

Developing Reflective Educators

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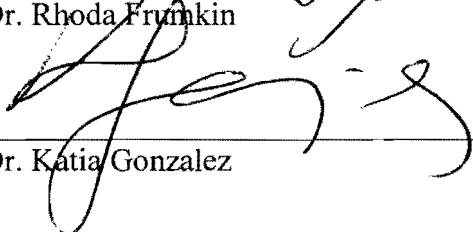
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Chapter 1: Conceptual Framework

The Many Ways of Being a Novice Teacher

When considering what a novice teacher exactly is, it is important to realize that these new educators are exposed to a lot of “firsts.” They are experiencing being on their own within the classroom for the first time, which is a huge responsibility, as well as a difficult transition. Some people even believe it may take five to eight years of classroom experiences in order to develop teaching expertise needed to be successful. These new teachers are also adjusting to a new lifestyle, which can also be a challenge. Through these first experiences, novice teachers learn a great deal about themselves as educators Scherer (2001).

For many novice teachers, their new job will be their first time working a full-time position. It is their first career experience. Beginning a new career can be very overwhelming to many people, and teaching is no exception. With this new career, novice educators are still finding themselves as teachers and discovering their own “groove” within their positions. A new career is a transitional period, requiring novice teachers to acclimate to new routines both at home and in the workplace.

Novice teachers are in a classroom independently for the very first time. They normally do not have a direct supervisor watching every interaction they have with students as they did while they were involved in their student teaching experiences. Without this direct supervision, novice teachers do not receive the immediate feedback on their performance they may be used to. While one learning experience as an education student is coming to an end, a new learning experience is actually just beginning.

Throughout this new journey on which novice teachers embark, they will be required to learn through their independent experiences.

Challenges Novice Teachers Face

One of the biggest goals a novice teacher must strive for is to develop students' attention spans. One important reason for this is that a student's attention span can greatly affect their academic success. In a study conducted by Saez and colleagues (2011), higher student attention span led to better word reading and behavior management. There are also many other challenges that novice teachers will face as they progress in their careers, such as developing classroom management skills and lesson preparation. A classroom that runs seamlessly is a rich learning environment that creates meaning for students. Developing the classroom environment, management skills, and planning all contribute to the goal of developing student focus. This is especially important in early childhood development, as it is extremely important for children to be able to focus on academic material in upper grades.

Novice teachers are guaranteed to face many challenges as first year teachers in addition to their goal of developing student attention span. New educators are required to learn the inner workings of their position at a new school. These new educators must learn the various required documentation and paperwork that must be done for each individual student, such as artifact binders. Novice teachers also must learn the school-wide routines, regulations, behavior support systems, and scheduling.

Aside from school-wide routines, novice teachers must also develop routines and rules within their own classrooms. Developing these routines requires a lot of dedication

that new teachers must be willing to devote themselves to in order to easily transition students into a new classroom. New teachers must develop their own behavior system to implement within their classrooms. These behavior systems must be consistently enforced in order to provide students with a solid foundation of what is expected and how those fulfilled expectations may be rewarded. Raths (2013) explores how the classroom set up itself must also be taken into consideration: How will desks be set up? Where will various centers be located throughout the room? How should the room be set up in order for easy student mobility throughout the room?

Another new experience for novice teachers is consistently developing and planning daily lessons. While lesson planning was a vital part of an education student's experience, it was not done at the same level of intensity. Novice teachers must now write lessons for every day of the week, for multiple subjects, and sometimes multiple classes. Developing organizational skills and time management skills are extremely important.

For the first time, novice teachers are interacting with parents, coworkers, and students completely independently. Learning how to professionally speak with these various groups of people can be challenging, especially when it comes to working with parents. More often than not, novice educators have not had this experience in the past and must use these initial conversations with parents as learning experiences. It is very important to consider how one should appropriately discuss students who may be displaying behavior issues, low performance scores, and other various issues that may arise with students in your classroom. Parents need to be seen as teammates: people who

can assist educators in addressing these issues. It is not always easy to approach problems with a child's parent: the encounter must be thought out carefully.

It is also important to realize that novice teachers will also be facing situations on their own that they have not necessarily been prepared for throughout their teacher preparation program. They will face issues that may not fall under situations that have particular guidelines and rules that can be found in educational theories. By building effective reflective practices, teachers can better evaluate how to make these difficult decisions (Ward and McCotter, 2004).

All novice teachers are exposed to the various challenges that have been mentioned in this section. Since novice teachers are on their own for the first time, it is important they approach these challenges as learning experiences. Reflection is a key practice that must be developed in order to truly gain meaning from individual challenges and experiences. A teacher, new or experienced in the profession, can consistently learn from their experiences through deep, meaningful reflection.

What is Reflection?

Reflection is essentially a critical evaluation of a specific idea or event. Reflective teachers are able to consider how they can better themselves and their students.

Reflection is used in the education field in order to have teachers deeply examine their classroom practices, lessons, and teaching techniques. Reflection helps teachers to decide how effective a lesson is, and what the next steps following the completion of the lesson should be. Being a deeply reflective educator allows the teacher to see when a lesson is not working with his or her students. Deeply reflective teachers can then decide whether

or not the teaching approach needs to be altered, or if a lesson should be retaught in a different way on another day. Reflecting is an extremely important practice for novice educators to develop, as it can help them to more easily navigate the challenges that a first-year teacher faces.

As most people in the education field are aware, John Dewey was an education reformer who is well known for many of his ideas on using the school environment in order to teach children appropriate social interactions. Dewey provided an explanation of what reflection exactly is: “*active, persistent, and careful* consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the *grounds that support* it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (1933, p. 9). In Dewey’s definition of reflection, there are four major components that are vital to deep reflective practice: *active, persistent, and careful* consideration, and *grounds to support* these beliefs. By using the four components from Dewey’s definition of reflection, teachers can truly become deeply reflective educators.

In order to completely understand Dewey’s definition of reflection, it must be broken down into four components, as listed above. By explaining thinking as an *active* process, Dewey is stating that one must sincerely think about their own ideas, as opposed passively reflecting, which could be learning from the ideas of others (Fisher, 2001). In order to truly think critically about a topic, one must raise his or her own questions about the topic, and thoughtfully consider solutions to these questions. Questions that teachers can ask themselves include: “How did my lesson go? How do I know this and what evidence can I use to support my theories?” Dewey also speaks about the importance of *persistent* consideration. It is important one continually reflects on lessons and practices:

before, during, and after they take place. Reflection should be habitual with educators, and teachers must deeply think about their experiences. By participating in deep reflective practice, teachers can use thoughts, ideas, and evidence to support their next steps. Dewey also mentions how educators must practice *careful* consideration in order to be reflective. By stating this, Dewey is referring to our thinking process, and how it is important to take our time and thoughtfully evaluate our performances. Educators must not simply arrive at a conclusion without a deep thinking process or evidence to back up our ideas. Making a rush decision can affect an educator's job performance, as well as negatively affect student learning. One must take time out to really reflect on how a lesson or other classroom practices went.

In order to be a strong reflective educator it is important to understand exactly what critical reflection looks like. It is not simply thinking about an event that occurred and stating an opinion on why this event occurred. True critical reflection uses an event as a learning experience and can be utilized to enhance future practices in the classroom setting. Thoughts and ideas are supported with evidence and can be used to explain what the next steps should be. Critical thinking develops a deep meaning and understanding, which can produce effective problem solving skills (Coley, Bilics, & Lerch, 2012). Developing critical reflective skills can take time, but it is very important to do this.

Reflection can be completed in multiple ways. For example, verbal reflections can be conducted as a group. This can be beneficial to both the person speaking and the listeners, as they can work together as a team to guide each other to effective solutions and assist each other in critically thinking about how this information can be used to benefit students or the classroom environment. Reflections can also be written, using

journals or questionnaires. Journals can be used as a free form of reflection, allowing the people to conduct reflective practice by writing their thoughts on paper and expanding upon their own ideas. Questionnaires can also be helpful to help a person narrow down what they would like to reflect upon. For example, a questionnaire can guide a person to reflect specifically upon the classroom environment or behavior management. This narrows down exactly what should be examined through the reflection.

Importance of Reflective Practice in Education

As educators, it is important to develop the ability to reflect on our work. “Change occurs when teachers observe their own teaching practices” (Stover, Kissel, Haag, Shoniker, 2011). If teachers do not observe and reflect upon their own practices, how can they understand if their lessons or approaches need to be changed? Deeply reflective educators are able to genuinely analyze their performance in the classroom and determine which teaching methods were most effective in the classroom. While reflection is important for experienced teachers, it is a vital skill for novice teachers to develop. Developing this skill early on, allows novice teachers to better evaluate their teaching skills, as well as better develop classroom practices throughout their careers.

Teachers also must be able to accept the fact that our lessons may not always be successful. By gaining the ability to adequately reflect on our work, teachers are not only helping themselves to become better at their job, but are also helping their students. It is important for novice and experienced teachers to be self-reflective in order to accurately evaluate their own classroom management skills, effectiveness of lessons, and what is

best for their own particular classes. Deeply reflective teachers do not only teach their students, but also learn by evaluating their own lessons.

Becoming a critically reflective educator is important for multiple reasons. Reflecting on our technique allows for us to thoroughly understand the specific needs of our learners. Every child learns differently, and it is important for novice teachers to figure out the best way to reach a child in order to for them to understand material. Reflection also allows us to improve our own skills as teachers. Reflecting on lessons and/or classroom behaviors allows all teachers to thoroughly analyze and explain why something has occurred (either good or bad), as opposed to making a rash assumption to explain why something has happened. While reflecting on events, educators must think about what happened throughout this period of time, and describe the outcome. For example, if a lesson went well, the teacher should evaluate his or her teaching in order to thoroughly understand why it was so successful. Reflection also allows teachers to detect particular patterns that occur in their own teaching, as well as determine what types of changes should be implemented in the classroom. Reflecting on our work helps us to come to these conclusions because it helps us to make meaning of our experiences. Teachers can think critically about these experiences, and efficiently analyze what worked or did not work through their own thoughts and consideration of the experiences that they have encountered (Ward and McCotter, 2004).

Impact of Reflective Educators

Becoming a reflective educator is an extremely important step for novice teachers to achieve. By developing reflective skills early in the teaching career, teachers are able

to finely tune their reflective skills and truly become a deeply reflective educator. When educators are deeply reflective about their lessons and work, it yields a positive impact on both students and teacher. These teachers have the ability to acknowledge their successful practices as well as reevaluate practices that may have yielded less than stellar results.

Developing reflective practice helps teachers to honestly and accurately evaluate their performance on their own accord. This is an important skill because it allows teachers to look back on a lesson that was taught and assess exactly how effective the lesson was. Deep reflection helps teachers to decide on the next step in the teaching process. Did the class grasp the aim of the lesson? If not, the teacher must decide what will be a more effective way to approach the specific topic in order to reteach the particular skill to the class. If the lesson was effective, and students adequately understood the aim, how will the next lesson progress?

Reflective educators also have the ability to evaluate lessons as they are taking place. A teacher may develop a lesson that just does not seem to work for the students in the class. Realizing this, teachers are able to change their lesson as it is taking place in order to serve students within the class effectively. Reflection also helps educators to decide accurately what the next steps will be. Again, if the teacher feels that the students did not adequately learn the material, he or she may decide that an extra day is required in order for students to understand the concepts of the lesson fully.

Research Questions

This study explored how to develop self-reflection skills of novice teachers through focusing on students' transitions from play activities to more academic activities.

Novice teachers at the Wagner College Early Childhood Center worked together during school days and at weekly meetings in order to critically analyze their performance in regards to helping children to focus on the task at hand and become fully involved in their academic work. This study aimed to help the educators at the Early Childhood Center to strengthen their skills as an educating team as well as their reflective practice. They worked together through reflective practice to become a team that worked around student needs. Students benefited from these efforts by strengthening their transitions and focus skills in an academic setting, a big challenge for many young students who face high expectations with the implementation of the Common Core Curriculum. During the study, I focused on answering the questions, “How can we foster reflective practices with novice teacher?” and “How can we use reflective practice to build a team that works together around student needs?”

Chapter 2: Literature Review

What is Reflection?

The importance of developing deeply reflective educators is a topic that has been studied often by educational researchers. These studies commonly focus on the various benefits that are produced for both the teachers and students. Many studies show the beneficial impact that reflective educators have within their classroom and school community.

In order to reflect effectively on teachings, educators must understand exactly what reflection is. There are many works that examine the true meaning of reflection. As stated earlier, John Dewey defined reflection “*active, persistent, and careful* consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the *grounds that support* it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (1933, p. 9). Even today, authors revisit John Dewey’s views on reflections and how reflection affects educators and students. As Jones and Jones (2013) note, “To Dewey, reflective thought is not equivalent to casually ‘thinking things over,’ but it is a systematic, disciplined, and rigorous way of thinking” (p. 74). It is important for reflections to be meaningful in order to truly gain insight from the reflection. Educators will not gain anything by just thinking about what they have done. It must be thoughtfully considered and critically thought out.

Fostering Reflection

While there are many works that define reflection, there are also a multitude of studies that have been written on teaching reflective practices. Many of these studies

provide valuable approaches to facilitate effective reflections such as microteaching, the use of journals self-evaluation, and building opportunities to provide a time for reflection (Jones & Jones, 2013). These approaches help novice teachers develop their reflective abilities and truly express their thoughts, helping novice teachers to think critically about how they had performed in different aspects of teaching.

Other researchers focus on how to foster reflective processes. For example, Stover and colleagues (2011) created a model study demonstrating approaches that foster reflective practice. One method provided was the utilization of daybooks, a book used by teachers for a variety of things, such as planning, drafting, and reflecting. In this case, the daybook was used by the teacher to summarize an event that happened in class, and then reflect on how she impacted this event. This particular teacher then listed questions to help guide her through her thought process, and lastly created a list of questions to discuss further with her coach. Other methods mentioned in this article were surveys to pinpoint educators' strengths and areas for improvement, and utilizing videotapes in order to evaluate teaching

Another study on reflection dived into the importance of teacher reflection and explored how it can help teachers to become more involved with in the school community. Parnell (2011) explained how reflection pushes educators out of their comfort zone in the classroom, as well as the rest of the school environment and community. These uncomfortable experiences can be difficult to address but are extremely important to learn how to handle. Educators need to identify when the lesson may have been an issue, and it can be difficult for them to admit when they are wrong. It is also important to be able to address these uncomfortable circumstances and learn how

to handle them because teachers may not always be comfortable with conversations that they must have with parents (Parnell, 2011). If reflection can help educators to build skills in these uncomfortable areas, it is important to develop the skills needed to reflect.

Yet another article stated that specific guided reflection was an important technique used by California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST) in order to develop teacher self-reflective practices (McCormick, 2001). In this approach, educators found themselves considering other areas outside of the specific guided reflection as well, and relating in back to the material. The educators were connecting areas of their practice in order to fully evaluate and critically analyze their work.

The articles written by Stover, et. al (2011) and McCormick (2001) were used as a basis in this study to develop approaches to help novice teachers build deep, self-reflective skills. Based on these articles, these approaches helped educators to think complexly about their teaching skills and abilities, as well as how they needed to change their approach. The study approaches also aimed to deepen the meaning that participants gained based on insightful reflections utilizing these approaches mentioned, more specifically the use of specific guided reflections, daybooks, and surveys.

Novice Teachers

It is important to note that many new teachers have a difficult time with the reflection process. While this is a complicated task to start with, it makes it more difficult that students in education preparation programs are not adequately informed as to exactly what reflection is and how it should be done. Learning how to appropriately reflect upon

circumstances is a crucial part of the teaching profession, and while it is stressed, college students are not being taught exactly how to conduct a good reflection. Ward and McCotter (2004) explained this problem after realizing the issue while developing a rubric to accurately evaluate the students' ability to reflect upon events. The rubric was also used to help clarify meaningful reflection to the students. Another issue addressed was that while reflection is being promoted, many studies examine the difference between describing and critically analyzing. This is a problem because new teachers are not being told how reflection can benefit them, and instead are being told the difference between weak and stronger types of reflections (Marcos, 2011).

Jones & Jones (2013) collected data through field notes, teacher, and student interviews in order to assess how help the pre-service teachers develop their own reflective abilities. Jones and Jones found that the pre-service teachers were able to build upon their reflective skills when they were given a clear explanation of what reflection exactly is. Once pre-service teachers were able to reflect effectively, they found that they could develop solutions to problems as well as evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions. The results go on to stress the importance of developing reflective skills within a teacher education program, as it provides a means for the individual to grow professionally

Many studies also investigate how reflection helps novice teachers to excel at their jobs. In one article, a student teacher named Ryan who had originally been uninterested in reflections for a multitude of reasons, later became discouraged about his career path. Upon adopting reflective practice, Ryan was able to see things differently and adapt his practices in order to mold his experiences into positives ones. Ryan was

able to learn from these experiences and grow from them (Freese, 2006). “He began to take responsibility for his actions and was more wholehearted about his commitment to teaching” (p. 112). Novice teachers must take responsibility for their own practice, and a key way to do this is through reflective practice. Teachers must ask themselves, “What can I do to improve this lesson? How can I help my students to succeed?” Ryan was also be troubled when his classroom seemed to be controlled by the students. Novice teachers can easily become discouraged when they have difficulties with classroom management, especially during lessons. It is important for novice teachers to remember that they have control within the class, and displaying a particular disposition and attitude within the class and with their students can help manage the classroom. Reflection can help novice teachers to realize how their attitudes affect student behaviors, and overcome classroom challenges.

Focus on Building Students’ Attention Levels

There are many great pieces of work that are dedicated to studying the impact of student attention levels. In a study conducted by authors Leilani Sáez, Jessica Sidler Folsom, Stephanie Al Otaiba, and Christopher Schatschneider (2012), the impact that low attention span has on a child’s ability to read is obvious. In this study conducted among a group of 432 students, it was clear to see the correlation between student attention levels and the ability to identify kindergarten words, as well as improved classroom behavior.

This point is reiterated in the article *School Readiness and Later Achievement* (Duncan, Claessens, Huston, Pagani, Engel, Sexton, Dowsett, Magnuson, Klebanov, Feinstein, Brooks-Gunn, Duckworth, 2007). This article explains that many studies have

been conducted on student attention rates and the correlation between student academic success and high attention rates. Signs of inattentive students can be seen as early as 2.5 years of age and will continue to develop until the ages of six to eight. The article goes on to state that early attention skills are predicative of later student achievement (Duncan, et al., 2007).

The practices and ideas discussed in these studies are used as evidence and support for my own study. My study will focus on building deeply reflective educators within the early childhood environment. The participants are novice teachers, with this being their first major experience working in a classroom. The importance of developing this skill is vital for educators in order to best benefit themselves and the children they are teaching.

Developing Focus on Non-Play Activities in a Play Environment

While highlighting play is an extremely important part of a young child's development, it is also important for us, as educators, to instill an appreciation for the importance of academic material. This could be as simple as having preschool children sit down and complete a craft that corresponds to the read aloud, while answering questions about the material. In completing these tasks, educators should also strive to develop the students' focus on the assigned activities.

When children have the ability to stay on task and focus on their work at a young age, it will greatly benefit them in their future academic careers. This skill allows children to utilize their full potential in order to learn and produce the best work possible (Duncan, et al., 2007). If it is permitted for preschool children scribble their work,

announce that they are done, and then return to the play centers, they will have great difficulty focusing their attention on other academic tasks when they are older, simply because they have become accustomed simply completing the work instead of producing quality work.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

In this study, novice teachers at Wagner College's Early Childhood Center worked together to become more self-reflective on their practices and techniques to discover what methods seem to work best with students. Self-reflection is a valuable skill that all teachers should develop, and teachers in this study worked together to become self-reflective practitioners. Novice teachers focused on their self-reflection through interactions with children at the school. Novice teachers in this study also concentrated on developing students' abilities to smoothly transition from play activities with friends, to non-play activities. The teachers addressed the students' ability to overcome difficult transitions, and reflected on how various approaches worked throughout the school day. Developing this study required time and attention to detail. Throughout the duration of the study, I recorded exactly what was done, in order for the study to be replicated if desired.

Design

Shared Discussion

This study was designed around a naturalistic inquiry approach. Each week the participants took part in an informal guided discussion, which was based on questions that were developed based on Dewey's four points of reflection. For example, the question, "Did the approach you chose to use help the student to focus on their academic work? How do you know this?" would address Dewey's point of being an *active* reflector and "How could you change your approach to better suit your students next week?"

would address Dewey's point of *persistence*. These types of questions were an important part of the weekly discussions, and used in order to help participants truly generate reflective practice. These questions focused on the participants' interactions with the students in their classes. These questions were generated to help participants reflect on their own practice, and personal experiences within their classrooms.

Data

Data was collected using three major approaches: written journal reflections, reflective questionnaires, and field notes. The written reflections were used in order to analyze major themes that were displayed throughout the study. They were also used to observe a change in quantitative data, by analyzing the content presented with a specific focus on Dewey's four points of reflection, as well as volume. Volume was analyzed by completing a word count each week on the written reflections. The second part of data collection was weekly questionnaires. Questionnaires were collected in order to gain insight on how the novice teachers grew week to week and helped students to transition from play activities to academic activities. This information was then shared and discussed during our weekly discussions. The last part of data collection was collecting field notes. These notes were taken based on observations on interactions and conversations that occurred during our weekly discussions.

Instruments

Before the study began, a number of instruments were developed in order to collect data and foster reflective practices with participants. Weekly reflective questionnaires were developed in order to have participants reflect on their own teaching

practices for the week. They used these questionnaires to think about how their students responded to each individual method they used with the student, as well as how effective this method was. Participants were asked to consider how effective the methods used were, and other ways that they could approach the situation.

A reflective journal was also utilized in this study. The journal was informal, and participants were asked to use the journal to openly reflect throughout the week without the structure that was provided by the weekly questionnaires.

Participants

The participants in this study were all novice teachers at the Wagner College Early Childhood Center. Working at the Early Childhood Center was the first real teaching experience that the participants had been exposed to, aside from student teaching. Within this setting, the participants were exposed to many first time experiences with students and colleagues. They designed units for the students to participate in and were treated as full members of the school's teaching team.

Process

General Setup

Before the start of my study, I consulted with the Director at the Wagner College Early Childhood Center to discuss the study I was interested in conducting at the school. I explained what the study entailed and how I planned to go about organizing and running this study. Once I gained approval from the director, I held a meeting with the novice teachers at the Early Childhood Center in order to explain the purpose and focus of my study. I informed the novice teachers that I needed five people who were willing to

participate in my study, which aimed to explore how to promote the development of deeply reflective teachers who were conscious about their decisions. I went on to explain that novice teachers would work to help develop student focus on non-play activities, and together they would reflect on how effective each approach was in order to build stronger practices. The novice teachers within the school would work together with each other, as well as the head classroom teachers, in order to become more self-reflective educators. The participants would do this by working with the students in the school, focusing on developing their attention on academic material within a play environment. Although the participants worked with the students in the classroom, the children were not immediate participants within this study.

Pre-Study

After explaining the goals and purpose of the study, I handed out consent forms to the potential participants. The consent forms also explained the study so that potential participants could once again review it. Once I gave out the consent forms I allowed time to address any questions or concerns brought up by the potential participants. I asked that the consent forms for interested participants be handed back in within five business days. The first five participants to return the consent form would be participants in the study.

I also informed the participants about their privacy rights during the study. While the participants in the study would know who the other participants were due to our weekly meetings, all reflective guidelines and written responses would be kept private and would only be viewed by the person conducting the study. In order to ensure that these were kept private, I told the participants they would be assigned a number to list on their paper instead of their names. The participants and I worked together to create a

comfortable environment to grow and learn in; however, participants were informed that if they felt uncomfortable at any time, they would be permitted to exclude themselves from participating for that meeting, or leave the study at any time.

Once I obtained five novice teachers to participate in my study, I handed out copies of the Pre-Reflective Reflective Guide. I explained to the participants that this questionnaire and survey were being used in order to gain an understanding of the children in each teacher's individual class, as well as to generate their thinking on the topic. The participants had three days to complete the Pre-Reflective Reflective Guide, and participants' schedules were discussed in order to plan our first meeting.

Week 1

At our first forty-five minute meeting, the participants and I discussed the various challenges that the participants and I had seen our students display, with special recognition of their challenges transitioning from play to academic activities. The participants and I also discussed potential ways that these issues could be addressed, with input from colleagues, as well as how these potential solutions could help our students to overcome the difficulties that they faced. Throughout the meeting the participants took notes based on suggestions from colleagues in order to implement this information. I also took notes on this information as well as the participants' responses. I paid particular attention to how they phrased their responses: Did participants' discussions mostly utilize simple responses, in-depth responses with explanation, or evidence from their experiences?

At the end of our meeting I reminded the participants to take the information that they gathered that day and implement the suggested approaches with their students and

take note on how their teaching practices worked with each individual student. It was important for the novice teachers to remember that every approach would not be ideal for each individual student. They were also told to reflect on the effectiveness of the teaching practices using questions such as, Did the approaches I used work? How effective were they? What could I do differently next time in order to help my student accomplish this difficult transition? At the end of this meeting I handed out the Daily Response Journals and the first Weekly Reflective Guide. I explained these tools and told participants to use the Daily Reflective Journal at the end of each workday. The point of this journal was to help them critically think about their teaching practices. These journals were used to record and reflect on and particular events that happened throughout the day. Participants were told to complete the Weekly Reflective Guide at the end of the next week, before our meeting. These guides were collected the day prior to our meeting.

At the end of Week 1, participants handed in their completed Weekly Reflective Guide. I reviewed these guides in order to see how participants were utilizing approaches and reflecting upon their practices. The participants and I then used these guides as a starting point for our discussion during our meeting. We discussed what each participant noticed with their respective students' transitions from play to academic work, as well as what techniques they used to help ease the students' transitions and how these techniques worked. While discussing how they utilized the techniques, participants were encouraged to critically think about how their approach to utilizing the transition worked with the particular student. Could they have executed the technique in a different way, which may have worked better for the student? Next, I provided approaches that have been shown to improve student focus, and asked the participants to implement these strategies

throughout the next week. Participants were told to particularly think about how the approaches they used worked. If it was not effective, was it adapted for the particular student; how was it adapted? What will be your next steps in the following week?

During this meeting, participants were given the option to share what they recorded in their Daily Response Journals, which allowed us to address the particular concerns and ideas that each individual participant had regarding their classes. At the end of this meeting, I reminded participants to continue to use their Daily Response Journals, and I handed out the Midpoint Reflective Guide. This guide was once again collected the day prior to our next meeting, so I could review them before the meeting.

Week 2

At our next meeting, the participants and I started by discussing what approaches worked for each individual participant. While many participants were able to explain their ideas with evidence, some others were encouraged to elaborate and share this information, which they did. Following this discussion, the individual participants discussed how they felt about their own personal reflective skills. I guided this discussion asking the following question: “Have you seen your own reflective skills develop since the start of this project? How?” At the end of our meeting, participants were asked once again to continue implementing the approaches that were discussed last week. They were also reminded to continue to record events and how they were handled in their Daily Response Journals, and to complete the Weekly Reflective Guide.

Week 3

At meeting at the end of Week 3, the participants and I began our discussion by addressing adaptive ideas that the participants had used with the techniques they were

utilizing. They discussed how these adaptive approaches helped them to be more successful in addressing the difficult transition period that their students faced. During this meeting, the discussion was centered on participant led conversations. When necessary I asked guiding questions, and let the participants regain control of the conversation. This allowed for the participants to generate their own thoughts and evaluate their teaching practices through their own words and thought process. During this meeting I took notes on how often they were critically evaluating events throughout the discussion. At the end of the meeting, participants were once again reminded to fill out their Daily Response Journals as well as their Final Reflection.

Week 4

At our final meeting, our conversation was generated around how the participants have developed their reflective abilities. This was done using the following questions:

- Do you feel that you have improved as a reflective educator throughout the duration of this study? Why or why not?
- Are your abilities to critically evaluate your practices the same, better, or worse due to your participation in this study?
- Did you notice yourself reflecting upon practices during interactions with students and adapt your practices and approaches, after and event occurred, or both?

These questions helped me to gather information on how the participants saw themselves change as reflective educators. Before ending our meeting and time together, I asked the participants to complete a final survey, which also helped me to understand

how they thought they improved. At this point in time I collected the participants' Daily Response Journals and Final Surveys in order to analyze with other data responses.

Analysis

After completing our last meeting and gathering the last remaining data, I began to my analysis. Data analysis first began by looking closely at the word count provided by the participants. Each weekly questionnaire was analyzed for word count to see if there was personal growth from the start of the study until the completion. Next, the data that was collected throughout the duration of the study was analyzed using Dewey's four points of reflection (*active, persistent, and careful* consideration, and *grounds to support*) as an analytic lens.

The Weekly Reflective Guides were analyzed for individual answer quality, by comparing the answers on the Pre-Reflective Reflective Guide, Weekly Reflective Guides, and Final Reflective Guide, to see how each participant grew on her own as a reflective educator. I also examined the journals in order to evaluate participant growth. The discussion and journal evaluations were completed by answering a set of questions regarding the data. These questions were answered at the end of each week, with tables being created to show growth from Week 1 to Week 4. Particular questions about the data can be seen below:

- “Did the participant elaborate on her answer?”
- “Was the participant able to accurately evaluate her own performance skills?”
- “Did the participant ask questions about his or her performance?”
- “Did the participant completely answer questions that arose?”

- “Did the participant name the next steps that can be taken in her approach?”

This analysis helped in understanding how the participants improved their reflective abilities from the start of the study until the completion of it.

Finally, the data were interpreted using the field note resources gathered through participant observation. This data source was used in order to determine participant growth in their abilities to reflect and how this improvement happened.

Chapter 4: Findings/Results

Word Count Analysis

Word count analysis was an important component of this study's data collection. By analyzing this information, participants' results were compared not only by content, but also patterns that were displayed based on the amount of words the individual participants used (see Table 1). The word count on the initial, pre-reflective guide, showed that the participants had a very large gap between the highest and lowest word count. Participant 4 provided the highest word count, with the entire questionnaire being answered in 331 words. Participant 5 provided the lowest word count, at 26 words. Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3 fell in the mid-range, recording 298 words, 148 words, and 74 words, respectively.

During Week 1 of the study, the participants remained fairly consistent with the word count that was recorded on the Weekly Reflective Guides. Participant 4 once again had the highest word count at 317 words, and Participant 5 again had the lowest count at 49 words. Participant 1 recorded 287 words, Participant 2 recorded 254 words, and Participant 3 recorded 126 words.

At the end of Week 2 of the study, there was an interesting change in the word count on the Midpoint Reflective Guide. The three participants who had been consistently recording the highest word count all displayed a drop in the number of words they wrote for the Reflective Guide, while the two participants who had regularly recorded a lower word count showed a jump in the number of words they recorded on

this week's reflective guide. Participant 1's word count fell to 262 words, while Participant 4's word count dropped to 277 words. Participant 2 had the biggest word count drop, with only 111 words recorded for the week. Participant 3 recorded 192 words after the end of Week 2, and Participant 5 jumped to a word count of 189 words.

The word count for Week 3 Reflective rose for the three participants who have consistently displayed a higher word count. Participant 1 recorded 301 words, Participant 2 recorded 188 words, and Participants 4 recorded 308 words. Although Participants 3 and 5 demonstrated a drop in their word count from the Midpoint Reflective Guide, their word count was significantly higher than what they had recorded on the Pre-Reflective Guide and Week 1 Reflective Guide. Participant 3 ended Week 3 with 167 words recorded on the reflective guide, and Participant 5 wrote 130 words.

The Final Reflective Guide demonstrated very high word counts, with all participants surpassing their own respective word counts for previous weeks. Participant 1 recorded 384 words, Participant 2 recorded 398 words, Participant 3 wrote 202 words, Participant 4 wrote 379 words, and Participant 5 recorded 207 words. It is noted that every participant had a rise in word count by the conclusion of the study.

Table 1: Word count by week and participant

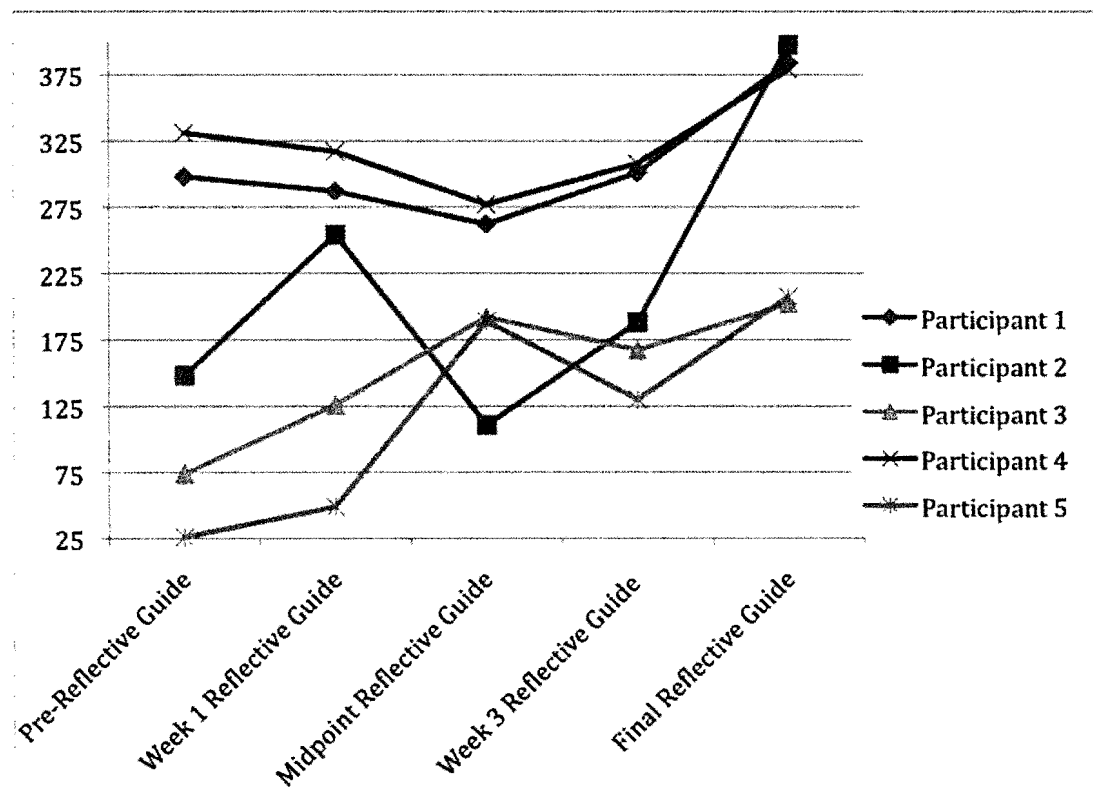
	Pre-Reflective Guide	Week 1 Reflective Guide	Midpoint Reflective Guide	Week 3 Reflective Guide	Final Reflective Guide	Total Word Count
Participant 1	298 words	287 words	262 words	301 words	384 words	1,532 words
Participant 2	148 words	254 words	111 words	188 words	398 words	1,099 words
Participant 3	74 words	126 words	192 words	167 words	202 words	761 words
Participant 4	331 words	317 words	277 words	308 words	379 words	1,612 words
Participant 5	26 words	49 words	189 words	130 words	207 words	601 words

Each participant's word count from every week was added together in order to see how many words they recorded on their Reflective Guides throughout the duration of the study. Participant 4 recorded the highest total amount of words, 1,612, throughout the study. Participant 1 recorded a total of 1,532 words, which was the second highest word count recorded. Participant 2 landed in the middle with the third highest word count, 1,099 in total. Participant 3 recorded 761 words in total, which was the fourth highest word count. Finally, Participant 5 had the lowest word count of 601 words in total throughout the study.

Over the course of the study, two patterns existed. Two participants (Participants 1 and 4) started off with a very high word count, and continued to follow that pattern throughout the study. These two participants averaged 314.5 words between them during Week 1, and ended Week 4 with an average of 381.5 words. Throughout the entire study, they averaged a total of 1,572 words. Two other participants (Participants 3 and 5), ended Week 1 with a very low averaged word count of 50. Their word counts rose

throughout the study, and they ended Week 4 with an average of 204.5 words between them. Throughout the whole study, these two participants had an average of 681 words, which is significantly lower than Participants 1 and 4. The last participant (Participant 2) had mixed results, starting with a fairly low word count of 148 words during Week 1, but ending with a very high word count of 398 words during Week 4. Participant 2 had a word count of 1,099 words throughout the study. (See figure 1.)

Figure 1: Word count relationship by week and participant



Expressive Content

Once the word count was examined, remaining data content was analyzed using Dewey's four points of reflection (*active, persistent, and careful* consideration, and *grounds to support*) as an analytic lens. First, content was explored in order to determine if participants were *actively* reflecting throughout the study. In other words, did they sincerely think about their own ideas, or passively learn from the ideas of others? Did the participants critically think about a topic, raising and answering their own questions? Based on our weekly discussions, questionnaires, and journals, it was found that the three participants who ended the study with the highest word count (Participants 1, 2, and 4) had been more actively reflecting upon their teachings and practices. During observations throughout the discussions, it was found that these three participants raised more questions during our discussions, and sought to answer them by considering possible outcomes and events. For example, during Week 2, Participant 3 was having difficulty getting a particular child to remain focused, even with the use of a structured participation timeline as a visual aid. Participant 4 was well aware of this child's fondness of trains and wondered how the student would respond if the visual aid was altered to include this interest. Participant 4 stated, "I know he is fond of trains; do you think the visual aid would be more effective if you changed it to include train tracks? The child could use a toy train and move it along the tracks as he completes each individual task. I think this would be worth trying, because if it catches his interest, he may be more inclined to stay on task, as moving the train will seem like a reward or game." As it turns out, Participant 4's suggestion was very helpful, and while the child still lost focus on occasion, it was much better. This participant was *actively* thinking about what she knew

about the student in order to best suit his needs. She took an issue that a child displayed, and although the approach was only slightly altered in a creative manner, it made a big difference in the child's ability to stay focused.

Participants 1, 2, and 4 also displayed inclinations toward developing their own unique ideas, and had a larger variety of topics that they wished to discuss, as displayed on the weekly questionnaires. These participants were aware that having a better understanding of challenges that arose could affect their successfulness when implementing various techniques within the classroom. The two participants who displayed the lowest word counts (Participants 3 and 5) would engage in our discussions, but often displayed tendencies of just agreeing with others and using the ideas of the other participants as common ground in their own discussions. For example, during Week 2, Participant 5 stated, "I agree with Participant 2's approach for helping the student. As she stated before, using a timer would help the students to easily understand when they are allowed to return to the play centers. I am considering trying this approach with my own students." Based on this quote, it is easy to see that Participant 5 was mostly reiterating the points stated by Participant 2. Participant 3 and 5 also usually listed the same topics to discuss on their weekly questionnaires, as opposed to changing their responses based on student responses to interventions and new challenges that arose. These participants also did not seem to use their journals as much as the stronger participants did.

The next component of Dewey's definition that was examined was *persistence*. Were the participants *persistent* in their reflections, continually reflecting on practices before, during, and after they take place? Evidence for this component was found mostly

throughout discussion observations and journal entries. While all five participants displayed evidence of reflection after they had implemented lessons and practices with students, only two participants (Participants 1 and 4) consistently displayed evidence of reflecting before the interaction took place. This was mostly seen during the weekly discussions, when participants would consider how a particular method might impact the student. For example, in one journal entry, Participant 1 explained how a change in approach might affect a particular student. “Once the student is able to sit and remain focused for at least five minutes using the visual aid, I will increase the amount of time that he will be required to complete academic work to seven minutes. While these extra two minutes may not seem like a lot, it is possible that he will not be able to keep his focus during this extra time, and may even begin to lose focus before the initial five minute period is up. By making his visual timeline longer, it may not seem as easy because there will be much more space to shade in. This could easily throw his focus off.” Participant 2 would occasionally show evidence of reflecting on how a method may impact the student, considering the potential interaction during only two of our meetings. Unless prompted, the remaining participants (3 and 5) did not show much inclination toward reflecting on the potential outcome on how a method may affect the student. Four participants (1, 2, 3, and 4) displayed an inclination toward reflecting during their lesson, showing that they were evaluating the effectiveness and changing their approach on the spot if necessary. This again was noticed in journal entries as well as discussion observations.

The third component examined was whether or not the participants used *careful* consideration in their reflective practice, by taking their time and thoughtfully evaluating

their performances. This component was evaluated based on the content the participant shared in discussions, questionnaires, and journals. All five participants did show signs of thoughtfully evaluating their practice after they had completed lessons with their students. For example, Participant 3 examined and explained her lesson on *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. “The student was extremely engaged during the read aloud, which occurred during circle time. After we completed the read aloud, we broke up into centers and I pulled the child for one-on-one work at the craft table. The student had difficulty focusing, as he wanted to make sure no one took the train toys. Once he began to focus, he was much better but had difficulty answering questions about the book. I decided to show him the book to see if he could figure out the answers using the pictures. This was a helpful approach because it allowed me to see that the student was not having difficulty comprehending the information, but had a hard time remembering it. Overall the lesson was successful and the student was able to sit until he completed the academic task. The task chart helped him to accomplish this task.” As is apparent using the lens of *careful* consideration, Participant 3 was able to pinpoint what worked in this scenario and determined what needed to be changed in order to help the student be successful. Participant 5 was also able to determine what worked throughout her lessons and what should be changed. Participants 1, 2 and 4 were stronger in this area based on the fact that they were able to also provide evidence that supported why they should or should not change their approach, which brings us to our final point to consider.

The final component of Dewey’s definition of reflection examined whether or not the participants used *evidence* from their experiences and practice to support their learning. Again, Participants 1, 2, and 4 were stronger in this area, giving clear evidence,

without prompts, for the entire study. Participant 2 used evidence to explain how students' transitions were improving on the Week 3 Questionnaire. "This week, the students showed prolonged time spent on task. The students who have shown difficulty in the past now respond more quickly and begin their academic tasks more easily than in the past. Using the sequence chart makes this transition easier for students, as they can see exactly what is expected of them before they can return to the play centers. As stated last week, I have noticed that students can become slightly distracted by the token/toys on the sequence chart, but by moving this chart out of their physical reach, and just letting them move the token when appropriate, they have increased their focus on academics."

Participants 1, 2, and 4 also explained their theories and practice using evidence that showed exactly why something did or did not work. Participants 3 and 5 only consistently did this when they were asked to further explain themselves. At the beginning of the study, Participants 3 and 5 did not give any explanation with evidence unless they were prompted; however, as the weeks went on they were slowly but surely beginning to use more evidence to support their statements.

Data was also analyzed using a specific set of questions to analyze the participants' growth throughout the study. The questions below were used to analyze journal entries and discussions at the end of each week:

Elaboration (Q1): Did the participant elaborate on her answer?

Evaluation (Q2): Was the participant able to accurately evaluate her own performance skills?

Questioning (Q3): Did the participant ask questions about his or her performance?

Completeness (Q4): Did the participant completely answer questions that arose?

Action (Q5): Did the participant name the next steps that can be taken in her approach?

This analysis helped in understanding how the participants improved their reflective abilities from the start of the study until the completion of it. It is easy to see that Participant 1 and Participant 4 started off very strong, and were extremely reflective at the beginning of the study. As shown in Table 3, this trend between the two participants continued. It is also clear to see that Participant 5 had very weak reflective skills, based on the questions that were looked at, and Participant 3 was also weak in this respect. By the end of Week 4, both Participant 3 and Participant 5 had started to show signs of becoming more reflective, only struggling with actively asking themselves questions about their own performance. Participant 2 showed signs of being strong reflective educator at the end of Week 1, only failing to ask herself questions about her performance, and elaborating on answers. By the end of Week 4, this participant had also improved in this area. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

Table 2: Initial Discussion and Journal Analysis

	Q1: Elaboration	Q2: Evaluation	Q3: Questioning	Q4: Completeness	Q5: Action
Participant 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Participant 2	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Participant 3	N	N	N	Y	N
Participant 4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Participant 5	N	N	N	N	N

Table 3: Final Discussion and Journal Analysis

	Q1: Elaboration	Q2: Evaluation	Q3: Questioning	Q4: Completeness	Q5: Action
Participant 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Participant 2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Participant 3	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Participant 4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Participant 5	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Chapter 5: Discussion

Data Interpretation

The data that was collected throughout the study yielded some extremely interesting results. Of particular interest was the correlation between the number of words each participant used on the weekly questionnaires and how reflective participants were based on observations during the weekly discussions and journal entries. The participants who consistently displayed a higher word count also proved to have stronger reflective practice. It was also interesting that as those participants with lower word counts increased the number of words utilized, their reflective skills also seemed to be improving. It appears that the word count increased as a result of the participants using more highly reflective practices. The word count began to increase as their skills developed because they began to use evidence and explanations in their statements, as opposed to just stating what they saw in the classroom.

Utilizing Dewey's four points as an analytic lens was also helpful in helping the participants to better understand exactly what reflection is, as well as analyze their results. This allowed for specific components of reflection to be examined, with a concrete explanation of what each individual point should look like. By defining each individual point that Dewey mentioned in his definition of reflection, the participants were able to truly understand exactly what reflection should look like.

Research Question 1: “How can we foster reflective practices with novice teachers?”

Fostering reflective practices within novice teachers is extremely complicated. There are multiple ways that one could attempt to deepen a novice teacher’s reflective practice. During this study, clearly stating what was expected during deep reflective practice helped the participants to better understand what this practice is. The participants had the four points that Dewey listed (*active, persistent, and careful* consideration, and *grounds to support*), which helped them to comprehend what they should be doing. The participants who were weaker at the start definitely benefitted from this component.

The weekly discussions and journals also helped the participants to think about what they were saying and writing. The discussions were guided by questions that were used in order to help participants generate reflective practice. These questions focused on the participants’ interactions with the students in their classes. These questions were generated to help participants reflect on their own practice, and personal experiences within their classrooms. The discussion was also focused on the participants’ conversation, which made it easy to encourage them to expand upon their ideas. For example, when participants were struggling on something, it was easy to help them think through what they were trying to say, as well as arrive at conclusions with the assistance of the other participants. Asking questions such as, “Why do you think that worked?” and “How could you alter that approach so it would be more effective?” encouraged the participants to really think about their approaches. Participants also took constructive feedback and utilized it in their own practice. For example, following the completion of the Week 1 Reflective Guides, I spoke to Participants 3 and 5 and suggested that they

should work on thoroughly explain their answers, as well as provide evidence for their reasoning. After this discussion, both participants began to produce higher quality responses and their word count began to rise. The journals also allowed the participants to develop their reflective abilities on their own. I found that the participants who used the journals more often were also the stronger reflectors. This is most likely because they were able to get their reflective ideas on paper and work through their own thought process.

The weekly questionnaires helped the participants to grow, as they were more structured, displaying what they should be thinking about. For example, the Midpoint Questionnaire asked questions such as, "Have you noticed improvements, decline, or stability in your students' transitions from play to academic learning? Please explain." By specifically stating that the participant must explain their answer, it required the participant to use more evidence and explain their thoughts and ideas. One question on the Midpoint and Final Questionnaires asked the participants if they would continue to use this approach or if they think they should alter the approaches. Interestingly, Participant 5 grew throughout the study, and her growth paralleled how this question was answered during the different weeks. On the Midpoint Questionnaire, she answered the question stating "Yes I should because developing student focus is important for their future academic careers, maybe I need to find a way to make it more fun." This answer dramatically changed in the Final Questionnaire, when she answered the same question by stating, "I will continue to use these approaches, because I have only started to see student improvement. I think if I continue to help students develop their attention span on important academic tasks as opposed to only play, they will continue to learn."

The structured questionnaires also produced slightly different results based on the type of questioning that was given. For example, questions about self-efficacy produced participant answers that were well thought out and explained, as opposed to questions that were centered on participant knowledge. For example, when Participant 2 answered Question 2 (Did you use any techniques from our discussion meetings?) on the Week 1 Reflective Guide, she simply explained the technique that was used. When Participant 2 answered Question 1 (What did you do in order to help your students better transition from play to academic learning?) on the Midpoint Reflective Guide, she fully explained her answer by explaining exactly what she did and why it was effective, which led to a higher quality reflection.

Combining these three approaches allowed the participants to develop reflective practices. One thing that I would change if I were to do this study again would be to model the practice of reflecting more. This would allow for the participants to better understand Dewey's four points, and therefore allow for more critical reflection to take place. For example, explaining and modeling how the participants should use evidence in order to have grounds that support their theories and ideas would be more beneficial to the participants and help them to better grow as critically reflective educators.

Another thing that I would change if I were to do this study again would be to ensure that the questions I used to analyze participant growth were not framed as yes/no questions. This approach hindered parts of the study because if the questions had been generated to include more details, I would have been able to collect more data on the topic. Perhaps I would instead use more open-ended questions so the participants would share more. For example, the question (Q1): "Did the participant elaborate on her

answer?” might be rewritten as “How did the participant use information and observations from interactions with students to elaborate on her answer?” (Q3): “Did the participant ask questions about her performance?” might be rewritten as “What kinds of questions did the participant ask about her performance?” Using this type of questioning would have led to more data and a deeper understanding of how each participant progressed. It also would have allowed me to see if the participants who displayed strong reflective skills at the start of the study had changed their approaches in their reflective practice.

Research Question 2: “How can we use reflective practice to build a team that works together around student needs?”

It is important for educators to work together and be on the same page in order to effectively address student needs. Working together as a team in order to solidify the approaches within the student’s daily routine is extremely important. If one teacher is attempting to address an issue, but a second teacher within the classroom does not reinforce this, the entire approach could be lost on the student. Being able to communicate with coworkers in your classroom is an important skill to have. In order to answer this question, it is important to look at the effectiveness of conversations that were used during our weekly discussion meetings.

The weekly discussion meetings became extremely important as the study progressed. While many of the participants worked with different classes, they were all able to share their ideas in order to address a common issue of developing student focus on the daily academic task. By the end of the study, the participants were giving

suggestions to each other in order to help address student behaviors and common issues that they found within their own classrooms.

As the participants developed stronger reflective practices, they were able to suggest more meaningful approaches to help their peers. Instead of just suggesting a method to try, they would suggest the method and explain how it might work with their students. They also were able to discuss practices that may not be effective based on previous behavior displayed by the student. The participants helped each other to modify their approaches in order to help them use an optimal approach based on what they had learned about the individual students. The participants truly came together to create a strong, supportive team.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pre-Reflective Guide

Participant Assigned Number: _____

Date: _____

Age Group: _____

- 1.) Have you noticed any children in your class show difficulty transitioning from play to more academic activities?

- 2.) Are your students in class focused on academic tasks, or more interested in continuing to play with friends in ways that do not incorporate academic tasks?

- 3.) Is there a specific student in your class who has shown particular difficulty with this transition? Please explain.

- 4.) What could you do to help children more easily transition from play to academic activities?

- 5.) In what ways could this help your students?

Appendix B: Week 1 Reflective Guide

Participant Assigned Number: _____

Date: _____

Age Group: _____

1.) What did you notice this week about students' transitions from play activities to academic activities?

2.) Did you use any techniques from our discussion meetings?

3.) What would you like to talk about in our next meeting?

Appendix C: Midpoint Reflective Guide

Participant Assigned Number: _____

Date: _____

Age Group: _____

- 1.) What did you do in order to help your students better transition from play to academic learning?

- 2.) Have you noticed improvements, decline, or stability in your students' transitions from play to academic learning? Please explain.

- 3.) In your observation, does this approach seem to be working for your students? Why or why not?

- 4.) Do you think you should alter your approach during the upcoming week? Why or why not?

- 5.) If you believe you should alter your approach for next week, how will you do this?

Appendix D: Week 3 Reflective Guide

Participant Assigned Number: _____

Date: _____

Age Group: _____

3.) What did you notice this week about students' transitions from play activities to academic activities?

4.) Did you use any techniques from our discussion meetings?

3.) What would you like to talk about in our next meeting?

Appendix E: Final Reflective Guide

Participant Assigned Number: _____

Date: _____

Age Group: _____

1.) What did you do in order to help your students better transition from play to academic learning?

2.) Have you noticed improvements, decline, or stability in your students' transitions from play to academic learning? Please explain.

3.) In your observation, does this approach seem to be working for your students? Why or why not?

4.) Do you think you should alter your approach during the upcoming week? Why or why not?

5.) If you believe you should alter your approach for next week, how will you do this?

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

WAGNER COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research: Adults

As part of my master's degree requirements at Wagner College, I am conducting research on building deeply reflective educators in order to further learning. You are invited to participate in this research project, and this document will provide you with information that will help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary.

For this study, I will be using an "action research" model, where participants are co-learners with me around an issue of practice. During the course of the project, I will conduct weekly meetings in our to discuss popular practices about how to focus students' attention on academic learning while in a play-based context. If you were to participate, I would ask you to reflect on your own teaching practices. This study will be about our own learning, not about the children we are working with. All information you provide during the project will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. My final thesis will also be cleared of any possible identifying information in order to ensure your confidentiality.

The project does not carry any foreseeable risks. If for any reason you felt uncomfortable, you could leave study at any time with no penalty, and any information you may have provided would be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning this study please feel free to contact me at emilie.johnsen@wagner.edu (917-658-0402) or Dr. DeMoss at Karen.demoss@wagner.edu (718.420.4070). Thank you for considering being part of a study related to my research for a master's degree in Education at Wagner College.

Please sign below to indicate your understanding of the project and your consent to participate. I have provided two copies so that you may keep a duplicate for your records.

 Signature of Participant

Date

 Emilie Johnsen, Investigator

Wagner College
Graduate Thesis Copyright Release Form

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