes in the study because of the daily stress of the job. Hana and Shoug were the only teachers who did not mention pressure from obligations much. Hana had her own way of doing both her teaching and the necessary paperwork. She was relaxed and recorded her child observations on the lap-top once. Her colleague was also comfortable in the classroom and did not complain about work pressure as did teachers in the other classrooms. One of the annoying requirements for them as a part of their accountability in parent communication was filing the announcement papers that are sent to parents.
Fourth Theme: Teacher's Transformation

The transformation was pronounced in Hana's and Shoug's case. They expressed their transformation abundantly in their reports. The categorical codes of this theme which read: competence, self-confidence, and the awareness of their new perceptions and practices, were recurring immediately after the first workshop. Hana could not contain her excitement about the IO training and she quickly was ready to change her approaches to accommodate IO strategies:

The pro (of IO) is the enjoyment. The con is surrendering power. Now children do things without my permission. Sharing authority with the children in the classroom made them cooperative and active in helping in the classroom. A girl today brought out the paper cutters and aimlessly cut with them, I asked her, “Do you know these? They are paper cutters and you did not ask my permission, but, you know, I trust you are responsible and you will play with them and return them. I am usually constantly asking the children to clean up. I monitored her. She later not only returned them, but felt obliged to tell the children that if they were done with them to return them. She wanted to be up to her promise. I liked that she had the self-discipline without my pressure” (Hana’s 3rd interview, 3/22/08).

Hana was the only one who knew what observation meant even though she did not have previous training with it, as had Fawzia and Nora. During our first interview, she mentioned what I had written in my proposal about observation for the sake of observation. She explained her statement in the second interview, 3/11/ 2008:

If you observe for a goal, your observation is limited to the goal. When I introduce a concept and look to see the feasibility of it or if it is age-appropriate, I cannot notice everything I only notice what I put in mind.
But when I observe for the sake of observation, I notice things that I did not think about. I feel that the circle of the observation is enlarged, and I might notice something I did not pay attention to before. When I observe for the sake of observation, I might discover wider dimensions for a situation.

Shoug’s perception of children transformed, “I enjoyed them (the children). I felt that I perceive things in them that I have not seen before” (3rd interview, 3/23/08). She wrote, “What I heard in the workshop made me review all my practices and impressions about the children” (Shoug’s logs 3/15/08). Her transformation was manifested in her confidence of what she learned. “Believe me, I learned in this short time more than I learned in four years at the university… I want to tell you something. I pity those teachers who did not enroll in the study and those who did not participate” (logs 3/26/08). The transformation in her perception can be depicted in the next example. In her logs for March 15, 2008, immediately after the first workshop, she wrote, “I felt that I was closing my eyes and now I opened them to see a much more beautiful reality.”

Shoug identified herself with her children and added her name among the children’s to describe her transformation:

“Shoug, the classroom teacher”
Early in the study
- I was lost …
- I had queries with no answers
- I had good skills but without a base to embark and teach my children.
Later after the training program, I possess:
- An outstanding foundation and standards to embark (outstanding, I am not exaggerating), she wrote.
- An understanding of the behavioral management technique.
• The ability to help the children build positive identities.
• An understanding of the children’s psychological state.

By putting her name with that of the children she was reporting an evolution in her abilities as a teacher.
Case Three: Madawi & Nora

Madawi was an enthusiastic and fast learner. She had a passion for new trends. She was hard-working and loveable. Her children used to draw her with hearts and kisses. She loved teaching academics and hands-on equally. She had the ability to transform any topic into a legendary circle time with the children. Nevertheless, she had long circle times, more than the children could stand.

Nora was a new, hard-working teacher. She graduated recently and was employed two weeks before the beginning of the study. She was thirsty for knowledge and a desire to advance herself.
First Theme: Teacher's Unprofessional Roles

The unprofessional roles that were recurring, as coded in the data and were manifested in this case teachers' reports, were teachers as watchers and waiters. According to the fieldnotes, Madawi and Nora were not seen recording observation before the training although they said that they “observe all the time.” This implies that they were watching the children all the time. Unfortunately, their long circle time took away from center time and the remaining time was devoted to academics. Their collaboration was reflected in the children. The children acquired the style of the teachers. They all loved writing because their teacher Madawi, a previous first grade teacher, encouraged them to write. Amazingly, rarely did any child participate in the dramatic play center in Madawi’s and Nora's classroom. They all enjoyed writing and reading. The final report received via e-mail from the school coordinator indicated that Madawi and Nora were still struggling with Khalil and Saud, while Rana and Fawzia had a positive influence on their children—even Hamad. As a researcher a question occurred to me. Did the under-use of resources in the dramatic play center lead to the slow progress of Khalil and Saud? All children may have been helped by active play in the dramatic play center, especially certain children like Khalil and Saud. Madawi used to perform a very long circle time; the children sometimes sat for one hour. Center time was significantly short in a way that might prevent the children from involvement in sophisticated play in the dramatic play area. Did this have anything to do with the children’s self-expression?
Second Theme: Teacher’s Professional Roles

All of the categorical themes of connectedness, mutual trust, observer and relaxer were enjoyed by Madawi and Nora. This dyad was happily paired as colleagues. Their relationships with their children were exceptional from the beginning. Nevertheless, they reported a unique sense of connectedness after applying IO strategies, “I noticed that I built a relationship with those children and I loved them even more than before” (Madawi’s 3rd interview, 3/24/08). The mutual trust was reflected in the child observation records of the two teachers. They were conveying massages of trust while they were observing the children. Madawi recorded how she was smiling to Khalil as a way of approving his deeds when he saw her observing him. Nora expressed emphatically her new role as an observer connecting to the children, “I applied all the observation techniques. I benefited a lot especially because I am a new teacher. I am closer to the children, and that's what made me observe more” (Nora's logs, p.9, no date). I saw Nora as a relaxer during my participant observation. She said “Now I am calm while I observe the children… I felt connected with the child I observed” (Nora's 3rd interview, 3/22/08).

Third Theme: Teacher's Stagnation

Madawi was considered one of the best teachers in the kindergarten. Mothers wanted their children with her and put children on a waiting list for her classroom. This led to fatigue, stress, and exhaustion for Madawi, who wrote in her logs a few times before the training that despite this, she was satisfied with her achievements. “I had a sense of achievement today when I saw the children happy with their projects” (Madawi's logs, 3/11/08). Nora had recently graduated and began to work just two weeks before the
study, so she had not yet experienced “chronic” stagnation. Further, she was lucky to be with Madawi, the veteran teacher. Nevertheless, she expressed her annoyance with the daily pressures of the requirements.

Both teachers were sad and frustrated because they felt unable to help Sami. Sami was not from the participant children. He suddenly was in selective mutism (choosing silence because of a shock or negative experience) because of the death of his younger brother. “I felt sad and I wanted to revive the soul of little Sami… I wish I could find a way for the sad Sami to express himself” (Madawi's logs, 4/1/08). Nora felt a sense of failure towards Sami's ordeal. "I felt frustrated because I could not help Sami" (Nora’s logs, p. 6, no date).

**Fourth Theme: Teacher's Transformation**

Madawi expressed her awareness of change in perception and practices, “I feel more professional now. I know the children better, all my children not just those in the study… I started observing myself and how and where I spend my time” (Madawi, 3rd interview, 3/24/08). Madawi was always confident and competent of her achievement and the training added to these feelings, “I felt a sense of competence after attending the first day of training” (Madawi's logs, 3/15/08). In the 3rd interview she said, “The training made me feel a sense of accomplishment. Being preoccupied by the daily routine took me from searching for new resources...but the things I learned in the training are totally new” (Madawi, 3rd interview, 3/24/08).

Nora expressed her sense of transformation in her logs “I became more aware of my role. We learned new strategies. It was an honor knowing and working with someone
like you; this experience had lighted my way” (Nora’s logs, p.12, no date). She expressed the reflection of the training on her self-image and confidence. “I have a lot of confidence… Now I really feel special” (Nora’s logs, p.8 no date).

The Confidante

Her contributions made the researcher’s mission easier. She was a positive, organized, and intelligent person. In addition to being an educated young woman with an ECE bachelor's degree and the mother of very young children, she had a passion for learning. She was not a participant, but she wrote her logs, observations of her children, drew her logo and sketches.

Confidante's Transformation

Her role as a supervisor improved dramatically. Her relationship with the teachers she supervised entered a new era:

My encounter with the researcher was a life opportunity. Every single word in the training opened doors for me. I am now closer to my employees. I discovered new positive sides in their personalities. Now I have learned to acknowledge their efforts. I became closer to my son and daughter (I am now the #1 person in my children’s lives). I learned to treat people as honest and not to be suspicious of others. In two months I learned what I would have taken a lifetime to learn (Naima's logs, 4/26/08).
Transformation's thematic categories, such as awareness of perception, and practices were manifested in her logs, “I feel it is (the training) my life style now and I can’t live without it. I want to use it with adults around me, too” (Naima logs 4/26/08).

On 3/25/08, she wrote:

I think it—contents of the workshops—was mentioned in the textbooks, but frankly speaking, I don’t remember anything we learned in the university. The contents of the textbook are not what you work with in the field. Even the practicum doesn't serve you when you are the teacher. 70% of the practicum is not used when you work. The most important thing is the experience and the quality of supervision and the resource of planning and implementing a chosen topic or theme. When I first graduated, I wept because I did not know what to do as a supervisor with the university students.
Cross Sub-Case Analysis of Teachers' Reactions to Intentional Observation

In this section, through comparison of the individual teacher's responses to questions or concepts, there were similarities and differences among the six teachers. Their perspectives about the challenges and privileges they encountered in applying IO strategies from their point-of-view were compared. Table 4.3 offers a comparison of the teachers' reactions to four other questions. The comparison included sharing their tangible observational experiences with specific children they felt they had accomplished some kind of advancement with them. In the last row of Table 4.3, there is an obvious link between number of pages recorded by each teacher using IO recording strategies, as well as type of recording (whether running records or anecdotal notes) and the quality of IO implementation.

Next are the responses of the six teachers to a question posed in the third interview. It was a question about what the pros and cons of IO are? Fawzia and Rana seemed to be fatigued and drained due to Hamad’s situation. Hamad was the child who always interrupted and spoiled other children’s work. “Our class is full of children with problems,” Rana said. “They should not have all children with difficult problems in one classroom” (Fawzia’s informal interview). Fawzia answered the previous question as follows:

IO has a lot of advantages. Among these advantages is that the teacher is able to follow the children and observe whether what she is introducing to the children is suitable to them or not. The negative side of observation is that it takes away time from the teacher. IO is nice when the teacher is
done with her paperwork. She enjoys observation then, but it's hard when she has a lot of work” (Fawzia, 3rd interview, 3/30/08).

Her colleague Rana was the counter-example of the participants. In the third interview she responded to the question about the pros and cons of IO:

I think teachers vary in their opinions. They might say that its advantages are more than its disadvantages and they did not yet find out the disadvantages. The disadvantages of observing—because I have to record everything and I have other jobs—are that it takes me away from paying attention to the children. So it takes from my time and causes pressure on me. Yesterday I wrote and wrote (anecdotally) and I was late for my prayer.

Researcher: “It became a burden.”

Rana: “Not a burden but it became a source of tension to me and a pressure” (3rd interview 3/30/08).

On the other hand, the other classroom teachers could not contain their excitement about the IO training, and they were ready to change to accommodate IO. Hana said:

The pro is the enjoyment. The con is surrendering power. Now children do things without my permission. Sharing authority with the children in the classroom made them cooperative and active in helping in the classroom (Hana’s 3rd interview, 3/22/08).

Shough’s response was similar to that of her colleague Hana. But Shough had a concern:

Shoug: “Right now there are not cons but I wonder if later, in the future, I wonder, whether I will be able to observe 30 children in the two sections” (3rd interview, 3/23/08).
Madawi had discovered one difficulty and she had a solution for it:

Madawi: “No bad sides of observation. The only limitation is time because I have a lot of administrative requirements. And when it starts at the beginning of the school year, it will not be difficult” (3rd interview, 3/24/08).

Nora’s response was similar to that of her colleague Madawi. Nora said, “Nothing can be an obstacle for me to practice it. But sometimes the pressures of work makes IO difficult to apply” (3rd interview, 3/22/08).

In table 4.3 there were similarities in teachers' responses in the third interview with the exception of teacher Rana. As the table reads, there was resistance from Rana's side to accommodate observation in her repertoire. The table demonstrates advancement in awareness with the six teachers with reservation form Rana to apply the IO strategies. Looking at the last row of the table provides possible interpretation to Rana's attitude towards utilizing IO strategies. Rana recorded only seven pages of observation compared to the others. She only used the anecdotal notes and not the running records (refer to Appendix A for definitions). With intentional observation it is advised to utilize running records as much as possible. Her absence for eight days might have affected her records, too. But Nora was absent for four days too and recorded less than her colleague Madawi, but she had always cared to record in the form of running records. There was a pattern of Rana's resistance to adapt IO throughout the interview as discussed in the analysis. Therefore, she was considered the counter-example of the study. “I have now less enthusiasm than right after the workshop. We have a lot of children with disruptive behaviors which makes application harder. Also, my jobs take most of my time. I do not
like to start something and not be able to do it well” (Rana's 3rd interview, 3/24/08). Her ability to manage tasks simultaneously (as all ECE teachers are expected to) did not develop. Among the morning group, Rana had Hamad who was energy-draining. But Madawi's and Nora's class had two children with disruptive behaviors in addition to a special-needs child.
### Table 4.3. Teachers’ Reaction to Intentional Observation Training in the 3rd Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Fawzia</th>
<th>Rana</th>
<th>Hana</th>
<th>Shoug</th>
<th>Madawi</th>
<th>Nora</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your reaction to the three observation workshops?</td>
<td>“I try to avoid being positively judgmental and say, excellent, good. Now I describe behavior”… “With observation I learned when to intervene if children have conflict.”</td>
<td>“Observation helped me in how to praise the children through positive reinforcement… I feel the class will be disruptive when I observe. I feel I can not write every thing I see” For me it takes from my work time.”</td>
<td>“After the few times I have observed, I felt that there was a curtain in front of me that is removed from my sight and I can see the children clearly.”</td>
<td>“I used to think I am close to the children, but I was not. Now I see things differently.”</td>
<td>“It made me feel a sense of accomplishment. I do go on line searching for new early childhood sites, but the things I learned in the first workshops are very new.”</td>
<td>“I benefited a lot and started applying practices. I saw good results just from few applications.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you think and feel about the training with respect to changing your observational practices?</td>
<td>“I benefited a lot from IO in managing the classroom.”</td>
<td>“I have now less enthusiasm than right after the workshop. We have a lot of children with disruptive behaviors which makes application harder. Also my jobs take most of my time. I do not like to start something and not be able to do it well.”</td>
<td>“The training did not just affect me, but it totally changed (in the sense of transformed) my practices.”</td>
<td>“My interaction with the children changed. Now they solve their problems and I am observing calmly.”… “This is a huge leap (transformation) for me.”</td>
<td>“Yes, it did influence me. I noticed that I built a relationship with those children and I love them even more than before… I started observing myself and how and where I spend my time.”</td>
<td>“I started to change some of my practices. I feel we learned more than we learned in the practicum.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Fawzia</td>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Shoug</td>
<td>Madawi</td>
<td>Nora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“10?”</strong></td>
<td>“Intentional observation helped me in dealing with children. Now I organize my notes before handling any problem with a child. Now I am a better problem solver.”</td>
<td>I did not really feel yet, that <em>I am closer to the world of the children as I am observing.</em></td>
<td>“Lately, I started losing interest in ECE because of the nature of the work. Now I am regaining my feelings as an ECE teacher.”</td>
<td>“I became closer to the children and more relaxed.” “I discovered a new world with observation. I consider myself not living before.”</td>
<td>“It trained me how to be ready to do observation at the beginning of the school year. I will apply it even if the administration did not require us to do it.”</td>
<td>“I felt that with intentional observation, I started noticing things in children that I have never noticed before.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How observation helped you understand a child?</strong></td>
<td>“As I was observing Layan, I noticed that she didn't settle on a task, but I noticed that she is intelligent and creative to the extent that sometimes a regular child won't be able to do what she does.”</td>
<td>“After Observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom.”</td>
<td>“I used to think of Omar only as a hyperactive child…I have different attitude toward him now than my attitude before as a police-like teacher, watching that he does not misbehave.”</td>
<td>“I knew Omar was trying to be involved in classroom activities but observation helped me to be close to Omar.”</td>
<td>“After observing Khalil, I felt closer to him and loved him more. I noticed that he is a worrier more than I expected. He bit his nails” My experience with Khalil made me like to observe all children.”</td>
<td>“Ali became closer to me than the other children after I observed him for full day for the first time and I recorded. But with Khalil, I did not feel as close. <em>It might be because I did not record my observations.</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pages of Child-observation</strong></td>
<td>13 pages of running records and anecdotal notes in 3 weeks</td>
<td>7 pages of anecdotal notes in three weeks</td>
<td>24 pages of running records and anecdotal notes in 3 weeks</td>
<td>16 pages of running records in 3 weeks</td>
<td>44 pages of running records in 3 weeks</td>
<td>16 pages of running records in 3 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nora's response to the last question, “How observation helped you understand a child?” was that she did not feel connection to Khalil because she did not record. “Ali became closer to me than the other children after I observed him for full day for the first time and I recorded. But with Khalil I did not feel as close. *It might be because I did not record my observations.*” Her interpretation is very insightful. This awareness form a novice teacher is very valuable to the studies of child-observation. Observation without recording is *watching*. It cannot be considered intentional observation.

Hana confessed that she was judgmental with Omar and thought he was a hyperactive child. Shoug started observing him before Hana and realized this child’s potential. She had a positive attitude toward him and proved everyone wrong. When a teacher handles the situation using IO, she becomes more accepting and nonjudgmental and close to the child. This supports the study and suggests that without IO, the teachers see the child through their former filters.

After observing Hamad, Fawzia reported that she felt connected to him and that he was advancing. In the same period, her colleague Rana reported disappointment with his progress. This was due to the fact that the initial observer (here, Fawzia) usually became more accepting. Later in the study, when Rana managed to observe Hamad for a full day observation her attitude changed. She could see him transparently: “After observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom” (3rd interview, 3/30/08).

This pattern of conflicting attitudes was manifested in Madawi’s and Nora’s impression of Rasha after they applied observation techniques. Nora felt more connected
and appreciative of Rasha than did Madawi. Returning to the child observation notebooks, the teacher who had observed Rasha was Nora. Maddawi had no chance to observe Rasha. This explains why Nora highly and proudly expressed happiness with Rasha’s advancement, while her dyad partner Madawi considered her advancement to be only acceptable. In the first days of applying IO strategies, Madawi’s child-observation notebook was mostly devoted to Khalil because she sincerely wanted to help him with chronic stress.

Hana and Shoug spoke about the improvement of the selected children in the same way. Returning to the child observation notebooks, all had observed their five children. As mentioned before, one IO made a difference. Hana had observed Omar just once. This IO was enough to change her previous attitude toward him and led her to say about Omar, “I am proud of his advancement.” This pattern of conflicting attitudes suggests that if the teacher intentionally observes she becomes less judgmental and more accepting and more connected to the observed child.
Summary

In this chapter findings were presented and discussion offered on the generated themes in and across the three case studies of teachers' dyads. Patterns relating to categories and themes in the teachers' data suggested teachers' perceptions of improvements on their professional roles and perceptions of best classroom practices. The teachers exhibited positive attitudes towards the utilization of IO strategies in their classrooms with the exception of Rana, who resisted this type of practice although she admitted that it helped her to accept the children more readily.

The second part of the chapter contained a discussion of the analysis across the six sub-cases of each individual teacher and included a comparison of responses to and feedback concerning IO and its privileges or the challenges of utilizing it in the classroom. The comparison revealed significant findings that are worth considering when applying IO training in the future.
CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS REGARDING CHANGE IN TEACHERS DUE TO
INTENTIONAL OBSERVATION TRAINING

This chapter presents findings from additional analyses of the multiple-case study. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the change that took place during the study. The focus is on four themes that surfaced during the data review. The data sources, whether they were interviews, logs, child observation records, or fieldnotes of the participant observation, provided signs of change that occurred after the training. Teachers had practices, attitudes, and roles that were transformed—as they expressed—after they had been exposed to the intentional observation training. This chapter attempts to discriminate between the two situations, before and after the IO training.

Table 5.1 demonstrates the four themes of the change that took place after the application of IO training. These themes are interrelated to the themes discussed in the fourth chapter but are from a different perspective. The discussion following Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 describes the change in form of a comparison of the situations regarding the change themes before and after IO training. The discussion is supported with statements from the data sources. During analysis, the themes that emerged from the data were organized in two tables: a table of the themes that were related to the period before introducing IO training, and another for the themes that were related to the period after
IO training. I grouped the themes around the contingent ideas and came up with Table 5.1. The grouped themes are as follows: Student independence, acceptance of children, attitude towards profession, and lack of social/emotional support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Change in Teacher's Behavior</th>
<th>Elicited Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shoug observes the children work in art center independently</td>
<td>Teachers’ recognition of children’s ability to work independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana waits before intervening to solve children's problems</td>
<td>Teachers’ acceptance of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana trusts children to clean up after working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana reported improved relationships with children</td>
<td>Attitude towards the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoug felt enthusiasm for teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madawi recognized that what she was doing did not work</td>
<td>Teachers' recognition of the lack of social/emotional support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 provides examples from each teacher's reports or from fieldnotes that demonstrate the change that occurred in connection to these main change themes. In looking at Table 5.2, Fawzia's behavior was influenced by the theme that surfaced in the classroom, one in which Fawzia was positive that children were able to work independently. As a result of the training, Fawzia was certain that children could work independently and so she included intentional observation in her daily activities. This is shown in Table 5.2.
### Table 5.2
Change Themes Substantiated with Examples from each Teacher's Reports or Fieldnotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Children's Independence</th>
<th>Teachers' Acceptance of Children</th>
<th>Teachers' Attitude Towards the Profession</th>
<th>Recognition of the Lack of Social/Emotional Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fawzia</td>
<td>“When Rana was absent, I managed to observe while the children were working quietly.” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
<td>“Through observation, I felt sympathy towards Dalal because the children were not aware of her presence.” 3rd interview, 3/30/08</td>
<td>“I am enthusiastic to apply what I learned in the workshops.” 3rd interview, 3/30/08</td>
<td>Fawzia corroborated Madawi statement when she suggested during the reflective group meeting that they needed to learn how to solve children's problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>She provided containers for the children included erasers and date stamp so they could work independently. Participant observation. 3/18/08</td>
<td>“After observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom.” 3rd interview, 3/30/08</td>
<td>“The workshops made me concentrate more on observing children… I was enthusiastic to observe after the first workshop, but now I feel that when I observe the classroom will become disruptive.” 3rd interview 3/30/08</td>
<td>“What should we do about behavioral problems? Now when we observe we see things and wonder which practice we should apply, when to intervene?” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Hana managed to record her observation on her laptop while the children worked independently. Fieldnotes, 3/11/08</td>
<td>“I used to think of Omar as only a hyperactive child… Now we sit together and start a conversation.” Hana, 3rd interview 3/22/08</td>
<td>“I enjoyed observing for the sake of observation, without filters and judgment.”3rd interview 3/22/08</td>
<td>“We learned what children needed through observation. Sometimes we do not know how to help them.” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Children's Independence</td>
<td>Teachers' Acceptance of Children</td>
<td>Teachers' Attitude towards the Profession</td>
<td>Recognition of the lack of Social/Emotional Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoug</td>
<td>“I noticed that observation taught the children how to handle their problems on their own during their play in the centers and they became more responsible without a teacher's interference.” Logs, 3/16/08</td>
<td>“I used to think I am close to them, but now I have discovered that I was not. Now it is much better. I see things differently.” 3rd interview, 3/23/08</td>
<td>“The day I fail to observe, I feel bad and I do not enjoy my day, but the day I observe, I feel happy.” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
<td>“In the future, will I be able to observe 30 children in two sections?” 3rd interview, 3/23/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madawi</td>
<td>“Now, I enjoy observing children managing their own behaviors.” 3rd interview, 3/24/08</td>
<td>“IO influenced me. I noticed that I have built a relationship with those children and I love them even more than before.” 3rd interview, 3/24/08</td>
<td>“I started observing myself and how and where I spend my time.” 3rd interview, 3/24/08</td>
<td>“Sometimes I observe a child, and there comes another child interacting with him. And they get into trouble. Sometimes I don't know what to do. Should I intervene or just wait for them to resolve their conflicts?” Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>“I benefited from observation to make things accessible to children in the classroom.” Logs, p. 8, no date</td>
<td>“Observation helped me to understand each child.” 3rd interview, 3/24/08</td>
<td>“Now when we observe, it is our decision not yours.” (to the researcher). Reflective group session, 4/5/08</td>
<td>“I felt frustrated because I could not help Sami.” Logs, p. 6, no date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at Table 5.2 at the example of Rana under the theme of “teachers’ acceptance of children,” the reader notices that IO strategies accelerated Rana's acceptance of Hamad and his disruptive behavior because observation made her see him from a different perspective. “After observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom” (Rana's 3rd interview, 3/30/08). Another example from the previous table is the example of Nora under the theme of “attitude towards the profession.” This refers to the attitude towards teaching and classroom practices in general, such as the attitude toward observation. Their enthusiasm for observation energized their willingness to be creative in teaching. Nora's enthusiastic attitude towards practicing observation made her assert that it was not the decision of the researcher to prompt the teachers to observe when she used to greet them in the morning, but that it was the teacher's choice to observe. “Now when we observe, it is our decision not yours” (To the researcher). Nora, reflective group session, 4/5/08

This chapter is devoted to describing the change that resulted after the IO training. The discussion that follows will describe some examples of the situation in the three classrooms before and after the training. The focus of the discussion is on the four aforementioned change themes.
Discussion

First Change Theme: Student Independence

Situation Before IO Training

The teachers performed multiple tasks inside the classrooms. Inadvertently, they did their share of tasks and their children’s share, too. One of the goals of the school experience is to take opportunities to assign roles to children so that they become independent individuals. Unfortunately, at the beginning of the study, the children in the three classrooms were recipients of teachers’ services. It was a dependency relationship. The absence of the service providers might render the recipients unable to attempt any form of problem solving, or this might create chaos in the classroom. Two examples of this dependency relationship come from fieldnotes, 3/5/08, “After circle time, Nora distributed the notebook. Madawi and Nora sat with the children to work one-on-one to complete the activity sheets. Each teacher held an eraser in her hand to erase children’s mistakes.” No one can deny that children in general are able to pick up their notebooks from their individual cabinets —there was an individual cabinet for each child as visible in the pictures in the fourth chapter— and are able to hold an eraser to erase what they think they have done wrong, too.

Another example of this dependency relationship was noticed during lunch time. “Rana distributes the previously prepared meal, while the children are sitting on the chairs” (Participant observation, 3/12/08). The children were totally dependent on teachers during the serving of meals. Unfortunately, teachers think that children “would
make a mess.” That was what Fawzia once said to me describing Layan when she was trying to water a plant in the science center. It was something positive that they allowed children to water the plant, though. Children make messes, but they are willing to clean up and this is a learning experience for them. In this case, observation of such incidents would inform the practices and would make the teacher include in her plans the water sink and activities related to pouring liquids.

Situation After IO Training

After IO training, teachers were astonished to see children as independent individuals in handling what confront them in the classroom especially when teachers gave them space to function independently. Shoug expressed proudly, a change in her attitude towards children’s dispositions, “When things go wrong, they fix it right away. I was worried that they will take a long time in adapting to this, but the teachers are being relaxed and giving the children chances to resolve their problems” (Shoug 3rd interview 3/23). In retrospect, Shoug reported self-criticism of her previous role as a “waiter” on children to finish their assigned work, “I used to sit in the art center waiting for a child to come. Now, I sit calmly and observe them working in the art center” (Shoug 3rd interview 2/23). The training stressed that teachers should provide the children with whatever they notice in the observation that the children might be able to achieve independently. I noticed that Rana and Fawzia provided the children with containers which included what they needed to do their tasks independently, such as erasers and a date stamp. The other classrooms were encouraged to do the same.
The six teachers in the interviews and some in the logs described themselves as being relaxed. “I am more relaxed than before” (Madawi, logs, 3/28/08). Shoug once described observing children as if she were observing *bees in a hive*. She probably meant that when bees are busy, the queen has time to relax. That was the reason for the teachers to repeat the expression of relaxing throughout the data sources that followed the training.

**Second Change Theme: Acceptance of Children**

*Situation Before IO Training*

Some Saudi teachers have a hard time understanding the relationship between love and acceptance. Acceptance is an integral part of love. The children need to feel loved and accepted all the time. The teachers say they love the children, but, inadvertently, they give them negative responses that might make the child feel unaccepted. Sometimes they focus on the child’s negative behaviors and oversee the moments he/she exhibited positive, promising behaviors. An example on this misunderstanding can be seen when Rana reported describing her feelings towards Dalal, “I feel empathy for her. It is hard for her to stand up for herself in some situations. She finds difficulties in expressing herself. She is really attached to me” (Rana 2nd interview, 3/12/08). In the participant observation, I recorded that Rana repeatedly reminded Dalal to stand up for herself, Rana told Dalal: “Be strong and do not let her kick you out of the dramatic play center” (Fieldnotes, 3/8/08). Rana implied that she could not accept Dalal unless she was able to stand up for herself. Dalal could be empowered positively.

Hana was apathetic with Omar. Her expectation of him to become more involved in classroom activities made her judgmental toward Omar. She assumed that he was a
hyperactive child. “I used to think of Omar only as a hyperactive child. I never captured any creativity like artistic abilities or playing or even language skills” (Hana's 3rd interview, 3/22/08). Improving relationships requires the teachers to connect to the children and to be able to sense their needs and feelings. Nora used to feel frustrated with Saud's repeated use of death words such as “I will die, I will cut, and I am going to kill/slaughter. She could have conveyed massages of acceptance to him so he would not feel the need to attract attention with death words.

Situation After IO Training

At the beginning, Rana—as a counter-example—applied intentional observation reluctantly. It was hard for her to capture the revealing moments in her relationship with her children. The full-time observation in which she managed to observe Hamad made a difference. “After observing Hamad, I sympathized with him. I discovered that he is a weak-willed child although he disrupts in the classroom” (Rana, 3rd interview, 3/30/08).

Hana criticized her previous behavior during clean-up-time, “I used to force children during clean up to clean and they do not clean sometimes” (Hana 3rd interview 3/22). She spoke about the change in her attitude toward the children and how she began to inspire them positively (making them responsible for cleaning). On another occasion, Hana said to a girl who was using an art tool, “I trust you are responsible… Later on she not only returned the cutters but felt obliged to tell the children that if they were done with them to return them” (Hana 3rd interview 3/22). After observing Omar, Hana felt the connection to him and started noticing abilities in him that she did not notice before. “I
have different attitude toward him now than my attitude before” (Hana 3rd interview 3/22). This was the attitude of acceptance that Omar felt from his teacher Hana.

**Third Change theme: Attitude towards the Profession**

*Situation Before IO Training*

The positive attitude towards their profession as teachers sank under the huge sense of stagnation as discussed in Chapter four. Hana said, “Lately, I started losing interest in ECE because of the nature of the work” (3rd interview, 3/22/08). Hana shared this attitude of boredom with the other teachers.

In the fieldnotes, there were patterns of a sense of despair among the teachers towards their profession. Meal time was a disaster to Rana. The children were always out of control during this time. “Six children left their chairs and started running in the middle of the meal hall while the others looked at them smiling. Rana called upon them to sit down. They continued running. Rana’s face was red and she looked very sad. When I hugged her, she cried on my shoulder” (Fieldnotes, 3/12/08). Actually, she felt depressed. She wrote in her log, 3/8/08, “I felt distressed because I can not resolve the aggressiveness of the children.” She expressed her happiness with Wednesdays because they marked the end of the week in Saudi Arabia. Once she wrote that she was sick and was absent and she added, “Besides being sick, I needed to rest, and rest my nerves, too.”

Her colleague Fawzia expressed the extent to which her well-being in school impacted her temperament at home, “I return home feeling angry like a child ready to explode for trivial reasons” (Fawzia’s logs, 3/11/08).
**Situation After IO Training**

The change theme of the attitude towards the profession was manifested with Shoug. She was a young teacher who was enthusiastic about advancing her practices. From the first day of IO training, she talked about how desperate she was for new methods to help her deal with the children. She realized that the training was the salvation she needed:

I discovered a new world; believe me I can put all my experience in teaching in one hand and what I learned today on the other hand. I felt that I was closing my eyes and now I opened them to see a much more beautiful reality. I'm not making this up, your (referring to the researcher) speech made me review all my beliefs and remember all my behaviors and all of my observation with the children. I have always thought that I am caring with my children, but I discovered that if I apply what you taught us, I am sure, with God's will, I will succeed in having very good relationship with my children (shoug's logs, 3/15/08).

Nora described her previous utilization of observation, “I observe because they might have a behavioral problem” (Nora 1st interview 3/5/08). Now, for her, observation has become an essential part of her daily practices, “From the beginning, I can see results of observation” (Nora 3rd interview 3/5/08). Rana, as a counter-example, showed her reservation to applying IO strategies. “I was enthusiastic to observe after the first workshop, but now I feel that when I observe the classroom will become disruptive” (3rd interview 3/30/08). She had a hard time separating her roles one as an observer and the other as a teacher with authority.

The training appeared to revive their spirit and interest in their profession. “Although I am exhausted today after a full school day, I see myself in the peak of
enthusiasm and energy before and after the workshop” (Shoug's logs, 3/16/08). This attitude was echoed in Hana's logs from 3/15/08, “During the first workshop I felt enthusiastic to the topic of the training and realized its significance to my profession.” Madawi wrote a short page in her logs after the first day of training “What a beautiful day. I had a sense of accomplishment out of my attendance to the first workshop about observation” (Madawi's logs, 3/15/08).

**Fourth Change Theme: Lack of Social/Emotional Support**

*Situation Before IO Training*

The six teachers expressed their perplexity towards the appropriate support and management style they should use with the participant children. In the second interview, and as a way to get them to speak about the daily events in the school, I had the teachers talk about the sketches they had drawn for each participant child as a part of the non-traditional assessments NTA. Fawzia described Layan's behavior, “During meal time she hides in the cabinet, and during circle time she always lies down on her back” (2nd interview, 3/11/08) Fawzia drew Layan hiding in a cabinet during meal time. In her logs, Fawzia expressed despair in relation to children's behaviors, “I feel frustrated because children’s behavioral problems are taking most of my time.” Her logs often had some details of being over-worked or showing role-strain. She wrote, “The load is more than an individual could endure” (Fawzia’s logs, 3/11/08). She added describing the huge load on the teachers, “Everyone expects you to be giving like the sun.”

Rana was hard-working to the point of draining herself. A glance at her feedback in the interviews and logs revealed that she was a perfectionist. She wanted everything to go as planned. “When I observe, I do not see who left or entered a working centers” (3rd
interview 3/30/08). She also repeated the word “discipline” more than any other teacher. She could not tolerate children who acted inappropriately. Although she worked hard, she felt that her efforts were in vain. One time, Bana, a girl from the other group, made her cry because, “I could not protect the children from Bana’s aggressive behaviors”. Meal time was the worst time for her, as she expressed in her logs, 3/10/08, “I feel anxious throughout meal time”. She had to discipline the children when they ate a previously prepared meal that they did not like. She stood up to monitor them. I came to her once and she said, “All my concern is that they might hurt each other.” She handled the situation as if everyone were in a battlefield. They actually were in a battle-like situation, because she treated them accordingly. In her logs, she mentioned crying three times and experiencing anxiety nine times. Unfortunately, she found it difficult to apply the OI strategies, although she enjoyed the training. Her problem was that “observation takes away from teachers’ time and they have more “important tasks.” Rana graduated from a community college, all of which teach strict programs for the children. This might be the reason for her resistance to change at the beginning although her current approaches were not working for her.

It was obvious that the Fawzia and Rana were stuck with behavioral problems. In the second interview they expressed their concern and hoped to learn something that would help them support Rayan, Hamad, and Dalal socially and emotionally. Looking at the sketch she drew for Rayan, Fawzia said, “Rayan always works alone. I wish once he would come to me and show me his work” (Fawzia's 2nd interview, 3/11/08). Rana classified Dalal's and Hamad's situation as urgent for her because they needed support. “I want to start with them because they have communication problems” (2nd interview,
The other four teachers were not annoyed by behavioral problems as much as they cared to support the children who had social adjustment problems. During the second interview with Hana, and while looking at the sketch she drew for Yara, Hana said, “Every day, I feel that Yara is more attached to me than the day before. When she plays with dolls, she says, 'this is me and this is you teacher.' It is nice but I feel it is not a healthy attachment” (2nd interview, 3/11/08).

Situation After IO Training

After applying the IO strategies, the first feedback the teachers gave was that they felt relaxed while observing. The behavioral problems in the classrooms minimized to some extent. Hana described their new situation in their classroom, “I told Shoug we are calm and so the children” (3rd interview, 3/22/08). Madawi reported, “I noticed that I built a better relationship with the children after I started observing them…I discovered new things in children although I had been with them since the beginning of the year” (3rd interview, 3/24/08). There were patterns in the data in that all the teachers felt closer to each child they had observed including Rana the counter-example especially after she performed a full day intentional observation of Hamad.

Teachers were excited with what intentional observation contributed to their situation in the classroom. As time passed, they felt that something was missing, as Madawi reported: “Sometimes I observe a child, and there comes another child interacting with him. And they get into trouble. Sometimes I don't know what to do. Should I intervene or just wait for them to resolve their conflicts?” (Reflective group session, 4/5/08). The six teachers, collectively, corroborate Madawi’s sense of the lack of
social/emotional support. “Now, when we observe, we see things and we do not know which practices should we use and when to intervene” (Rana, reflective group session, 4/5/08).

**Summary**

The generated findings from analyzing the data sources from the six teachers were corroborated by the patterns that were explicit in the teachers' feedback. Even teacher Rana, the counter-example, showed a few worth-consideration signs of change. The change themes discussed in this chapter were as follows: *Student independence*, *acceptance of children*, *attitude towards profession*, and *lack of social/emotional support*.

The teachers enthusiastically reported the change they began to notice in themselves and in their children. The teachers' experiences throughout the nine weeks of applying IO strategies influenced them, and they evolved and began to see the children from different perspectives. The changes in the teachers’ attitudes affected their practices. Consequently, the change in teachers’ attitudes and practices caused the children’s behaviors to be more responsive to their teachers’.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

The final chapter summarizes the study; highlighting and discussing the main findings is followed by comments on the strengths, limitations and implications of the research.

Summary

Chapter one introduced the study and stated the problem. I established a background rationale for the study, the purpose of the study, the study questions, followed by a statement of the importance of the study. In chapter two, I reviewed the literature pertinent to the study’s topics. The information in this chapter highlights the issues of quality in ECE, teacher training, and observation approaches and their significance in ECE. Chapter three described in some detail the methods and procedures I used in the study. Here also, is an account of the design and the complexity of this multiple-case study.

Findings were discussed in chapters four and five. Chapter four presented information about findings of each of the three dyads, covering the data provided from interviews with each of the six teachers, logs, fieldnotes and other data sources, followed by the presentation of findings organized and presented in a cross sub-case analysis. The
analysis in the fifth chapter summarizes the change that took place upon application of IO training in four major change theme areas.

The analyses in chapters four and five suggest findings that might be relevant to research on early childhood education. First, participants found that IO training provided strategies that effectively and positively influence teachers' feelings toward the observed children, whether they were disruptive children or compliant children.

The second finding that was corroborated by the patterns in teachers' reports was that IO helped teachers focus, relax and gain the needed tranquility to be sensitive to children's feedback, behaviors, body language and needs. Third, the analysis suggested that failing to take notes or otherwise record during observations reduced the positive outcomes and lessened improvements in relationships between teacher and children. Further, utilizing running records (recording simultaneously while observing) improves the quality and outcomes of observation in relation to improving the teacher-child relationship.

The fourth finding was that excessive administrative demands drain teachers' energy and deter them from their main role, which is to support children's social, cognitive and emotional development. The fifth finding, as suggested by the teachers' feedback, was that IO training supports Saudi teachers' sense of efficacy and revives their spirit for teaching and for utilizing effective strategies to boost their profession. The teachers expressed frustration with their lack of skills in supporting children socially and emotionally. As the examples in the analysis suggested, teachers' acquired roles after training contributed to minimizing classroom conflicts and dependency on teachers, but
more skills are needed to handle children's conflict and to support those children who fail in their aspiration to express themselves.

**Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers’ observational practices and the teachers’ perspectives on possible gains and challenges of applying new observational strategies through on-site training program. A case study research approach was used and multiple cases involving six teacher and 15 children were done to cover the density of this study. The central findings of this study support my argument that intentional observation can pave the road to teachers’ having more positive and effective relationships with young children. Although the teachers had multiple classroom and administrative tasks, they persisted in applying IO strategies willingly. The final feedback from the teachers was consistent with the study’s main findings, which were compatible with the notion that teachers can work autonomously to develop a good relationship with the child, utilizing IO strategies. In ECE, when teachers are convinced about the effectiveness of a specific practice, they make it priority to continue doing so. Five of the teachers committed to including IO strategies in their daily practice. “I will apply it even if the administration did not require us to do it,” said Madawi (Reflective group session). Madawi’s enthusiasm about applying IO strategies echoes Plato’s statement, “The purpose of education is to make individuals want to do what he has to do.”

The findings of the study relate to the study’s questions:

*Question One:* How do Saudi teachers observe and then describe their own observational practices to communicate their perception of observation? How do they
think about their existing observational practices? How can they improve the observational skills and the knowledge of observation of young children?

**Assertion One:** In this school, teachers referred to observation as “watching” the children. They were not trained in observational skills. If they would observe, they followed the procedures to fill out forms when the child has a behavioral problem. One teacher had an experience with observation, but she thought it was a procedure needed only to get her degree. She never comprehended the experience thoroughly. A second teacher almost forgot that she had training in something called “observation”. The third one knew what it meant but, she did not know the procedures and skills. The other three did not know at all what observation meant. Yet all six teachers were certified as ECE majors.

**Question Two:** What are the teachers’ reactions to the training workshops about IO and how do they think about it in respect to altering their observational practices?

**Assertion Two:** It was an enriching experience, which revived their spirits, according to their comments. They felt they now owned a strong basis on which to embark and to improve their practices. After the training, they went to the classrooms for application. They expressed their total enjoyment, but the majority wished they had had the training at the beginning of the school year. The teachers stated that the work pressures deterred them from implementing intentional observation but they did it anyway in spite of the pressure because (five of them) were convinced of the value of intentional observation. The sixth one thought it was taking from the classroom’s requirement time.
**Question three:** How much satisfaction did teachers demonstrate after applying the training? What are the difficulties and what did they like about it? How confident are they of using it? What are their concerns about implementing it? How do teachers perceive their observational practices?

**Assertion three:** In the analysis chapters, I cited their own words in different tables on the influence of the training on them. It impacted them enormously. Even the counter-example spoke about the change in her attitude towards the children.

The difficulties they talked about were the daily requirements. Five of them expressed repeatedly, how relaxed they had become, and this created more time for observations or to perform different classroom work. They are determined to perform it. “I will apply it even if the administration did not require us to do it,” said Madawi. In chapters four and five tables illustrated the change that took place in this school. The tables included statements from the participant teachers.

**Question four:** How do the participating teachers see the relationship between IO training application and their perception of their relationship with their children?

**Assertion four:** According to the data, that is, the teachers’ statements, after the first day of applying IO strategies, they felt “calm.” Their being calm and relaxed established more opportunities to connect to the children. The six teachers reported recognizing new positive sides of the observed children. I can say that there are encouraging signs from this study especially in the Saudi context where teachers are basically introduced to the concept of classroom observation for the first time. Findings are not inconsistent with the promise that IO training can improve the teacher-child relationship. Other than the interview feedback, the teachers’ log entries suggested that
they experienced some changes due to the training program and they reported in the logs that the children exhibited change accordingly.

Question five: What are the challenges in applying the IO approach?

Assertion five: In the KSA context the challenges are to influence schools administrations to modify parts of the routine requirements that are expected from the teachers. Another challenge is to convince some teachers to surrender some of their child control practices, which are often a part of their identities as teachers, and to have more trust in children to take a more responsible role in classroom practices. Furthermore, there is the challenge of recruiting trainers who will be able to influence teachers to add IO to their daily repertoire.

Why is IO Beneficial?

This study contributes to the ECE research literature in its relevance to studies reviewed in the first and second chapters. For instance, Jablon et al. (2007) was cited in chapter one with regard to practicing observation in several meaningful contexts with the experience leading to a possible transformation and eventually to personal and intellectual satisfaction. The teacher-participants described their personal and intellectual gains from practicing IO strategies, including increasing their awareness of their professional roles, their personal satisfaction with their profession, and their relationships with the children.

Zaslow and Martinez-Beck (2006), also cited in the first chapter, stressed that any program of professional development should influence teachers' practices inside the classroom—programs outcomes should not be assessed by just assuming that the teachers attended and completed activities. The teachers' feedback in the present study
accords with Zaslow and Martinez-Back's condition for gauging the success of a training program: the teachers spoke enthusiastically about the improvement in their practices and the children practices accordingly. Their participation in the training had a huge impact on them as the data revealed—an impact that was not due merely to attendance of the program training in order to complete professional requirements.

One study reviewed in the second chapter, concerning the relationship between the teacher's beliefs in developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and their actual practices, revealed no significant differences in beliefs about DAP between the teachers who employed teacher-directed versus child-initiated practices (McMullen et al., 2006). In other words, teachers' beliefs about DAP did not improve their sensitivity to their children in a manner that allowed the children to take on significant roles and initiate classroom activities. This study called for in-service training that helps the teachers translate their beliefs into effective practices. After participation in the present study, at least five teachers discussed in this dissertation admitted that they had adjusted their practices to match their new beliefs and furthermore allowed the children to resume new roles that had previously been monopolized by teachers.

Moreover, Hatch and Grieshaber (2002), also cited in the second chapter, encouraged teachers to be less worried about accountability issues that do not benefit children but increase pressure on both teachers and children, especially when the curricular objectives are narrowly defined. The teachers in the present study used to assess the children on narrowly defined objectives using forms that contained about 320 items. Study participation enabled them to see each child as a whole; as teacher Madawi
said “I felt competent in mothers’ conference due to the information I collected from the observation” (Madawi’s logs, 3/30/08).

The effectiveness of IO, one might hypothesize, helps teachers develop natural tendencies to be sensitive to children's emotional and intellectual needs. This possibility was examined through looking at the positive and energized roles exhibited by the teachers who participated in the study after receiving the IO training. Teachers became more in tune with children's feedback, behaviors, body language, and needs. As a consequence, teachers supported the children's intrinsic motivation to learn.

**Limitations of the Study**

The raw data were written in English language, which the participants could not read. Therefore, I unfortunately could not perform member checking due to the multiple tasks I had involving transcribing and translating between two languages. Moreover, I stated in the IRB form that the only person that would see the confidential data would be my advisor and me. Time consideration prevented me from going back to the IRB to ask permission. For future research, I would allow more time for member checking and I would seek help with the transcribing and translation.

Another limitation is small sample size. How well the IO strategies would work in other sites remains an empirical question. Additional research is needed before taking IO training to scale or transporting it to schools as a recommended training to improve ECE teachers and how they work with young children. Furthermore, additional research is needed to test the internal validity of IO training in terms of how it achieves its
beneficial effects if in fact it is responsible for them and not other uncontrolled factors. This study was not experimental.

A third limitation was the study’s great dependence on the researcher’s observations with little check on the validity of the observations. It was not possible to record videos in collecting data due to the cultural idiosyncrasies of the female teachers in the KSA, but there was a chance to triangulating using other methods of data collection and hiring an independent coder.

Another limitation, which is a point of strength and that affected the participants, was the close relationship I had with the participating teachers. It might not be professional to have this kind of relationship, but I was a resident researcher and spent about six to eight hours a day, depending on whether there was a workshop. This attributable in part to my personality (I relate to people well) and partly to the goal of being accepted by them, especially after the first group of teachers withdrew. I did not feel accepted by the teachers until the beginning of the first workshop, when the teachers felt the promise in the IO training contents.

The last limitation was having the study during the second semester. Four teachers suggested that the timing of the study was not appropriate. They recommended starting with the approach at the beginning of the school year. Information is needed about how to apply IO training in local situations and across the academic year.

Finally, much more could be learned about teachers’ views and attitudes concerning observation and related behaviors in teaching in the Saudi Arabian cultural context. For example, it would be helpful to explore the sources and modifiability of them in some depth.
**Strengths of the Study**

From an extensive review of the literature, there were not any statements forthcoming asserting that there is a relationship between teacher observation and improvement of quality in teacher-child relationships. Hence, I want to say that this is the first study to suggest that practicing intentional observation might help teachers establish better relationships with students. I should note following the exact procedures of intentional observation is important, in order to achieve the best results.

The possibility of the *transferability* of the study to other sites is open to further research. Transferability is the extension of the theoretical construct of the study “beyond a particular sample and yet respect cultural diversity” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 87). The use of NTA offers a methodological contribution as techniques—during interviews—by encouraging teachers to talk about their children and to learn more about ECE. In doing so, teachers might reflect and feel more for their children.

Another value of this work is that it provides data concerning ECE in Saudi Arabia. This study was an example of practices in ECE that will further along the improvement of ECE in Saudi Arabia. The school principal provided a positive testimonial about the researcher; this item is not included to ensure confidentiality. The positive written testimonial from the school facilitates positive changes. As stated before, the ECE policy in Saudi Arabia supports child-centered practices. Therefore, this training program has no antithetical elements in the system in Saudi Arabia that hinders this kind of change.
Implications for Teachers

Through the study we can suggest to the teacher the following:

- Teachers should scaffold children to take over part of their daily requirements and they should trust their achievements. Why should the teacher clean if a child spills milk or seeds? Do we forget the role of the school! It is to help in creating accountable, responsible adults.

- Unfortunately, children in some cultures are not trusted to have tendencies of following rules (Jingbo & Elicker, 2005). Teachers should alter this irrational belief and start interacting with children as trustworthy persons. Even if they came from homes with inappropriate attributes. Gradually, they will behave according to how adults deal with them.

- By tracing a pattern that was apparent in the data, the findings suggested that whenever the teacher observed a child, involuntarily, she was more accepting of that child. Examples are provided in previous chapters. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers use IO to gain a more sensitive, accurate and objective view of the children in their classroom, along with looking for ways to challenge these children.

- Teachers experience a lot of job-related stress in the early childhood setting. They become perplexed by certain situations and are not sure how to handle these pressures. Teachers should not keep silent; their voices should be heard. Having an intimate relationship with a co-worker minimizes the stressful demands of daily work. The teachers would benefit by brainstorming ways to minimize the burden they are experiencing in school.
Implications for Administrators and Staff Developers

The experienced teacher Hana felt the need to observe for the sake of observation, as I felt when I practiced observation as a teacher. In this expression, she meant that she can develop her focus or concerns of observation along the process of observation without having committing to pre-classified focuses or goals. Hana enjoyed IO because it gave her a chance to observe without having the stress of finding answers to preconceived goals or concerns:

If you observe for a goal, your observation is limited to the goal. When I introduce a concept and look to see the feasibility of it or if it is age-appropriate, I cannot notice everything I only notice what I put in mind. But when I observe for the sake of observation, I notice things that I did not think about. I feel that the circle of the observation is enlarged and I might notice something I did not pay attention to before. When I observe for the sake of observation, I might discover wider dimensions for a situation (Hana’s 2nd interview, 3/11/08).

Hana’s perspective goes along with that of the grounded theorists who felt a similar need. “Grounded theorists give priority to developing rather than verifying analytic propositions. They maintain that if the researcher minimizes commitment to received and preconceived theory, he is more likely to ‘discover’ original theories in his data” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 143). Nevertheless, as a researcher and a trainer I told the participants (see Appendix A) that my intention was not to forsake the well-received observation programs such as CLASS or the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Systems, but teachers need from time to time to observe freely without concerns in mind.
• Administrators should seek to increase the comfort of the teachers as well as children. Administrators should ensure that teachers have flexibility in deciding how and when to develop classroom activities. The administration should support the teachers and find solutions or ways to reduce their daily discomfort. Fawzia felt angry when Rana was absent and she received no assistance. One day she wrote that. “They should send someone. I am struggling with the children alone. The floating teacher had gone to another classroom. Flouting teacher said she was chatting all the morning with the receptionist and no one sent her to me; unfair” (Fawzia, logs 3/13/08).

• The theme of daily pressures dominated the conversations and interviews with the teachers. Administrators could help alleviate some stress by explaining to the teachers what their priorities should be.

• The school’s administration should always remind teachers to focus the curriculum on the child for more gains for the child and for themselves.

• The IO training approach is compatible with the Saudi Arabian education system. It does not require changes in the classroom environment in which the education system has invested significantly. The school coordinator wrote in a report to the school principal and she provided a copy to me. She wrote:

    We should consider applying the entirety of what the researcher contributed to the school. Nothing taught in the workshops contradicts any programs or system already in the schools. It is simply just changing the way the teachers think about the children and how they interact with them. The application does not need any grants or materials (school coordinator, 5/4/08).
• IO training facilitates teachers’ roles and as a consequence smooths the progress of the children. It reinforces the ideals of Saudi Arabia in the sense that it assists the teachers, ensure their professionalism by stressing taking time to reflect and contemplate.

• Observation for the teachers’ salvation: Observations can re-connect teachers with their primary motivations for teaching and working with children, refreshing them and helping them to continue in their profession even in the face of various external difficulties.
Conclusion

Although there are not philosophical concerns in applying the IO training in the KSA, anticipated practical problems exist. As the reported data from the teachers demonstrated, teachers are burdened and overworked. Overworked teachers have difficulty attending to children’s needs. They hardly have time to reflect on and appraise their daily interaction and practices with children. The study made it clear that in the present situation the Saudi teacher is unfulfilled and unhappy. According to Al-Otaibi and Al-Suwailm (2002), teachers in ECE reported a lack of administrative support and proper supervision. They also complained about the scarcity of professional development programs and in-service training.

Another major challenge is “the cultural heritage” concerning beliefs about children. Unfortunately, Saudi adults in general indulge children even as they consider them to be untrustworthy. They think they are naughty and that they can never be trusted to stay alone at any time. They attend to their demands to the extent that they spoil them. In the same time they teach children to be obedient and respectful. The participants in the study used to think so and the training helped them. As one of them expressed, “after the few times I have observed I felt that there was a curtain in front of me that is removed from my sight and I can see children clearly” (Hana’s 3rd interview 3/22/08). A collaborative effort would correct the misconception about children.

One major challenge was the dilemma of the conflict between some of the values of the Saudi culture and those new values of ECE, which were adopted from western culture. Unquestionable obedience to the adult was one of the local values. Teacher Hana expressed how it was a dilemma for her to surrender her previous values, “The pro-
IO- is the enjoyment. The con is surrendering power. Now, children do things without my permission” (3rd interview, 3/22/08). It was not easy for all the teachers to adopt new values but the positive outcomes encouraged them to sustain.

One challenge was the weak involvement of parents in their children’s education. Parents’ involvement plays a major role in child’s school adjustment and success. The teachers felt disappointed because only four mothers of participating children responded to the teachers when they sent the “Recorded Moments” notebook. This notebook acted like a liaison between home and school.

IO may play an important role in ECE in the KSA. Teachers there are burdened with dealing with social adjustment of the children in the classroom and IO training may give the teachers answers and provide them with explanations of children’s behaviors. It also could contribute to the quality of the relationship between the children and the teachers. In being successful in reducing daily stresses, IO training can play a role in boosting the feeling of competence in teachers. Moreover, Saudi teachers will feel relieved and this will enhance their self-confidence and their abilities as ECE teachers. In addition, IO can be useful in altering teachers’ attitudes towards children and their needs, interests and abilities in a positive way. Through IO, teachers may develop more faith in children’s ability to handle some of the classroom challenges on their own. Teachers’ sense of satisfaction might increase and they can accomplish tasks they used to do under stress with feeling at ease and relaxed because of the mutual trust with their class children. The study suggests that teachers could reach self-confidence through feeling competent in their profession. IO training may help teachers in achieving their sense of competence.
The focus of IO is the teacher, as first stated in chapter one. The child has been well attended to by researchers in the literature. This study instead proposed that caring about the well being of the teacher will eventually be reflected positively on the child. Because once the teacher feels fulfilled and satisfied, other agencies and sources of strength are available for her and as a consequence are then available for the child as well. The teachers in the study felt the zeal and competence. They expressed their excitement of the renewed level of awareness they had through enrolling in IO training. They expressed that they felt freed with the special kind of knowledge. The way they reported the freedom they felt, was as a genesis for them. They felt charged and enthusiastic to wake up every morning and start a day in their classrooms.

Teachers are pressured by the administrative jobs. As cited in the second chapter, accountability involves altering teachers into “technicians of proficiency” (Kozol, 2000). For example, Nora, one of the teachers in the study, was annoyed with the classifications that kept her from enjoying the observation she had in her practicum. Ironically more accountability may be less accountability. If distracted by technical accountability responsibilities, teachers may be more likely to be unable to see the reality of children and classroom life. When teachers are pressured to administer practices to achieve accountability and oversee the other aspects of a child’s experience in the classroom, their vision may become clouded.

The IO experience can help the teachers in prioritizing their roles in the classroom. Is teaching what profoundly matters in child’s life at this early stage in his/her life or the social and emotional adjustment is the priority for the child. IO may help keep
the whole child in mind. In the study, IO training helped the teachers in seeing the children openly and objectively.

Observation has benefits for the teachers, their development, and their thinking about pedagogy. Through IO, they managed to plan their daily lessons to fit the daily needs of the children. This procedure was discussed and reflected upon in the reflective meeting with the teachers. In chapters 4 and 5 there are reported examples on this kind of occurrence. This study is trying to improve teacher-child relationships through training to improve their observation skills.

Findings of this dissertation seem trustworthy because of the consistency in the results and the patterns that showed. Findings from different resources of information are not inconsistent. I examined teachers' practices and talked to them before and after intentional observation workshops. There was consistency across the participants with one counter-example. I have consistency across the sources of information, the logs, the fieldnotes, the teachers’ interviews, the administrative interviews and their corroborative evidence. Findings suggest the validity of my findings.

IO increases teacher’s sensitivity, which in return becomes the medium for depicting in a transparent manner the child needs and present emotion. With this situation of interaction between teacher and child the relationship between them increases. Children interact actively with teachers they connect with. Teachers' sensitivity led them to seek and demand more training in order to support children both socially and emotionally.

This study represents a Saudi experience with IO training. Teachers and administration in the site of the study received IO training highly and they already had it
in their school system for next year after they have asked for my permission. For them the gains were more than they have expected. The question now, will IO training be adequate for other ECE setting in other regional context? Could it be transferable to other sites in other countries? These remain imperial questions. IO was really tailored to fit the Saudi ECE needs but it still contains areas that are necessary for any other ECE setting.

I put forward the findings of this study to capture what teachers should be experiencing. Teachers are not working on an assembly line. They are dealing with human beings full of feelings and passions. The teachers themselves are humans, and they need training that alleviates their daily pressures.

I am not suggesting that the IO program is not with flaws or limitations but it seemed to achieve positive outcomes for this site and the participants in this study. Feedback from the teachers also makes possible revising the program. There are, undoubtedly, ways to make this program work better. In future work, I will continue to evaluate the training studied here and continue to try to improve its strategies. The workshops could be passed along more efficiently. The workshops were so much labor intensive. Some work should be done to minimize the effort and the cost of the workshops so that they can be transferred and passed on professionally to the public and private schools.

I am not claiming long-term benefits of this training program, because I have not collected empirical data. I do believe, however, that they could be persisting and continuing on long term benefits. In the same time, I am acknowledging that this remains an empirical question for further investigation. I am open minded to new possibilities when I am perplexed by these gains to generate new ideas. That is what I am aiming for.
I am looking forward to studying the longitudinal benefit as soon as I may, since I know first hand, to what degree the program’s immediate impact has on the teachers, the children, and even the administration who have worked with, and embraced it.

In conclusion, the teacher-trainer personality may have been coupled with the IO training for causing this impact. The important aspect of the training was the satisfaction with the training. The teachers reported that the training experience had an impact on the teacher-self relationship. The teachers expressed their pride in the scope of their newly acquired awareness and a sense of self-confidence. The teacher-child relationship improved as teachers reported. The study proposed that IO may be an effective strategy for strengthening teacher-child relationship. The training reflected the importance of maintaining effective teacher-teacher relationships and teacher-administration relationships, too.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INTENTIONAL OBSERVATION TRAINING MANUAL
Intentional Observation

Narrative Observation Training Manual

For Kindergarten Teachers

By

Nada AlRabiah
Workshops Introduction

Narrative Observation has always been the “later on” job of the early childhood teacher. Although most teachers recognize its importance, they fail to allot time to narrative observation in their daily routine.

This training is the result of many years of reading and experience with child observation as a student, teacher, supervisor, principal and trainer. I have also attended workshops in this area of pedagogy. The training program is based on the acknowledged significance of child observation in building an effective relationship between the child and the teacher. The training is presented in three workshops that focus on the following: the rationale of observing children, observation strategies, and skills in narrative child observation with an emphasis on the strategy of intentional observation (IO).

The general goal of the training is to have teachers develop a positive attitude toward narrative observation. Teachers will not only receive information and insight about narrative observation, but also gain the self-confidence and zeal they need to apply the strategies and techniques that are provided throughout the training. The teachers will acquire the needed skills to perform narrative observation and be able to transcend any obstacles that may hinder them from observing children systematically.
Training Objectives

At the end of the first set of workshops, attendees\(^2\) will be able to:

1. Define Intentional Observation
2. Understand the objectives of systematic narrative observation
3. Understand why narrative observation is important to the child-teacher relationship
4. Identify and define the different narrative observation strategies
5. Gain knowledge of the format of narrative observation
6. Practice using the descriptive narrative style
7. Recognize the uniqueness of the “intentional observation” strategy in helping the teacher to know the child as a whole

This training used a variety of techniques to help participants interact to explore new ideas in order to comprehend them. I tried to keep lectures to a minimum. I encouraged discussion and activities as much as possible.

\(^2\) For the sake of clarity and convenience, “she” will be used to refer to the classroom teacher since the kindergarten teacher is always a female in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia
### Workshop 1 Outline: 2-hour session  **Day One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Topic and Activity format</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Activity</td>
<td>Observe only one of the volunteers and write a descriptive record about her</td>
<td>10 min. This activity continues for ½ hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Observe only one person”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation of an observation in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review workshop goals, slide # 1</td>
<td>Slide of the workshop goals</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they said about observation Slide # 2</td>
<td>As an introduction, the slide shows the importance of observation through statements of people in support of observation</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation of the reality of observation in ECE settings, “Binder simulation”</td>
<td>Use of a binder and files to represent different observation program and approaches</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do we record when we observe, Slide # 3</td>
<td>This discussion is generated with the teachers. It distinguishes between observing and watching</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ feedback on the first simulation, “Introductory Activity”</td>
<td>Read what you have observed about the specific person. How do you feel about her?</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation of the plug and the socket</td>
<td>Discussion on the simulation that signifies connectedness</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why teachers observe? What does observation lead to?</td>
<td>Discuss the reasons for observation</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides # 4 &amp; 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency activity Slide # 6</td>
<td>Describe one Riyal bill (local Saudi currency) followed by discussion about the currency</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity Slide # 7</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference between description and interpretation child in the picture</td>
<td>Read what the teachers record about the child in the slide. Write group feedback on flipchart</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Narrative Observation (Description of day one process)**

- **Introductory procedure:** This activity is performed by two volunteers. They are required to be involved in a task for about one-half hour; such as building a structure, making an art work out of beads, or painting. The volunteers have all of the requirements for their activity. The goal is to have two people absorbed in an activity (as the child is absorbed in his/her play) and have the audience observe them. This is a simulation of a child observation while participants continue listening to the presenter as she starts the workshop. This simulation resembles the teacher who observes a child while she continues to monitor the entire class children.

  The instruction for this simulation is that the participants should observe only one of the volunteers and write a descriptive record about her. Before this procedure, the presenter gives the participants quick examples of how they can be objective and how to describe what they see and avoid being judgmental. Later in the training they will learn how to write observation records objectively. The goal of this activity is not what they write, but to connect to the person they are observing. The participants continue to observe for about ½ hour while reviewing the goals of the workshop and a few other parts of the workshop.

- **Refer to slide # 1.** The goals of the three-day training

- **The presenter shows them slide # 2** about what has been said about observation. They continue creating observational records about one of the volunteers while they are looking at the slides.

- **Binder simulation:** While continuing in their observation of one of the volunteers, the presenter provides the participants with a quick review of different effective observation
programs³ that are being used in ECE settings, such as the Teaching Strategies Developmental Continuum. They all recommend observing with a goal in hand, like the teacher observes the child’s fine motor skills. They are excellent programs but the teachers are overwhelmed by their classifications. All of these programs need a base to unify them—and they can be put in one binder. This base is “to observe for the sake of observation.”

- Slide # 3—why do we record our observation? Open for discussion

- At the end of the ½ hour, the presenter asks the participants about their feelings towards the person they have observed and the other one who is supposed to have done the same load of work that she has been involved in. It is expected that they will connect to and appreciate the one they have observed more, and be able to give detailed information about her, depict her feelings and understand her instantaneous challenges, more than the other one whom they have not observed.

- Simulation of the plug and the socket: The presenter discusses with the participants their observations of the volunteer and whether the participants feel connected to her as the socket connects to the plug. Do they feel the same towards the other volunteer? This simulation is used to emphasize the main topic of the training throughout the workshop to signify connectedness.

- Why do teachers observe? Example of why we “observe for the sake of observation”?
  
  When we open the fridge, we have in mind a goal, which is to find the juice, for example.

---

³ I explain that these programs have a different purpose than the new observation approach offered in this workshop on IO. That is why they are both indispensable in an ECE setting.
We do not know how to describe the fridge exactly, if someone asks us to do so. In another example, we look at the clock to determine the time, but when someone asks us to describe the clock in detail, we cannot provide details. Because we have a goal in mind, we overlook details (Curtin & Carter, 2000).

- Then slides # 4 & 5 are about the reasons we observe and what impact observation has on the teacher and the child.

- Slide # 6 —another activity about the fact that we cannot see the whole picture until we intentionally observe, is the currency activity. The presenter can ask, “What exactly does the Saudi Riyal bill have on both sides?” The presenter writes the details on the flip chart. Then the presenter shows them the Riyal on a slide. Although they see it everyday, they are expected not to be able to describe its details.

- Can you resist judgment/ Slide # 7? Describe the child in slides # 8 & 9.
## Day Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation helps us see the whole picture, Slides # 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>The whole picture means objectivity</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment of observing details Slide # 12</td>
<td>Simulation of objective observation</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional observations</td>
<td>How to look at the records/discussion and handout</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The significance of ‘Intentional Observation’ (IO)</td>
<td>Building relationships with the child and parents when best to use (IO)</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Segment # 1</td>
<td>“Learning to look, looking to learn” The goal of this observation is to know the effectiveness of the used props in the water sink</td>
<td>20 min.; cont. throughout the discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing the observation</td>
<td>Evaluation of the water area vignette discussion</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intentional Observation

Intentional observation is the act of intentionally observing for the sake of observation. It is an exceptional way to enjoy observation at the beginning of the school year. Intentional observation is the “purposeless purpose” type of observation. Observing to assess or rate a child’s autonomy or social emotional growth is not an easy task because the teacher sees part of the picture when she sits to do this kind of rating. Intentional observation gives the teacher a holistic base from which to view all aspects of the child’s personality and behaviors together. It is “beyond a set of skills. It is an attitude of openness” (Jablon, Dombro, & Dichtelmiller, 2007, p. 6). Intentional observation clarifies the blurry pictures that the teacher used to see and tunes the sounds that she used to hear. Even though it is a “purposeless purpose” kind of observation, it is done with intentionality. When the teacher shifts from merely applying skills to, intentionally, looking for opportunities to learn and construct her identity as a teacher, she makes observation an integral part of her. In intentional observation, the focus is not on the child but on the teacher (Jablon et al., 2007).

Intentional observation does not happen by chance—rather, the teacher observes “thoughtfully, planfully, and purposefully” (Epstein, 2007). Intentional observation is the main daily ritual for the intentional teacher who has an extensive knowledge about how typical children develop and learn. Intentional observation is comparable to ethnographic observation in the sense that the teacher starts observing without having a targeted behavior to start with (Borich, 1999).

As a general prerequisite of intentional observation, teachers should have the following characteristics:
1. High expectations of children. They assume children are capable of achieving meaningful educational goals. Teachers who expect children to learn will deliberately engage in instructional and observational practices to enhance children’s knowledge and skills (Epstein, 2007).

2. Effective planning and management capacities.

3. A belief that any experience is a learning opportunity for them and their class children, and they rejoice and cherish these learning moments.

4. Are capable of asking children questions that stimulate their thinking.

5. These teachers never quit providing feedback to the children whether in a form of questions, and/or comments, and posing the magical “what if” to gracefully challenge children (Epstein, 2007).

6. Assume that parents are always doing what is best for their children.

   Child observation has been used in early childhood as an active strategy for developing curricula based on children’s interests and needs (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002). Therefore, observation is strongly connected with effective teaching (Jablon et al., 2007).

   Teachers should willingly be systematic observers. They should seek it out and not be pushed to do it. The predominant notion among teachers is that they should observe for the sake of the child. Now it is time to promote the slogan “observation for teacher’s salvation.”

Goals of IO

- To build a better relationship between teachers and children
- To build better relationships between home and school
- To mitigate the daily pressure for the teachers
To help teachers master other observation and assessment strategies

To increase teachers’ professionalism

Bear in mind that IO is not meant for assessment although it can serve this purpose very well—however, it does not share the same objectives as other observation strategies. It also has a unique method with specific procedures.

**Objectives of IO**

- To help the teacher understand and appreciate her children as they are. She will discover their strengths and interests, which will……
- Create a bond of closeness between the teacher and each child, which will ……
- Increase a positive attitude and cooperation between the teacher and the child, which will …. 
- Allow more space-for the observer-for learning and positive developmental growth.
- Promote a mutual sense of security and confidence which will help the child in unleashing his/her creativity
- All of the above will lead to an appreciative and strong relationship between school and home
- IO will also make the task of other observation and assessment strategies easier

**Intentional Observation Method**

It is recommended that the teacher start with IO as one of the first observational strategies at the beginning of the school year. At the onset of the school, IO will be the lens through which the teacher will see all children as they are without pressure.
Teachers should have a notebook for each child. Intentional observation does not require an observation form. The teacher has to observe only one child throughout the day in all of the segments of the school program. She does not have to be preoccupied with this child. She can do any aspect of her daily routine and just “check” on the child every 5 minutes. The teacher does not have to be in close proximity to the child. She still can perform other forms of observation such as class list log. At the beginning of the year, it is better to focus on IO. She needs to employ IO everyday with a different child. The teacher can redo the observation with a specific child if she feels that, at the end of the day, she did not gain a deeper perspective of the child than at the beginning of the day. Each teacher in the classroom has to do IO with each child. After employing it for 20 days, “20 children in the class,” the teacher can start again with the child who needs more attention. It might sound like quite a load but by the time the teacher has mastered it, she will feel that she cannot do without it. The teacher can discontinue IO when she feels she knows every child. She has to continue performing the other observation approaches that are assigned by the school administration. She will notice how IO made the employment of any other approach a “piece of cake.” In IO the teacher writes her observations as running records but if she is teaching or busy, she can write them anecdotally or in retrospect. She records as follows

Morning: Magan kissed her mother with a smile and put her lunchbox in her cubby. She sat on the floor with Josh to fix a puzzle, completed the puzzle, and put it on the shelf.

Circle time: She sat next to Mary and sang the morning song. She answered when the teacher asked her what day it was.
Centers: ……

Meal time:……

Playground:…….

Closing time:…….

It is possible to write with an erasable ball-point pen or pencil because the teacher will share these notes with parents on the same day or the next day at the latest. In this way, parents can extend the child’s experience and converse with their child about the experience. The recordings have to be stated positively. The teacher can write about extreme negative experiences in other forms of observation forms. At the bottom of the page, she has to write a positive “interpretive” remark—a simple analysis of the day’s records. She should not write any negative remarks. She can write something similar to this example:

Comment: Magan enjoys the classification activities. She puts away things after she uses them. She masters playing on the monkey bars.

The teacher should not send the notebook if she feels the parents of a specific child would be upset. She will focus on this child to connect with him/her and to build on his/her interests and strengths. Intentional observation records are not for assessment, but rather acts as a liaison between school and home. The parents will like the “liaison notebook” and will wait anxiously to read the individualized observation about their child. On the first page of the notebook, the teacher can state the protocol for the notebook and that parents can write their feedback on the next page.
## Day Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining different strategies for narrative observation</td>
<td>Anecdotal notes, running records, class list log with examples—Power-point and hand-out</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When can we use each type of strategy?</td>
<td>Vignettes and teachers suggest what strategy to use</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video segment # 2</td>
<td>Teachers try to take running records of the video segment/running records forms</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work according to your comfort zone. Do not stress yourself out, Slides # 13/14/15</td>
<td>The comfort zone continuum</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts and myths about intentional observation, Slide # 16</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions &amp; Closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Narrative Observation**

The most popular strategy for recording child observations is "narrative recording," or a written description of a child's actions. Here are some of the narrative methods:

*Running Records* is a method of observing children in their natural setting. In this method, the assessor records all events happening around a targeted behavior as they occur during the period of observation. Running records are detailed and continuous descriptions. Staff observes unobtrusively and utilizes detailed narrative records of behaviors as they occur over a 20 to 30-minute timeframe. The assessor can embed notation of these behaviors within the records. The running records strategy is a popular form because of its versatility. (Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002)

*Anecdotal notes* are brief narrative recorded accounts describing an event or child’s behavior after it occurs; observe first, and then write. Anecdotal notes range from notations about developmental competencies to behavioral descriptions. The observer specifies the events, timeliness of the record, and the importance of details. Anecdotal records need to be objective, factual, and followed up with supportive information (Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002). Running and anecdotal recorders are like written movie camera scripts, exactly describing actions, facial expressions, and exact words of children (Nilson, 2001).

*Diary observations*, or journal entries, are the oldest method of observation. These observations are written narrative accounts over a brief timeframe; they include what
happens at school as well as at home during a certain period of time. Entries vary from a short daily commentary to a detailed report (Head-Start, 1998; Marion, 2004).

*Time sampling*, or frequency count, is a method of recording how often a specific event or behavior occurs within time intervals. It provides a frame for the observation before it actually begins. The teacher tallies behaviors based on time intervals or frame elapses (Borich, 1999; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).

*Event sampling* is another strategy of narrative observation strategy in which a record is kept of every target behavior occurrence. Use of the ABC method embedded in this strategy makes event sampling a very informative strategy. The ABC method uses the antecedent-behavior-consequence categorization to look at behavior (Lidz, 2003; Nicolson & Shipstead, 2002).

*Checklists* are the simplest form of observation. They are observations of a specific list of items, skills, or behaviors to be performed. Completion of checklists will show if the observed child has performed the skill or behavior. Checklists can be completed during the observation period or later. They generally contain responses such as yes, no, or sometimes. Basically, checklists are useful with safety- and health-related observations (Borich, 1999; Head-Start, 1998; Lidz, 2003; MacAfee & Leong, 2007; Marion, 2004).

It is necessary to observe positive behaviors and not just the referral-oriented behavior. All of the aforementioned methods focus on a target behavior or objective; however, the observation strategy promoted here does not require an objective.
Training Goals

- Teachers will develop a positive attitude towards narrative observation. The workshops will provide the teachers with not only needed information, but the zest to practice such strategies.
- At the end of the IO workshops, attendees will be able to:
  - define Intentional Observation
  - understand the objectives of systematic narrative observation
  - understand why narrative observation is important to the child-teacher relationship
  - identify and define different narrative observation strategies
  - gain knowledge of the format of narrative observation
  - practice using the descriptive narrative style
  - recognize the uniqueness of the “intentional observation” strategy

What Has Been Said About Observation?

- When the teacher is a good observer, her work with children will be easier and she will feel personal satisfaction (Grounland, 2005)

- I majored in ECE and was disappointed in the workplace. I did not regain my balance until I practiced observation. (Saudi ECE Teacher)

- After practicing narrative observation for a while, you discover its joys and that you did not know your children well before. (Pam, ECE Teacher)

- We walk around believing that what we see with our eyes is real, when, in truth, each of us constructs our own understandings of what we are seeing—Donald Hoffman (Curtin & Carter, 2000)
Why record?

- To be a model for children in recording
- For documentation

Adapted from, "Week by week: Plans for observing and recording young children" (Nilson 2001)

Why does the teacher observe?

- For assessments
- To provide safety measures
- For physical and health follow-up
- To communicate with parents
- To help the child and for referral
- To communicate with the child effectively
- To identify the child’s interests
- To manage the child’s behavior
- For feedback about the feasibility of a teacher’s teaching
- To expand the child’s social and educational experiences
- For curriculum planning
- To decide on a suitable style for teaching a child

(Jablon, Dombro & Dichtelmiller, 2007)
What Happens When the Teacher Observes?

- She slows down and learns to listen more than observe. Then she might interact better with the child and …
- Starts to accept the child as he/she is and identifies his/her uniqueness, temperament, potential, and best way to express him/herself, so…
- Interaction increases positively and this helps to establish a strong, respectful, and trusting relationship between the teacher and the child.
- The child feels more accepted and trustworthy so he/she develops independence and confidence, so that then . . .
- The child becomes calmer and needs less attention.
- The teaching load decreases, and . . .
- The teacher’s professionalism increases.

Slide # 5

What Happens When the Teacher Observes?

- She slows down and learns to listen more than observe. Then she might interact better with the child and …
- Starts to accept the child as he/she is and identifies his/her uniqueness, temperament, potential, and best way to express him/herself, so…
- Interaction increases positively and this helps to establish a strong, respectful, and trusting relationship between the teacher and the child.
- The child feels more accepted and trustworthy so he/she develops independence and confidence, so that then . . .
- The child becomes calmer and needs less attention.
- The teaching load decreases, and . . .
- The teacher’s professionalism increases.

Slide # 6
Strive for Objectivity?

- Avoid opinions and interpretations
- Write descriptive short statements, such as “Ali counted ten giraffes and said ten”
- Avoid being judgmental—for example, “she cut the circle and left the table angrily.”
- Record as much as possible in order to have enough records later to use in asking questions about the recorded situation

Slide # 7

Description and Interpretation

2 photos of same child doing two different actions

His teacher took descriptive records without intervening, What did she learn?

Adopted from, “the Art of Awareness” (Curtis, Carter 2000)

Slide # 8
How to Differentiate between Description and Interpretation?

Use the previous picture to practice your ability to lessen the occurrence of interpretations.

**Car park simulation**

- When you go shopping, do you drive your car inside the mall? If you did, you would intimidate people. It is better to leave it in the parking lot.
- Your first reaction when you observe is as wild as if your car were inside the mall. Be aware of your first reaction but put it aside during your observation.
- Now look at the previous picture. Your initial reaction might be, “Oh, Tom made a mess. I must stop him before he stains his clothes. This is disgusting. What can I tell his mother when she sees him like this? I will never accept this.”
- You might do this for his safety but wait. There is no urgency. Remember what could have happened if he was alone.
- Revise what you have written. What do you want to keep in the car park? Are there interpretations or judgments?
- (The teacher who observed this child waited until the child looked at her and said, “No.” He learned his lesson.) If you say Tom wanted to explore the coloring pens, this is a story that does not bear recording. Then you need to defend Tom in front of his mother. Take a chance to share with the mother the details of this experience. Contemplate together the dimensions of this incident and let her understand why you did not stop him. Your record shows the depth of the experience—the more you slow down the more details, the more meaning and connotation are available. Experiences that annoy us give children chances to learn (Curtis, Carter 2000).
Why we have to be objective and not biased and judgmental?

Figure of the agents that are influential on child's life

Adapted from the book, "Week by week: Plans for observing and recording young children" (Nilson 2001).

The Enjoyment of Observing Details

Do this activity with a friend using the same number and shapes of blocks
1. Sit back to back
2. Start building a structure
3. Describe in details so your friend can build like your structure
4. At the end turn around and compare your structures. If your structures are similar you have been precise and objective in description

(Curtin & Carter, 2000)
Safety First

Set Rules

And let the cattle graze

Adopted from, “The Art of Awareness” (Curtin & Carter, 2000)

3 photos of boys engaged in rocket play

Adopted from, “The Art of Awareness” (Curtin & Carter, 2000)
No one response is better than another.
Find your comfort zone and avoid that which irritates you.
Looking at the previous pictures:

- Where are you on this continuum?

(Curtin & Carter, 2000)
## Myths and Facts of IO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intentional observation (IO) is time-consuming.</td>
<td>1. When the teacher gets used to intentional observation, she saves time through better class management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. IO has no benefits.</td>
<td>2. Through IO teachers can master all kinds of observation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. IO is difficult to combine with other observation strategies at the same time.</td>
<td>3. This might apply to the situation at the beginning of the year, but later on, IO makes other observation strategies easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is difficult to apply IO everyday.</td>
<td>4. With practice, IO becomes part of a teacher’s daily routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is sufficient and easier to use one type of observation.</td>
<td>5. It is not sufficient. Every situation requires a different method of observation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Exploring teachers’ existing observational practices and the teachers’ perspectives on these practices and on the gains and challenges of applying additional observational strategies: A case study with an intervention approach

Principal Investigator: Nada AlRabiah – P. O. Box 52798 Riyadh 11573, Saudi Arabia
e-mail nya100@psu.edu, Mobile, 0505479580

Advisor: Dr. James Johnson
e-mail jej4@psu.edu Tel. 814-8652230
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Early Childhood Education
The Pennsylvania State University
145 Chambers Bld.
University Park, PA 16802

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this case study research is to explore how applying narrative observation strategies impact the quality of teacher-child relationship

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to draw sketches, write few lines of poetry about few children, answer 28 questions scale pre and post the study for those children. The scale takes 5-10 minutes each. You will go through audio-recorded interviews throughout the study. The investigator will do daily observations in your classroom. You will participate in a training program for 4 seminars 2-hours each. After the training you will record your personal logs until the end of the study.

3. Discomfort and risks: There are no risks in participating in this research at all. There are no discomforts in participating beyond those experienced in applying the new observational strategies and keeping logs to reflect on the whole experience.

4. Benefits: You might manage your daily classroom routine more efficiently. You might improve your observational skills. You might be able to delegate more tasks to the children rather than do class jobs by yourself. You might have better relationships with children especially challenging children which might facilitate better classroom behavior management.

The benefit to early childhood education (ECE) society includes the power that observational skills add to the ECE teachers as professionals

5. Duration/Time: The whole case study takes 9 weeks. There are 8 hours for the workshop; 2 hour a day for 4 days only
6. **Statement of confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured at my home office. Penn State’s Office for Research Protections, the Social Science Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this research study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. The audio records will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office and will be destroyed after transcribing.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Dr. Huda Al Ameel (Vice President of King Saud University, women section) 4352506 with questions, complaints or concerns about this research. You can also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to Penn State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You may also call this number 0505479580 if you wish to talk to the investigator at any time. You can call 0552757700 if you like to talk to someone else.

8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

    You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

    You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

    ___________________________________________________________  __________________________
    Participant Signature                          Date

    ___________________________________________________________  __________________________
    Person Obtaining Consent                     Date
APPENDIX C

TEACHER AND CHILD RECRUITMENT SCRIPT
Teacher and Child Recruitment Script

Recruitment Script

I am doing a study about child-observation strategies. In the first stage of the study I will observe teachers for 2 weeks to explore how early childhood teachers utilize the existing observational strategies. In the second stage of the study, the participants will attend a three-session training program (two hours each) about narrative observation strategies and how they can improve the quality of teacher-child relationship. Each dyad will choose five children who represent some sort of teacher-specific challenge to be among the participant children in the study. In this stage of the study, I will observe and coach the teachers on the application strategies for 6 weeks. The participant teachers will keep personal logs after the workshops to record their perspectives about the new methods application. The logs are meant to record your ideas and attitudes.

If you are interested in participating, please read the consent form carefully and sign it.

Children Recruitment Script

My name is Nada AlRabiah. I am a university student studying in America. To complete my studies I have to do a research project. Among the research requirements, I need to talk with your teachers and be present in your classroom, in order to make sure you are comfortable in the school and finish my research. Your teachers have chosen only you among your classmates, since I do not have time to stay in the school longer and work with your teachers to observe all the class children as well. That is why your teachers observe you and work with you more than other children.

Thank you for your cooperation
APPENDIX D

SAMPLES OF THE NON-TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENTS
Figure 2. Sample of a Sketch with 2 Lines of Poetry
Figure 3. Shoug's Logo with a Statement “The Childhood World is Unlimited”
APPENDIX E

LIST OF ACRONYMS
List of Acronyms:

ECE = Early childhood education

IO = Intentional observation

STRS = Student-Teacher Relationship Scale by Pianta

NTA = Non-traditional assessments (sketches, logos, and poetry)

IRB = Institutional Review Board

KSA = Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Curriculum Vitae

Nada Yousef Al-Rabiah

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EDUCATION

2006          Ph. D. Student, ECE Department, Penn State University.
1982          BA, English Literature, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2005—2006       Principal of a model kindergarten
2001—2005       Teacher in a model kindergarten
1990—2001       Supervisor /kindergarten
1984—1990       English teacher/ kindergarten
1982—1984       English teacher, middle school

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. "Young Ambassador of the Kingdom: Citizenship Program" Received a document of appreciation from the Archaeology Department in the Ministry the Information. 1991— present.
2. "Mother Earth" program starting from preschool classes to KG-12 about caring for the environment. 1992 — present
3. "How to help your child love reading" A campaign for having children and kids hooked on reading 1995—present
4. Chosen as an educator to supervise and participate in planning and editing a children's TV program.1998
6. Utilizing Play Therapy technique in the ECE classroom, 2005—2006

AWARDS:

Distinguished teacher award in Riyadh Saudi Arabia 1993