Too Important to Ignore:

A Post-Intentional Phenomenological Investigation of Teaching Pre-Service Early

Childhood Teachers About Infants and Toddlers

A dissertation

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Acknowledgements Page

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Abstract

A watershed of knowledge about how very young children learn and develop has been revealed through the science of child development. The science of child development has demonstrated that immediately from birth, babies need supportive relationships and responsive environments in order to build strong brain circuits and lay the foundations for both physical and mental health. Increasingly very young children (under three years of age) in the United States depend on early childhood teachers for their care and education. Studies of early childhood teacher preparation programs, that focused on preparing teachers of children from birth to grade three, have found that pre-service students may not take even one course about infants and toddlers (birth to three years of age) or that the coverage of infants and toddlers is marginalized within the curriculum.

This post-intentional phenomenological study (Vagle, 2014) examined the phenomena of *how infant and toddler content might take shape* in bachelor's degree (BA/BS) programs that offer Early Childhood teacher (birth to grade three) licensure in Minnesota. The phenomenon was studied though investigating the experiences of six faculty members who teach courses about infants and toddlers and seven staff members of university-sponsored child development centers who host students in their classrooms as an infant or toddler practicum connected to the courses taught by the faculty.

Findings from this study are depicted through six tentative manifestations of the phenomenon: *Swimming against the Current, Complexity, Un-like, Mentoring Students, Perspectives on Parents* and *Beyond Standards*. The tentative manifestations were

produced as a synthesis of the experience of faculty and staff: attending to the Minnesota Board of Teaching's Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Standards (87100:3000); in dialogue with participants' personal preparation, experiences, beliefs, and convictions; in consideration of the demographics of the pre-service students; and in response to current information and issues within early childhood education. This research contributes to an understanding of how infant toddler content took shape in five early childhood teacher preparation programs and also yielded significant practical implications for teaching pre-service teacher candidates about infants and toddlers.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

"How individuals function from pre-school all the way through adolescence and even adulthood, to a significant extent, hinges on their experiences before the age of three."

(Force, C., 1994, p. 1)

Overview of Chapter 1

This chapter sets the context for the importance of this study, identifies the problem, provides a description and rationale, and presents the research questions. To establish the importance of this study, this chapter begins with an overview of some researchers; insights regarding the importance of experiences and development in a child's first years of life. The chapter also verifies the trend towards an increase in the number of infants and toddlers in out-of-home care – pointing to an increased need for early childhood educators with expertise in working with infants and toddlers. Given this trend, juxtaposed with what is known about the importance of the early years, there is a national interest in early childhood teacher preparation (Allen & Kelly, 2015). Also provided is an overview of the national research indicating that many early childhood teacher preparation programs may not include courses on infants and toddlers. Chapter 1 concludes with a statement of the problem, an overview of the study including the research questions, and researcher assumptions.

The First Years Last Forever

From the *Starting Points* report released in 1994, to the more recent neuroscience research (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000; Twardosz, 2012), it is clear that child development

research has established that what happens in the earliest years in the life of a child matters greatly. In 2000 the seminal national report entitled *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000) was released. It informed both professionals and the public that what happens in a child's earliest years has both short and long-term impact on the child's future development and life-long outcomes. The *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* report offered a deeper understanding of how early experiences build a foundation for later development and learning; the interactive influences between genetics and the environment; the impact of poverty and hardship on a child's development; the negative effects of stress. The Executive Summary of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* proclaimed that:

> Although there have been long-standing debates about how much the early years really matter in the larger scheme of lifelong development, our conclusion is unequivocal: What happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for adult well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows. (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000, p. 5)

In those earliest years of human life, the brain is literally being built through interactions with parents and other caregivers (Cartwright, 2012) . As the brain is being built, how it is built can result in children's potential being optimized or compromised (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). Not only does what happens early in life impact the architecture of the brain, but it also impacts the individual's life course (Anda, Butchart, Felitti, & Brown, 2010).

Because of these enhanced understandings of the importance of the early years, early childhood education is currently in the national spotlight as a viable way to narrow academic achievement gaps (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006), increase human capital (Temple & Reynolds, 2007), and impact long-term well-being (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). These expectations are, in part, based on longitudinal studies of young adults who participated in high quality early childhood programs. Studies of these individuals found they are more likely to have graduated from high school, are leading productive lives, and are less likely to rely on social services or spend time in prisons (Barnett, Carolan, & Johns, 2013). In addition, neuroscientists have found that it is in the first three years of life, that the architecture of the brain is formed through human interactions as well as through infants' and toddlers' experiences in the world (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015). There is strong evidence that what happens in a child's preschool years, especially the first three years of life, builds a foundation for the child's future. These discoveries are informing both policies and program development at the national level (Shonkoff, 2010).

Research conducted since the release of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000) has increased our understanding of the capabilities of babies and very young children to learn and also provides a deeper understanding that while this developmental period in a young child's life holds opportunity, it also holds risk (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). This includes an understanding that there are critical and sensitive periods of time, especially in a child's earliest development, in which experiences result in the development of and changes in brain circuitry (Fox, Levitt, & Nelson 2010). In addition, these differences in qualities of early life experiences have

been linked to the trajectory of an individual's development across the life-span. Hertzman and Boyce (2010) summarize these findings in an article in *Annual Review of Public Health:*

> Social environments and experiences get under the skin early in life in ways that affect the course of human development. Because most factors associated with early child development are a function of socioeconomic status, differences in early child development form a socio-economic gradient. We are now learning how, when, and by what means early experiences influence key biological systems over the long term to produce gradients: a process known as biological embedding. (Hertzman & Boyce, 2010, p. 329)

What has been learned is that during infancy and toddlerhood the knowledge and skills developed are highly dependent on experience that influences brain development (Takesian & Hensch, 2013). These findings from the science of child development underscore the importance of child's early childhood experiences.

Changing Societal Needs

One key perspective in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000) was to juxtapose findings from the science of child development with the then (year 2000) current societal trends - specifically the trend towards work patterns and the impact on children. Contained in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* was a strong statement supporting a focus on 'out of home relationships' that impact brain development and ultimately the child's future developmental trajectory. The report made

links between advancing scientific understandings and current situations for many children in the United States:

> Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning early in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early childhood years. The time is long overdue for society to recognize the significance of out-of-home relationships for young children, to esteem those who care for them when their parents are not available, and to compensate them adequately as a means of supporting stability and quality in these relationships for all children, regardless of their family's income and irrespective of their developmental needs. (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000, p. 9)

This increasing trend toward out of home care prompted investigations of early childhood education and early childhood teacher preparation (Bowman, Dovovan, & Burns, 2000). Studies found that child care quality varied within child care settings. There are more than 44,000 centers with an estimated 340,000 teachers providing care and education to infants and toddlers. This care and education is often found to be low in quality. Low quality includes things such as minimal requirements for staff, high turnover rates of staff, etc. (National Survey of Early Care and Education Team, 2013).

The trend toward out of home care has dramatically increased since *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* was published in 2000. In 2000, the Census Bureau counted the labor force participation rate for women with infants (children under age one) at 55% (Children's Defense Fund Key Fact, 2003). In 2012, Zero to Three's *National Baby*

Facts (2012) reported that 63% of mothers of infants return to work before their child is one year of age. They also noted that "second only to the immediate family, child care is the setting in which early childhood development unfolds for many of these young children" (*National Baby Facts*, 2012, p. 6). That means that many infants and toddlers rely on early childhood teachers to provide the kind of environment that is needed to promote their optimal development. A national report described the importance of focusing on early childhood professionals and linked the key findings from the science of child development with a new understanding of how important the day to day experiences of young children are:

> Young children experience important influences from many adults, including their parents or other primary caregivers; their siblings and other family members; their peers; members of their communities; and the adults who work with them to provide for their care and education, health, and security. These professionals represent one of the most important channels available for improving the quality of early care and education. (Allen and Kelly, 2015, p. 15)

Given the information from the science of child development and concerns about the quality of many child education and care settings, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Research Council of the National Academies commissioned a study that was dual in focus. It studied both what the science of child development has revealed as well addressed the individuals who make up the early childhood workforce. The report is titled: *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (Allen & Kelly, 2015). The introduction of the report provides a description

that speaks to the complex interactions between optimal education and support for young children and the current situations that exist in early care and education:

> This study was commissioned specifically to focus on the science of development and early learning not just for what it reveals about children, but in particular for its implications for the professionals who work with children during this critical period. These implications apply to the knowledge and competencies these professionals need; their systems for professional learning; and other supports that contribute to improving the quality of professional practice and developing an excellent, robust, and stable workforce across the many professional roles that relate to children from birth through age 8. This dual focus on the science of learning and the development of the workforce is central to ensuring that all children get a good start in life. (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 37)

At present the early childhood workforce is described as fragmented because for children under age five, there are many different programs with differing credentialing for teachers. In addition there is a difference in how these educators are viewed in status as compared to teachers in the K – 12 system. As a result, the quality of the programs is variable and the turn-over rate for teachers is very high – creating a situation of instability in care during the developmental period when children benefit most from stable relationships. The report also addresses the disparities between the compensation of early childhood teachers and those of their peers in the K-12 system.

The disparities in compensation are an underlying issue in the poor quality that exists in many early care and education settings. In calling for increased compensation, the report also calls for increased educational expectations for early childhood

professionals to have a bachelor's degree. The authors of the report indicate that they

believe increased expectations for qualifications along with increased compensation are

what is needed:

> The consistency in education expectations that would result from requiring
>
> educators who work with children from birth through age 8 to have a minimum of
>
> a bachelor's or equivalent degree, with qualifications based on core competencies,
>
> could contribute to improving the quality of professional practice, stabilizing the
>
> workforce, and achieving greater consistency in learning experiences and optimal
>
> outcomes for children. (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 366)

Focusing on Bachelor's Level Early Childhood Teachers

Allen's and Kelly's report (2015) *Tranforming the Early Childhood Workforce*

(IOM) was released on April 1, 2015 just as I was in the process of collecting data for

this study. What was significant to me was the call for a minimum of a bachelor's degree

for early childhood educators. This call affirmed the bachelor's level context as the focus

of my study. In Minnesota there are currently ten universities that have been approved to

offer the early childhood teacher licensure program (see Appendix A for a list of these

programs). Each of these programs received approval through the Minnesota Board of

Teaching, and only candidates completing one of these bachelor's level programs can be

licensed as a Teacher of Early Childhood Education (scope of practice children birth to

age eight). Teaching licensure standards in Minnesota are in Rule and approved by the

Minnesota State Legislature and published by the Minnesota Revisor of Statues. In

Minnesota, an administrative rule is a general statement adopted by an agency to make

the law it enforces or administers more specific or to govern the agency's organization or

procedure (Minnesota Revisor: Teachers of Early Childhood retrieved 2/12/2016 from:

https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?view=info). The first two subparts of

8710:3000 Teachers of Early Childhood Education reads:

> 8710.3000 TEACHERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.
>
> Subpart 1. Scope of practice. A teacher of early childhood education is authorized
> to design, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate learning
> experiences for young children from birth through grade 3 in a variety of early
> childhood settings and to collaborate with families, colleagues, and related service
> personnel to enhance the learning of all young children.
>
> Subpart. 2. Licensure requirements. A candidate for licensure in early childhood
> education for teaching young children from birth through age eight shall:
>
> > A. hold a baccalaureate degree from a college or university that is
> > accredited by the regional association for the accreditation of colleges and
> > secondary schools;
> >
> > B. demonstrate the standards for effective practice for licensing of
> > beginning teachers in part 8710.2000; and
> >
> > C. show verification of completing a Board of Teaching preparation
> > program approved under part 8700.7600 leading to the licensure of
> > teachers of early childhood education in subpart 3. (p. 1)

This information is included to provide the context within which bachelor's

programs preparing early childhood teachers in Minnesota operate. Subpart 3 of

8710:300 is the detailed description of the specific standards that must be met by the

teacher candidate.

As the following quote suggests, completion of a degree program is not a guarantee of a high quality teacher. On the other hand the quote suggests that the content of the teacher education program can be impactful.

> No single influence can be held responsible for young children's development and learning, including what degree is held by a teacher. Nonetheless, a teacher's education, if it is rich deep and positive, provides a critical foundation that may constructively influence a child's experiences. (Hyson, Tomlinson & Morris, 2009, p. 17)

Higher education can contribute significantly to teachers' capacity to influence child development and learning in critical, positive and lasting ways. Given the importance of early development highlighted throughout *Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and subsequent research contained in *Eager to Learn* (Burns, Donovan & Bowman, 2000) that called attention to the preparation of early childhood educators, it is essential to focus on teacher educators. As Ben-Perez, Kleeman, Reichenberg, & Shimoni (2013) point out: "Teacher education programs bear the responsibility for preparing student teachers for the complexities of teaching in our rapidly changing world. The success and quality of teacher education programs depends in large measure on the effectiveness of teacher educators" (p. 1).

Studies of Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs

In 2001, Early and Winton published what appears to be one of the first national studies "to provide the field with accurate baseline data about the number of programs offering early childhood degrees, the characteristics of faculty in those programs, and the

kinds of coursework and practica experiences provided to students" (p. 288). Early and

Winton (2001) found a significant number of early childhood teacher preparation

programs, those claiming to provide training for teachers to serve children birth to age 8,

did not offer even one course on infants and/or toddlers. This finding was one of the first

to raise concern about infant and toddler content being left out or marginalized in early

childhood teacher preparation programs. Subsequent studies (Austin, Kipnis, Sakai,

Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013; Horm, Hyson, & Winton; 2013; Kipnis, Austin, Sakai,

Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013; Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins,

2006) continued to echo similar concerns and findings regarding the lack of focus on

infants and toddlers as part of early childhood teacher preparation.

Despite the growing body of research (Bick, 2012; National Council on the

Developing Child, 2010; Shonkoff, 2010) pointing to the critical brain architecture that is

developed in the first years of life, many early childhood teachers are not being prepared

or, at least, not being adequately prepared to work with infants and toddlers. A review of

studies about early childhood teacher preparation revealed some information suggesting

why infant and toddler courses may be missing or marginalized. Specific findings in

those studies relevant to this study will be highlighted in Chapter 2.

Focusing on Infants and Toddlers

I undertook intensive literature searches for studies designed to explore infant and

toddler courses in early childhood teacher preparation. These searchers were conducted

periodically between 2012 and early 2016 using search terms such as: early childhood

higher education, infant and toddler, early childhood teacher preparation, infant, toddler,

infant teacher, toddler teacher and combinations of these terms. I did not identify any

studies which provided descriptive information about courses focused on infants and

toddlers that are part of early childhood teacher preparation programs. What I did find

were studies of early childhood teacher preparation programs (Austin, Kipnis, Sakai,

Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013; Early & Winton, 2001; Horm, Hyson, & Winton; 2013;

Kipnis, Austin, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013, Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006; Ray,

Bowman, & Robbins, 2006) that raised a concern about the lack of focus on infants and

toddlers in early childhood teacher education programs. Two studies in peer reviewed

publications, Branscomb and Ethridge (2010) and Recchia and Shin (2010) , provided

insights into how college students' thinking changes through a practicum experience

with infants. Both articles highlighted the value of an infant practicum experience as

important in early childhood teacher preparation. Neither of these studies included a

focus on a toddler practicum experience – nor did they shed light on the courses

associated with the practicum. Rouse, Morrissey, and Rahimi (2012) conducted a study

in Australia titled, *Problematic Placement: Pathways Pre-service Teachers' Perspectives*

on Their Infant/Toddler Placements. This study described challenges to finding high

quality practicum placements but did not explore courses. Garvis and Pendergast (2015)

conducted an exploratory investigation of Australian early childhood teacher candidates'

perceptions about working with infants and toddlers. The main finding was that due to

the barriers of status, pay, working conditions and a lack of confidence in working with

these age groups, teacher candidates were not interested in working with infants and

toddlers.

Also conducted in Australia was an investigation into early childhood teacher education programs to provide an understanding of what pre-service teachers learn about children birth to age three. The study (Garvis, Pendergast, & Yim, 2013) titled *A Content Analysis of Early Childhood Teachers' Theoretical and Practical Experiences With Infants and Toddlers in Australian Teacher Education Programs* had findings similar to studies conducted in the United States (Austin, Kipnis, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013; Early & Winton, 2001; Horm, Hyson, & Winton; 2013; Kipnis, Austin, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013; Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006) in which only a few early childhood teacher programs had courses focused on infants and toddlers. As the current study was conducted by analysis of descriptions on university websites, there was limited opportunity to gain insight about the content of the courses beyond what could be learned from the descriptions on the websites.

A dissertation by Beck (2010) entitled *More Than "Just" Changing Diapers: Experiences of Pre-service Teachers in an Infant Field Experience* also focused on the insights students gained during a practicum with infants. Beck later authored an article based on her dissertation research in which she stated, "Just as infant experiences appear to be largely missing from early childhood teacher preparation programs, there is also a dearth of research on infant field experiences and preparing professionals for work with infants" (Beck, 2013, p. 8). In the concluding statements of Beck's article, she made note of the lack of research in this area of early childhood teacher preparation:

> The underrepresentation of infants in early childhood teacher education programs perpetuates the dated societal view that infant teachers are like "babysitters," which may keep well-prepared teachers from seeking jobs in infant classrooms.

Perhaps if more early childhood teachers had opportunities to work with infants in

their teacher preparation program, their assumptions about infant care and

education would be challenged and they would consider becoming infant

teachers. (Beck, 2013, p. 20)

As this quote suggests and this study will investigate, a focus on infants and toddlers

comes with some challenging societal impressions and situations that have been created

given these impressions. These issues will be explored further in Chapter 2.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this post-intentional phenomenological study is to explore how

faculty from five institutions and staff from two child development centers in Minnesota

shape the infant/toddler (children birth to age three) content they teach in courses and

practica which are part of baccalaureate early childhood teacher preparation programs in

Minnesota.

To investigate how infant and toddler content might be shaped in baccalaureate

early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota, a post-intentional

phenomenological research study was designed (Vagle, 2014). Chapter 3 will provide

additional information about post-intentional methodology. A qualitative method was

chosen because the goal was to describe how infant and toddler content might take shape

by interviewing faculty and staff, who teach infant and toddler courses, and analyzing

documents used to guide students in learning about infants and toddlers. Investigating the

experiences of faculty and staff who teach infant/toddler courses provided an opportunity

to study the phenomenon. The context for the study are six courses focused on infants

and toddlers that are taught at five early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. The study was guided by the following research questions.

Primary Phenomenological Question

How might infant and toddler content take shape in early childhood teacher preparation programs?

Secondary Question

What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?

The primary research question seeks to explore how infant and toddler content is shaped in these five BA/BS in early childhood teacher preparation programs by studying the experience of faculty who teach infant and toddler courses and staff who supervise practica experience associated with the courses. The question probes for the interplay between the Minnesota Board of Teaching Early Childhood standards that are central to each institution approved to offer this program of study to students, juxtaposed with the delivery of infant and toddler courses which rely on faculty and staff to interpret the standards and make decisions and choices as to how best to teach BA/BS students about infants and toddlers. Thus the term s*hape* was used in the question to acknowledge that the product is not standardized. Instead there was an expectation that whatever was discovered would reflect the variations in programs in which individuals practice in particular institutions with a specific groups of students and who have personal/professional identities. The second question attends to a desire to capture

descriptions of insights and recommendations that were revealed as part of the interview process.

In addition to interviewing staff and faculty, documents were collected that were created or used by faculty and staff in these courses and experiences. Interviews with faculty were the primary way to explore the tentative manifestations of infant and toddler content that are made available for students when they study infant and toddler content. Syllabi and other written materials provide additional insights. In this study I describe the phenomenon of *how infant and toddler content is shaped* through a study of the experiences of faculty and staff that teach infant and toddler courses in BA/BS early childhood teacher preparation programs.

Assumptions

Based on my experience and background in early childhood teacher preparation and in teaching infant and toddler content, three primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, the BA/BS college-level courses with infant and toddler in their title and/or description would likely address many of the infant and toddler standards found in Minnesota 8710: 3000 Teachers of Early Childhood Education. Second, infant and toddler courses would include parent content, meaning that a focus on infants and toddlers would include information about relating to parents and communication with parents. Third, faculty would privilege particular topics or concepts within the courses based on their own background, training or experiences.

With regard to the first assumption, I expected to see information in the written documents about standards that were being met in the course and that these would be

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made visible for the students' information as well as for accountability. With respect to the second assumption regarding inclusion of a focus on parents, I expected this because teachers of infants and toddlers generally work very closely with parents. The findings provide insights into how a focus on parents shaped the content. Finally, I believed that participants' personal experiences in the field or early childhood education would inform their perspectives on particular topics or aspects of the course.

Conclusion

The science of child development has affirmed that experiences early in life have a direct impact on the well-being and development of an individual both in the short and long term. With an ever increasing number mothers/parents entering the workforce within the first year of their infant's life, more and more infants and toddlers are being placed in out of home care. Given the number of hours these infants and toddlers spend in out of home care, the development of these infants and toddlers relies to a great degree on their early childhood teachers. Therefore, the preparation and training of infant and toddler teachers matters. At the same time, little is known about infant and toddler courses in early childhood teacher preparation and especially how the content might be shaped. This study provides insights into how the infant and toddler content is shaped in preparing BA/BS students to teach infants and toddlers.

This quote by Ben-Peretz et al. (2013) captures the intent of my dissertation research:

Each discourse revolves around its own mental image of the future teacher that teacher educators think they ought to educate. The mental image is usually

grounded in the wide theoretical playground where ideas about the worthy

learning environment teachers should create, the pedagogies they should practice,

the epistemology they should embrace, and the social interactions that are relevant

for bringing all of the former ideas to life, are probed, played with and elaborated.

(p. 1)

As Ben-Peretz et al. (2013) posits, teacher educators must navigate broad

theoretical concepts, predict what the future teacher will need to know and do, make

choices about what to illuminate, and engage in teaching practices which result in student

learning – all of which shape the content of a course and impact what students are

exposed to as they learn.

This chapter provided an introduction and framed the importance of this study.

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 describes the study's

methodology. Chapter 4 presents the findings from this study integrated with a discussion

of the findings and implications for practice. Chapter 5 concludes with discussion and

implications from the findings and, identification of limitations and recommendations for

future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this post-intentional phenomenological (Vagle, 2014) study was to explore the experiences of thirteen early childhood teacher educators (faculty and staff) to gain an understanding of how infant and toddler content is shaped in the courses they teach or practica they supervise. Specifically, I sought to understand how the content in courses and practica might be shaped through: the key beliefs and concepts that were privileged, the opportunities to provide students with experiential learning, and the selection of knowledge bases, as well as exploring how this content might be shaped in response to the specific populations of the students these educators teach. A secondary research aim was to gather insights and recommendations from the staff and faculty about what they think is important in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. Post-intentional phenomenology explores findings that may reflect "multiplicity, difference and partiality. (Vagle, 2014, p. 114)

When proposing a post-intentional phenomenological methodology (Vagle, 2014) one begins by conducting only a partial review of the literature. When researching a phenomenon, one does not want to become heavily influenced by the findings in the literature review so as to bias one's ability to identify the phenomena as it is described by the participants. Vagle (2014) states: "The primary goal in post-intentional phenomenology is to capture the tentative manifestations of the phenomenon as it is lived – not use existing theories to explain or predict what might take place" (p. 124). On the other hand, one needs to conduct enough of a literature review to become familiar with ways in which the phenomena might appear. Early literature reviews confirmed that much was unknown around the inclusion of courses designed to teach pre-service

students about infants and toddlers within early childhood teacher preparation programs and that this study was warranted. Once the data had been collected, I continued the literature review process in order to analyze my findings (tentative manifestations) within the context of the broader issues within the field of early childhood education and policy. This review of the literature explores the interconnectedness between the focus (often missing) on infants and toddlers within the larger context of early childhood teacher preparation in the United States. In light of this, three areas of literature were critically reviewed: 1. the impact of initiatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that influence early childhood education; 2. the status of teacher education and teacher educators within the academy and research focused on early childhood teacher preparation programs; and 3. the state of early childhood teacher preparation in the context of Minnesota.

To conduct this review, multiple sources of information were examined including journal articles, books, dissertations, and internet resources. Journal articles, books, and dissertation sources were accessed through data bases such as ERIC, JSTOR, Pub Med, and Dissertation Abstracts. The time line was not limited when the search included exploring the history of early childhood education, history of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, or other historical information. The time line of 2000 to 2016 was used in seeking information about the current initiatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), studies of early childhood teacher preparation, early childhood teacher educators, and studies that focused on teaching pre-service teachers about infants. This literature review serves two main

purposes: to underscore the need for this study and to provide a frame for analyzing and interpreting the data.

In the first section of this chapter, I reviewed the literature to expose issues surrounding the status of teacher education in the academy. I then reviewed the literature regarding the status of early childhood teacher education within teacher education. Within early childhood teacher education I have reviewed the literature that has a focus of teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers. This chapter concludes with a recent study focused on early childhood teacher preparation in Minnesota where the study was situated. I then investigated the history of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in order to provide an understanding of the origins of specific practices and perspectives within the field, including the central role that NAEYC plays in the field of early childhood education and early childhood teacher preparation. Specifically, NAEYC definitions of 'developmentally appropriate practice' as well as guidelines for teacher preparation figure powerfully in the configuration of the Teachers of Early Childhood Education – the Minnesota license (state regulation 8710: 3000) for teachers of children birth to age 8. It is within the context of this teacher licensure area (birth to age 8) in the approved programs in Minnesota that this study is situated.

Early Childhood Teacher Educators

As early childhood has become a national focus, there are a variety of perspectives about its importance. For example, economists value early childhood education as a way to build a competent workforce (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). Those

with a social justice agenda see it as a way to address the achievement gap (Kroll, 2013). Neuroscientists see it as a venue to act upon what has been learned from research on the brain (Shonkoff, 2010; Fox, 2002). Given these interests in early childhood education, attention has been focused on the training and preparation of early childhood educators (Allen & Kelly, 2015; Austin et al., 2015; Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzales, 2010; Burns, Donovan, & Bowman, 2000), and to those who prepare them – early childhood teacher educators (Jaruszewicz & Landrus, 2005). In the introduction to *Teacher Educators: An Evolving Profession* the editors open with this perspective:

> The success and quality of teacher education programs depends on large measure on the effectiveness of teacher educators. Thus attention has to be paid to the teacher educators, their professional identity, beliefs and pedagogies, and their professional development. (Ben-Perez, Kleeman, Reichenberg, & Shimoni, 2013, p. 1).

As Ben-Perez and her colleagues suggest, what students experience in their teacher education programs is heavily influenced by their teacher educators. In turn, these teacher educators are influenced by their own education and training, the experiences they have had as teachers in the field, and pedagogies and beliefs they have come to adopt and privilege. They are also influenced by the particular institution where they are employed, the department they are a part of, and the circumstance of their employment (Connelly, 2013). In this opening section of the literature review, I bring in perspectives about the status of teacher educators within the academy. I will then specifically explore what has been investigated about early childhood teacher educators, and the focus on infants and toddlers within early childhood teacher preparation. This

will include issues of status and identity of infant and toddler teachers within the early childhood field, the scope of practice within the academy, and positioning of early childhood teacher educators within the academy.

Finally, I look to recent investigations of early childhood teacher educators to provide a demographic profile of early childhood teacher educators and how this is viewed as impacting a focus on infants and toddlers. I conclude with a summary of these findings and their implications for this study. To begin, I focus on the perspectives that have been offered on transitioning from a teacher in the field to a teacher educator. This leads into a review of studies of early childhood educators and early childhood teacher educators and how these perspectives may impact infant and toddler content.

Transforming into a Teacher Educator

Loughran (2013) considers the issues associated with teacher educators who work in a university context as involving a process by which they transform from being a "schoolteacher to an academic*"* (Loughran, 2013, p. 10). The implications for this transformation of early childhood teachers transitioning to early childhood educators is the main focus of this section of the literature review. Loughran (2013) noted that the very nature of teacher education being set in a university context brings to the discussion the perceived status of teacher education within the academy. Loughran (2013) contends that within the academy, the status of teacher education is marginalized as evidenced by teacher educators having higher teaching loads and relying more on adjunct faculty, and those outside of these departments, perceiving within teacher education a lack of scholars and scholarship.

In taking up these issues of the status of teacher education within the academy, Klass van Veen (2013) points out that there is a lack of preparation and training for teacher educators, and that teacher educators find themselves in the role because of their expertise in subject and extended experience as a teacher. He contends that if there were a defined knowledge base for teacher educators, it would make a difference. An additional challenge is that teacher educators leave the role they were trained for and join a teacher education institution without the requisite knowledge about their new role (Reichenberg, Kleeman, & Sagee, 2013). While one typically learns the requirements of a position prior to assuming that role, often in higher education teacher educators do not have this type of preparation (Reichenberg et al., 2013). Klaus van Veen (2013) points out that in the United States there is judgment leveled about the effectiveness of teacher educators that has resulted in efforts to train teachers through alternative methods – not through traditional teacher education baccalaureate programs. He argues that this has happened because of the "weak image" teacher education has and that teacher education is not "well organized or well represented, and is often known for 'soft pedagogies and assessments. (van Veen, 2013, p. 27).

While van Veen and Loughran are writing about teacher education in general, there are many important parallels between the perception of teacher education within the academy and the positioning of early childhood teacher preparation within teacher preparation that are relevant to this study. These parallels have to do with the historical divide between early childhood and K-12, the perceived status of early childhood educators, allocations of teaching and advising loads for early childhood teacher educators, and the impact of the history and ensuing developments on early childhood

teacher educators. These issues are taken up as they become pertinent in the review that

follows. Whether one is in K-12 teacher preparation or early childhood teacher

preparation, there are expectations for preparing highly qualified effective teachers.

Expectations of Teacher Education

Those who study the field of education find that "External demands on teacher

education are at an all-time high while support for teacher educators is at an all-time low.

An ever increasing number of requirements in education, in turn, adds to the scope of

what teacher educators must ensure students learn" (Craig, 2013, p. 136). Linda Darling-

Hammond (2013) describes what some of the increased expectations are: "Not only do

teachers need to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students, they

also need to enable increasingly diverse groups of student to learn ever more complex

material and to develop a wider range of skills" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 87).

Darling-Hammond (2013) believes these increased demands of teachers and teacher

educators require a change the societal treatment of teaching to recognize the

complexities and challenges within the profession. In tandem with a recognition of the

complexities of the profession is a need to recognize teacher educators as individuals who

bring their personal histories, propensities, and challenges with them (Craig, 2013).

Therefore, it is important to embed the discussion of the status of early childhood teacher

educators within the larger content of teacher education within the academy. For

example, the personal professional histories that early childhood teacher educators bring

with them may make them more vulnerable to being perceived as having a 'lower status'

than teacher educators in general. This next section first focuses on the low status of

early childhood education, and sets the context for the research about early childhood teacher educators.

The 'Less Than' Real Teachers

Early childhood education, which has until recently resided outside of the public education system, is exceptionally vulnerable to being seen as 'easy work' that does not require much training (Lascarides & Hintz, 2013). This perception, for some, may rest on the fact that the licensing requirements for teaching pre-school aged children are very different than those required of elementary teachers where there is a "comparative structured, established and regulated system" (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 306). Educators teaching young children outside of K-12 are 'qualified' by a range of options from having a high school diploma and/or some credits in child development to having a BA, but not necessarily in early childhood or early education (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald & Squires, 2011). The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (Allen & Kelly, 2015) report cited the effects of this history and these policies on the public perceptions of what it takes to educate young children:

> Lower educational expectations for early childhood educators than for elementary school teachers perpetuates the perception—and policies that reflect the perception—that educating children before kindergarten requires less expertise than educating K-3 students, which makes it difficult to maximize the potential of young children through the early learning programs that serve them. (p. 365)

Linked to the lowered expectation are historical events (taken up in the discussion of NAEYC) in creating a two tiered system in which there is public support for education of children K-12 and their educators, while the 'system' for children under kindergarten age is largely reliant on a patchwork of private and limited public funding to address the educational and care needs of children from birth to pre-kindergarten age. The Center for Child Care Employment report (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009) states: "The public K-12 education system was established to provide access to education for all children in the nation, free of charge, because a well-educated populace was seen as a public good, something that generates benefits to society" (p. 2). The newest neuroscience research and longitudinal studies of adults who once participated in early childhood education programs, suggest that being well-educated begins from the moment of birth (Twardosz, 2012). Early childhood education has been placed in the national spotlight (Obama, 2016) with hopes that it can aid in building a stronger, more educated country that can be competitive in the world's economy. However, the paradox is that while society and sometimes even care professionals themselves "tended to perceive working with younger children as less demanding and prestigious work" (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 309), it is a perception that is not borne out by the science of child development and studies of early learning (Twardosz, 2012).

Lack of recognition. In a study of the professional identity of infant and toddler teachers, infant and toddler teachers were found to have to cope with, not only low wages, but with the perceptions of being unskilled workers. In her dissertation research titled "*It's Temporary" Professional Identity and Career Decisions of Infant-Toddler Center-Based Teachers,* Williams (2012) investigated the career decisions and

professional identities of teachers in an accredited child care center with teachers who held or were working towards a BA and who were serving as infant and toddler teachers. Amongst her findings Williams explains,

> Teachers in this study self-identified as professional "teachers" while perceiving themselves to be other-identified as unskilled "day care workers." Teachers in this study did not view teaching infants and toddlers as a long-term career option. The findings suggest that the public's perception of infant- toddler teachers as unskilled workers may encourage highly-educated teachers to leave the profession. (Williams, 2012, p. v)

Williams' (2012) study illustrates that within the early childhood field itself, there are status perceptions, especially about teaching infants and toddlers. These negative experiences of status and remuneration may carry over as early childhood educators join the faculty ranks. In writing about how education scholars can be better understood, Loughran (2013) noted the importance of " how a teacher educator starts the journey into the profession, and how that journey itself impacts on identify formation" (Loughran, 2013, p. 10). As these studies indicate, low status is both an overarching theme and reality within the field itself – especially for teachers of infants and toddlers.

Lacking incentive

The infrastructure for early childhood education has never been strong (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011). For example, how an individual is 'certified' as an early childhood teacher can vary from having a high school diploma or just a few courses related to child development or a BA (Trout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006). Meanwhile, in the

K-12 system there is an expectation that teachers are prepared and certified at the BA

level. This expectation for training and certification then garners a living wage for

educators of children K and up (Barnett, et al., 2011). The wage realities for early

childhood educators has been bleak, with the findings that many early childhood

educators work full time yet earn wages under the Federal poverty guidelines – leading to

a high turn-over rate in early childhood programs (Ackerman, 2006). In order to right

this situation, the IOM is calling for a BA with specialized focus in teaching young

children to become the standard for early childhood teachers. They see this increased

expectation in the training and preparation of early childhood teachers as raising the

wages thus increasing the likelihood of higher quality programming for young children.

The status of teaching very young children has been known to be a general issue

within the early childhood field, and remuneration of early childhood teachers is a

reflection of this status. The authors of the IOM report framed the issue of compensation

by stating that, "Discrepancies among compensation for different kinds of educators can

lead to informal (but powerful) hierarchies in which some individuals clearly have lower

status than others" (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 36). Studies of compensation in early

childhood education reveal that these discrepancies exist even *within* the early childhood

field, with infant and toddler teachers' compensation at the lowest level.

Remuneration of infant and toddler teachers.

Ronald Lally (2015), founder of *For Our Babies,* highlighted a report that

provided updated information drawing attention to the low wages and absence of a

livable wage structure in child care. The report is entitled *Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable*

Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years After the National Child Care Staffing

Study (Whitebook, Phillips, & Howe, 2014). This national study found that early

childhood teachers working with infants and toddlers (birth to age three) versus children

(age three to five) suffered what Lally described as the "harshest consequences". Lally

was citing the data from the report that indicated, "Teaching staff working with children

three or younger earn about 70 percent of what those working with children three to five

years old, not yet in kindergarten, earn (Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 2014). In

summarizing the implications of this data, Lally (2015) wrote:

> The study points out that those working with infants and toddlers face the harshest
>
> consequences of early childhood employment in the United States. They earn the
>
> lowest wages, receive the smallest premium for their education, and because of
>
> their low earnings, are more likely to experience the highest level of economic
>
> worry and reliance on public income supports. (p. 1)

The concerns raised by Lally (2015) related directly to why there has been concern about

the quality of infant and toddler care (Allen & Kelly, 2015) as well as the experiences

early childhood teachers may have when they have been infant or toddler teachers

(Williams, 2012).

Impacting early childhood teacher preparation foci. The especially low pay

for teachers of infants and toddlers may, in part, explain the findings that indicated that

early childhood teacher educators had less experience working with infants and toddlers.

In a study in Rhode Island that included a focus on faculty, "none had taught infants and

toddlers, two (40 percent) had taught preschool-age children, and all five (100 percent)

reported having taught children in Kindergarten through grade 3" (Austin, Kipnis, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013, p. 42). Another study conducted in New Hampshire (Kipnis, Whitebook, Austin, & Sakai, 2013). found a similar pattern of faculty having less experience with infants and toddlers: "For example, in New Jersey, of faculty who had classroom teacher experience , only 17% had teaching experience with infants and toddlers while over half (52 percent) had experience in teaching pre-school or kindergarten, while 38 percent had experience in a fourth grade classroom or higher (Kipnis, Whitebook, Austin, & Sakai, 2013, p. 44). Findings from these two studies suggest that early childhood teacher educators are less likely to have experience in working with infants and toddlers. This lack of experience with infants and toddlers is concerning because "faculty who teach infant/toddler courses often lack specialized academic preparation and direct or recent experience working with this age group" (Horm, Hyson, & Winton, 2013, p. 102). Another conclusion was that the fact that many faculty do not have personal experience with this age group, may be a factor in why infant and toddler content was not robustly included in many early childhood teacher education programs.

Early Childhood Teacher Educators Have 'Extra Baggage'

As these studies indicate, the low status of the early childhood field in general is a reality for those in early childhood education who may become early childhood teacher educators (Allen & Kelly, 2015; Williams, 2012; Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 2014). The history of an early childhood teacher educator's experiences 'in the trenches' matters. For some with infant and toddler experience it may bring up negative memories – and thus temper their approach to teaching students about infants and toddlers

(Williams, 2012). For some the challenges in the field may inspire them to bring a strong focus on infants and toddlers into their course. What is known about the experiential backgrounds of teacher educators may also have an impact on a focus on infant and toddler content (Lortie, 1975; Loughran, 2013).

Marginalization Exponentially Magnified for Early Childhood Teacher Educators

When Early and Winton (2001) conducted research to learn about the programs that provided early childhood teacher education preparation, their interviews with early childhood teacher educators revealed that the perception of early childhood work being 'less than' within the field of education was carried into the academy. Early childhood faculty indicated that: "One of our biggest challenges as faculty is how the early childhood community is viewed generally. We just don't get that much respect" (Early & Winton, 2001, p. 303). Insights regarding the status of education (looking easy) both in the academy and in the public are magnified for early childhood educators and early childhood teacher educators. As defined by Loughran, (2013) perceived ease and higher loads were seen to be indicators of marginalization. Within teacher preparation, early childhood teacher educators report both issues.

Carrying a Heavier Load

Early's and Winton's (2001) investigation titled *Preparing the Workforce: Early Childhood Teacher Preparation at 2- and 4-year Institutions of Higher Education* included an investigation of faculty issues. Early and Winton collected data comparing early childhood programs with the institution as a whole. One of their findings was that:

Early childhood teacher preparation programs tend to have a small number of

faculty who serve a larger number of students. The average student to full-time

faculty ratio of 61 to 1 is 60% higher than the 39 to 1 ratio of the higher education

institutions as wholes. Furthermore, early childhood programs tend to have a

greater percentage of part-time faculty (54%) than do the institutions as wholes

(45%). (Early &Winton, 2001, p. 299)

Early and Winton (2001) reported being surprised that, given these heavy advising and

course loads, the early childhood teacher education teacher education participants in their

study, did not report this as problematic. They offered this possible explanation as to

why this was not seen as an issue: "Perhaps, they feel fortunate to have salaries and

benefits that are well above the very minimal levels that are the norm for the early

childhood field" (Early & Winton, 2001, p. 301).

This explanation would suggest that early childhood teacher educators have lower

expectations for support within the academy than do teacher educators in general. A

subsequent study appears to support this contention. Eight years after the Early and

Winton study, Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris (2009) conducted an exploratory study to

learn about early childhood teacher program priorities by gathering insights from faculty.

One of their assumptions was that faculty are key to building high quality programs. A

major finding was that approximately 60% of the faculty reported their programs were

focusing little to no effort on building faculty capacity that year. Reasons cited for this

were hiring freezes, budget crises or a "college wide lack of commitment to building the

early childhood education program, especially related to hiring full-time faculty" (Hyson,

Tomlinson & Morris, 2009, p. 11). Of the 40 % who did cite building faculty capacity,

their focus was on hiring faculty with current knowledge and expertise. As was reported earlier in this section, two studies suggest many early childhood teacher educators lack experience with infants and toddlers.

Maxwell, Lim, and Early (2006) looked at factors within early childhood teacher education programs that were likely to impact the content of courses and how well content was covered. Amongst the challenges they cited were that many early childhood faculty are hired only in part-time positions and are often adjunct instructors. In addition they found that the faculty members participating in the study were often the only early childhood faculty members in their department. In responding to the findings of the previous study that infant and toddler content was often not included, they concluded that lack of infant toddler content in some programs may be serving as a proxy for other issues such as faculty loads, lack of faculty, and use of adjuncts.

A similar study to explore the capacity of Minnesota early childhood teacher preparation programs (ACET, 2012) included collection of faculty data. Twenty-nine of the thirty-four two and four year institutions in Minnesota completed the survey. Focusing on the data from the four year institutions, it was found that 47.2% of the faculty were full time and that four year programs relied more heavily on adjunct faculty than did two year programs. These findings regarding the reliance on part-time and adjunct faculty mirror findings in other studies (Early & Winton, 2000; Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006).

Life in the academy for early childhood teacher educators.

"Betwixt the tower and field" is how Shteiman, Gidron, and Eilon (2013) describe the world in which teacher educators are situated (p. 169). They point out that advancement in teacher education depends on teacher educators being able to conduct research and publish. The heavy course loads and advising of early childhood teacher educators revealed in studies by Early and Winton (2001); Maxwell, Lim, and Early (2006); and Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris (2009) may serve to impede teaching/scholarship/service which in turn impacts the path to professionalism in early childhood education.

A study that investigated this specific context was conducted by Jaruszewicz and Landrus (2005) and provides insight into how the heavier course and advising loads may affect the work of early teacher educators within the academy. In *Help I Lost My Research Agenda*, Jaruszewicz and Landrus (2005) explored how the non-teaching demands of early childhood educators affected their teaching/service/research responsibilities. They pointed out that the teaching/service/research activities are both necessary and expected activities that can affect both the rank and tenure process within an institution of higher education. They studied fifty-seven members of the National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Education. A significant finding of this study was that early childhood teacher educators "often bear a disproportionate departmental or institutional burden for program development, accountability, and administrative survival needs." Additionally,

> Not only do early childhood educators report the largest mean number of
> programs for their specialization area, but the resulting faculty/student ratio per

specialization area is more than double in early childhood than for any other

specialization area reported. (Jaruszewicz & Landrus, 2005, p. 104)

Because of this shift in their responsibilities, the participants described significant

challenges in engaging the teaching/research/service processes. The article provided

insights into what constituted bearing the burden for program accountability and

administrative survival needs through this vignette:

Where's my research agenda? It has to be here someplace! If I look over the

contents of the top of my desk, I should find it. Maybe it's under the 172- page

report requesting state approval of our new early childhood undergraduate

program. Could it be with the revisions to our two graduate programs that are now

necessary to address revised NAEYC and NCATE standards and re-defined state

teacher certification levels? If it isn't there, perhaps it's stuck between the draft

syllabi for three new field courses with on-line and portfolio course components.

It definitely isn't in the folders with the minutes from the search committees,

community agency board meetings, department, school, or grad council—or the

requests for reference letters… (Jaruszewicz & Landrus, 2005, p. 104)

In addition, Jaruszewicz and Landrus (2005) found that there was criticism within

teacher education about early childhood regarding the lack of empirical research to

"support advocacy for developmentally and culturally appropriate practices and

constructivist pedagogy" (p. 106). Secondly, the span from birth to age eight "extends

the context of our work well beyond the sphere of the public school environment—child

care, Head Start and other PreK education programs, early intervention, social services

and policy/advocacy activities" (Jaruszewicz & Landrus, 2005, p. 105). Jaruszewizc and Landrus surfaced the challenge that ensues because early childhood education spans from birth to age eight. Early childhood teacher educators are expected to work with not only public schools but government programs (Head Start) and private enterprises (child care); with each of these settings having a unique focus and differing requirements for early childhood teachers. This makes it challenging to prepare pre-service teachers when there is not a common curriculum focus or qualification for teaching in these settings.

Jaruszewicz and Landrus concluded that early childhood teacher educators often bear the institutional burdens for program development, accountability, and administration needs. The implication: "As a result, personal writing, research, and other scholarly endeavors necessary and expected in the rank/tenure process can be compromised" (Jaruszewicz & Landraus, 2005 p. 103). Given the findings of this study, early childhood teacher educators may find themselves under added pressures within teacher education, which, coupled with lack of experience working with infants and toddlers or experiences working with infants and toddlers that left them with negative impressions, likely impacts how infant and toddler content is included and shaped within particular teacher preparation programs. In addition, personal experiences in the field coupled with a perception of the early childhood field in general appear to position early childhood teacher educators precariously within the academy.

Choices

Early childhood teacher educators must prepare students to enter a field of practice that has less status and sobering remuneration realities (Hyson, Tomlinson, &

Morris, 2009). While faculty may find they are fortunate to have a position in early

childhood teacher preparation, they do so knowing that the career options for their pre-

service students may be limited. In turn, this appears to cause some early childhood

teacher educators to focus more on older age groups within the range of birth to five that

have more career potential: "Some faculty in teacher education programs that cover ages

0 to 8 or 3 to 8 in our pilot survey said they feel pressured to focus on kindergarten

content because that is where their students are finding better paid positions" (Early &

Winton, p. 303). Early and Winton (2001) wondered if pressure to focus on pre-

kindergarten content may impact early childhood education on infants and toddlers. This

was because while the early childhood teacher education programs in their study

indicated they focused on children from birth to age eight, only 39.8% of the BA

programs included a course that focused on infants and toddlers (Early & Winton, 2001,

p. 295).

The picture these studies paint of early childhood educators in higher education

highlight the lack of credibility from outside of the academy for both teacher education

and early childhood education; the pressure from within the academy for scholarly

research; the reality from within the academy for early childhood teacher educators to

serve larger numbers of students-often while working only part-time and the pressures

and tensions in the early childhood field which present as challenges in preparing early

childhood educators for viable employment opportunities.

Identity Crisis

Complicating the status issue for early childhood teacher educators is another potential issue - creating an identity as a teacher educator. The challenge for identity within teacher education is described in an editoral written by Hatch and Benner (2009) in the *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*; they discuss the lack of participation by early childhood educators in the annual conference program for the *American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education* (which they cited as the primary *teacher education* organization in the United States). They pointed out that of the last 40 articles published in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, "not one was directly about early childhood teacher education" (Hatch & Benner, 2009a, p. 92).

The reason posited by Hatch and Benner (2009) was "most JECTE (Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education) readers see themselves as more closely aligned with early childhood education than teacher education*"* (p. 92). They urged their readership "to explore the possibilities for making connections that might enrich teacher education, early childhood education, and early childhood teacher education. As we strive for recognition and credibility as 'professionals', all may be well served by uniting in our work" (Hatch & Benner, 2009, p. 92). This editorial suggests that many early childhood teacher educators may not identify strongly with other teacher educators in their institutions but rather identity strongly with early childhood – as a profession. What is particularly troubling is the fact that early childhood education, when configured as a birth to age 8 span, calls for collaboration that bridges the history and traditions of early childhood to the history and traditions of elementary teacher preparation. The editorial indicates that the strong identification with the profession of early childhood may impede

this collaboration. Given that teacher educators face credibility challenges along with needing to engage in complex work, collaboration and unity amongst teacher educators would perhaps create an internal supportive environment. The challenge is summed up in the concluding statements of Hatch and Benner (2009): "But the ways the field has evolved, universities have been traditionally organized, and licensing patterns have developed make it likely that most early childhood teacher educators don't think of the field of teacher education as their principle discipline" (p. 92).

Early Childhood Teacher Educator Demographics

Recent information was gathered that included early childhood teacher educator demographics in the states of New Hampshire (Kipnis, Austin, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013), New Jersey (Kipnis et al., 2013), and Rhode Island (Austin et al., 2013) using the Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory tool (ECHEI). The ECHEI tool was designed to gain a picture of a state's early childhood teacher preparation programs by collecting information on early childhood teacher preparation programs in states; the focus and content of those programs; and information about the background, training, and experience of faculty. Of relevance to this study was the discussion suggesting a relation between a lack of infant and toddler focus and the older skew in faculty age ranges. It was suggested that faculty had likely not taken courses on infants and toddlers themselves and, "Not surprisingly, faculty also report less teaching experience related to this age group" (Kipnis et al., 2013, p. 65). The findings that follow offer an opportunity to compare demographics of early childhood teacher educators in two other states.

New Jersey. Almost all faculty (96 percent) were women (Kipnis, Whitebook, Austin, & Sakai, 2013, p. 35). There was very little racial diversity among the faculty, with 75 percent identifying as White/Caucasian. The second largest racial/ethnic group was Latino/Hispanic, at eight percent. Almost one-third (31 percent) of faculty reported being 60 years or older, potentially close to retirement. More than one-half (56 percent) were between 40 and 59 years old. Only 13 percent reported being 39 years or younger (Kipnis, Whitebook, Austin, & Sakai, 2013, p. 35).

New Hampshire. Of the faculty members who participated in the Inventory, almost all (95 percent) were women, and nearly all (93 percent) identified as White/Caucasian (Kipnis, Austin, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013, p. 45). Almost all (95 percent) reported fluency in English only. More than one-quarter (28 percent) of faculty members reported being age 60 or older, potentially close to retirement. Approximately one-half (51 percent) were between 40 and 59 years old. Less than one-quarter (21 percent) reported being 39 years old or younger (Kipnis, Austin, Sakai, Whitebook, & Ryan, 2013, p. 45).

Minnesota.

In Minnesota, The Early Childhood Personnel Preparation Project (ACET, 2012) was designed to explore the capacity and effectiveness of Minnesota's two and four year institutions of higher education in preparing early childhood educators. As in New Jersey and Rhode Island, findings from the ACET study (2012) were that the majority of faculty were female (86 %) and white (84.4%), and 22 percent were 51 or older (though they noted that 40% of the respondents ages were 'unknown'). Minnesota's teacher educators, viewed through the ACET study (2012) bear three striking similarities to the data

collected in New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island: Faculty are predominately women, white, and older.

Teacher Educator Summary

In summary, while the course of study and early childhood teacher preparation is informed by multiple sources, the influence of early childhood educators cannot be underestimated. As this section of the literature review reveals, the way in which early childhood educators are situated in the academy can be problematic and challenging. In addition, early childhood teacher educators may come to the academy with their own history of experiences and beliefs. Within early childhood teacher preparation, the teaching of infant and toddler content can be influenced by the early childhood teacher educators' own experiences in teaching infants and toddlers or lack of ever having personal experience with this age group.

Added to the general external demands on teacher education that are at an all-time high (Ben-Perez, et. al, 2013) is the momentum created by neuroscience research findings that are driving national initiatives to increase early childhood programs – that in turn call for training of more early childhood educators (Allen & Kelly, 2015). Given the recommendations from the IOM report to provide all young children, birth to age 8, with access to a teacher with a BA and specialized training in early childhood education, there is need to ensure early childhood teacher preparation programs are in place. At the very same time, investigations of these programs find they have never been well resourced or supported within higher education, and the inclusion of a focus on infants and toddlers has been found to be lacking (Early & Winton, 2001; Jaruszewicz & Landrus, 2005).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

In this section of the literature review, I present information about the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). An understanding of NAEYC is important in framing the context of this research due to the authority, voice, and reach NAEYC has in the field of early childhood and early childhood teacher preparation. This voice and reach was captured in a study by Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris (2009) titled *Quality Improvement in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Faculty Perspectives and Recommendations for the Future.* This study explored " the contexts for quality improvement in these programs as viewed through the eyes of faculty and other program leaders" (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009, p. 2).

One of Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris' (2009) key findings was that "NAEYC was viewed by the overwhelming majority of participants as a credible source of guidance on almost every facet of early childhood education and teacher preparation including facets that are not actually within its scope**"** (p. 22). While the study was designed to investigate the quality of early childhood teacher preparation programs, it captures the reliance by many early childhood teacher education faculty on NAEYC. As the quote indicates, one of their findings was that NAEYC is ascribed authority and influence over facts of early childhood education not even in their scope. In addition, as a response to asking study participants what research, researchers, or research report they rely on, "Many cited sources that are not actually sources of primary research most often, NAEYC and NAEYC Publications" (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009, p. 9). The fact that NAECY was found to have such a strong voice amongst the participants in this study

led the authors to propose that the field should take advantage of this credibility in order to make improvements in early childhood teacher education:

> NAEYC's reputation among early childhood teacher educators allows it to be a trusted source of information and resources, including its links to other professional organizations, researchers, and partners that will further assist programs in their quality improvement activities. Strengthening these links may multiply NAEYC's potential impact on teacher education. (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009, p. 22)

The finding from this study that some faculty relied on NAEYC publications rather than primary research seems to further validate the concern raised by Jaruszewicz and Landrus (2005), who found that there was criticism within teacher education about early childhood regarding the lack of empirical research to "support advocacy for developmentally and culturally appropriate practices and constructivist pedagogy" (p. 105). While there are concerns about the reliance on NAYEC by teacher educators, the findings of Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris (2009) underscore the authority and reach NAEYC has in the field of early childhood teacher education.

Becoming an Authority

The National Association for the Education for Young Children (NEAYC) is a national resource for early childhood educators and an influential force in creating early childhood policies including early childhood teacher education (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009). The current NAEYC organization was first established as a professional organization in 1929 and was then known as The National Association for Nursery

Educators (NANE). NANE was established just after the time when kindergarten was for children five to six years of age and was being adopted into the main public schools programming (Wortham, 2002). As kindergartens became aligned with the public school system, institutions of higher education developed specific training for those teaching kindergarten as a part of the elementary teacher preparation and licensing. Early childhood teacher training was not included in these higher education teacher education programs at that time (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013). Within higher education early childhood as a focus of study was affiliated with a variety of departments depending on the institution. These departments ranged from psychology to home economics, and sometimes to specific departments called child study. Individuals wishing to teach children birth to age five may have completed one of these programs – or no program at all since regulations for teachers of children under the age of five were not in place (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013).

Children under kindergarten age became the focus for NANE. To clarify this focus, in 1941 NANE rejected merging with the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) formerly the International Kindergarten Union (IKE). This affirmed NANE's focus on children birth to age five, and members saw themselves as having a different perspective from those working with children in the public school realm. In 1964 NANE became the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with momentum from the establishment of Head Start and growing federal involvement in early education and care (Copple, 2001).

Defining the Field

As a national organization, NAEYC leaders became involved in policy issues. One of the most important sets of principles and practices that was created and promoted by NAEYC is a set of principles that NAEYC believes should guide the practices of teachers working with young children. These principals are included in another NAEYC position statement entitled Developmentally Appropriate Programming (DAP). In 1986 NAEYC adopted their first position statement on DAP in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth to Age Eight. The inclusion of children from birth to age eight (rather than the previous birth to age five focus) was based on child development research regarding children's need for experiential learning (Copple, 2001). With their publication, NAEYC became involved in advocating for DAP to influence the early elementary school grades. A central focus was to ensure that children within this age range (0-8) were afforded learning opportunities that used play as a teaching strategy – something NAEYC maintained was important in teaching this age group. This was not the only focus found in DAP but was the focus that differentiated early childhood teaching from those approaches used in elementary teaching.

The NAEYC/ DAP position statement was revised and updated in 1996 and again in 2009. According to Copple (2001), development of the DAP position statement arose out of a concern by members regarding the increasing emphasis on academics in kindergarten. In addition some public schools had begun serving four-year old children and it was feared that an academic approached would be used by these programs serving four years olds. The 1985, NAEYC Governing Board convened a *Commission on Appropriate Education for 4 and 5 year olds*. As the Commission members worked what

emerged was a more comprehensive focus on including the 'whole child' perspective, child development, and a focus on how children acquire skills - through emergent curriculum and play. Copple (2001) described the concern and resulting position statement: "…we quickly identified a need to take a developmental approach. We realized rather than singling out 4 and 5 year olds, we should be addressing the issue across the full-age span that corresponds to NAEYC's mission – birth through 8" (p. 103).

DAP served to place defined learning in early childhood as different from learning (and teaching) with older children and elementary school practices. With early childhood being re-defined by NAEYC from birth to five to birth to eight, programs serving kindergarten and elementary school children were now included in DAP. This has presented a challenge to collaboration within teacher education programs in which DAP teacher preparation courses are often designed to focus on content and pedagogy in subjects versus an approach which relies heavily on teaching through play based experiences and facilitation rather than direct instruction. DAP has evolved since it was first introduced in 1985 and currently includes a strong focus on teaching children based on their individuality within the context of their community and culture. DAP includes a focus on understanding child development, identifying what is individually appropriate for the learner, and understanding and responding to the culture of each child and family (Kroll, 2013).

Breadth of DAP

This is an especially germane discussion in teacher education programs that are focused on preparing college students to work with children from birth to age eight. Not

only is this a large span in childrens' development but also represents divergent ways of conceptualizing teaching and learning. Dr. Glenn Palm (personal communication, March 11, 2015), a faculty member involved in crafting the standards for the MN 8710:3000 birth to age eight license, explained that the hope in Minnesota was that the principles and practices in DAP would influence practices in the K – 3 programs. He went on to explain that soon after 8710:3000 was launched, the *No Child Left Behind* federal legislation was passed, which served to counter the hopes for a more 'developmentally appropriate' approach from 0-8. Dr. Palm also noted that the age span has been problematic given the climate for accountability that the No Child Left Behind created (Dr. Palm, personal communication, October 12, 2015). The breadth of early childhood ages spanning 0-8 has been implicated in decreasing or marginalizing a focus on infants and toddlers because of the emphasis on pre-school certification in many states (Early & Winton, 2001; Horm, Hyson, & Winton, 2012).

 Concerns regarding DAP

According to Spodeck and Saracho (2003), almost immediately after DAP was released, there were some who questioned it and felt it was controversial. Some of the criticisms of DAP were: 1. It set up an orthodoxy in early childhood education; 2. It suggested a single approach to early childhood education is appropriate for all cultural groups; 3. It did not adequately address criteria for worthwhile programs other than developmental appropriateness; and 4. It reflects a maturational view of development though it is "couched in constructiveness terms" (Spodek & Saracho, 2003, p. 7)**.** Despite criticisms of DAP, it was one of the most popular products sold by NAEYC and continues to influence early childhood education and early childhood teacher preparation

(Copple, 2001). In the aforementioned study of faculty perspectives (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009), when participants were asked about specific theories or theorists they used in their approaches to early childhood education, Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson, Gessell, Montesorri, Bronfrenbrenner, and Gardner were named. "Some respondents listed Reggio Emilio and Developmentally Appropriate Practice which are approaches, not theories" (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009, p. 9).

Hatch and Brenner, who are both early childhood faculty members and co-editors of *the Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education,* describe the space DAP occupies:

> As early childhood teacher educators, many of us have spent our careers teaching and sometimes preaching in terms of our field's most salient binary: developmentally appropriate versus developmentally inappropriate practice. Over the years, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has expanded the ways developmentally appropriate practice is defined so that the either/or nature of the early iterations of DAP has been blurred. More recent versions take many more important factors into account as the field tries to identify best practices for guiding the education of young children. Adding more complexity to DAP is important and necessary, but many of us are still trying to organize the experiences of pre-service early childhood teachers based on the assumption appropriate and inappropriate practices can be codified. (Hatch & Benner, 2011, p. 198)

More recently this 'binary' issue was cited in the Institute of Medicine/ National Research Council (IOM) report (Allen & Kelly, 2005) titled *Transforming the*

Workforce: A Unifying Foundation for Birth to age 8, in which they noted many early

educators feared that by aligning with public schools early childhood curricula would

focus on a narrow range of skills and that early education would lose its focus on

"whole-child learning or eliminate time for play" (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 30). The IOM

report (Allen & Kelly, 2015) pointed out that these debates can be contentious in that a

philosophical divide exists between some early childhood educators and those with

elementary education backgrounds.

NAEYC's Standards for Early Childhood Teacher Preparation

In 1986, NEAYC published *Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's*

Standards for Programs, and these guidelines were revised several times. The most

current version was published in 2009. These standards are intended to define what early

childhood professionals should know and be able to do (Campbell, 2008). These are the

only national standards that have been developed to guide in the preparation of early

childhood teachers in the United States (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009). The

standards have five key foci: 1. Knowledge of how young children develop and create

learning environments; 2. Building family and community relationships; 3. Using

assessments responsibly; 4. Teaching to promote learning using evidence based practices;

and 5. Being professional and ethical.

As a professional organization, NAEYC began to weigh in on the professional

development of early childhood educators. In 1990, NAEYC issued this Position

Statement: A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development

from NAEYC's history and foundation of recommended practices; the current College

Accrediting Education Programs (CAEP) uses the NAEYC Recommendations for Early Childhood Teacher preparation (birth to age 8) in accreditations of BA/BS programs. This history in expanding early childhood teacher preparation to focus on children from birth to age eight was created by NAEYC, and NAEYC also defines what constitutes quality early childhood teacher preparation by virtue of its recommendation and position statements being the basis of CAEP. These position statements and their adoption by so many educators, including teacher educators, and teacher preparation programs have made NAEYC the most powerful early childhood organization in the United States.

NAEYC Summary

This section of the literature review provided a historical overview of how the NAEYC became a leader in the field of early childhood education, but also defined what ages 'early childhood' included, as well as what knowledge and skills are needed by early childhood educators and teacher preparation program. This history is important to this study because it reveals when, how, and why early childhood came to be defined as birth to age eight; and how in turn this influenced the configuration in early childhood education teacher preparation to reflect that same age span. The roots of NAEYC run deep within the early childhood education field and have shaped the thinking of many about the nature of how children learn and the best ways of teaching.

In Minnesota, the crafters of the Teachers of Early Childhood Education relied heavily on NAEYC's DAP and Preparation of Early Childhood Teachers position statements and chose to define early childhood and the new teaching license as birth to age eight. This study is set within the content of Minnesota, within approved early

childhood licensure programs for children birth to age eight. The influence of NAEYC is reflected in the configuration of the license to span from birth to age eight as well as the notable Developmentally Appropriate Practice that appears with nine of the 10 standards. A full copy of 8710.3000 Teachers of Early Childhood Education can be accessed online at: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8710.3000

Summary

In this literature review, I began by describing the purpose of the study. I explained that in a post-intentional phenomenological study one conducts only a partial review of the literature so as not to heavily influence the researcher's thinking by what is found in the literature review as well as alert the researcher to ways the phenomenon may be lived by the participants. This review included studies that identified concerns about the lack of teacher education focused on infants and toddlers. Some teacher education programs did not include even one course about infants and toddlers and in some cases the course content was marginalized.

Another focus in this literature review was on teacher educators in general and more specifically early childhood teacher educators within the academy. The review included what has been written about the divide between early childhood and elementary teacher status. This historical divide appears to be evident within the academy where teacher education in general is often marginalized and early childhood teacher educators further marginalized. Remuneration of infant and toddler teachers was included due to its affect on quality in infant and toddler education and care settings as well as on the professional experiences of early childhood teacher educators who become early

childhood teacher educators. The fact that many infant and toddler teachers are not well compensated means there is a high rate of staff turnover (Whitebook, Phillips, Howes, 2014). In turn, this impacts the quality of infant and toddler practicum experiences for pre-service students. It also enters into how much encouragement is given to students to pursue a career working with infants and toddlers. These types of findings will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The second half of this chapter focused on the role that NAEYC plays within early childhood teacher preparation. Three influences of NAEYC are especially important to this study: first, the decision to define early childhood as spanning from birth to age eight; second, NAEYC's field defining DAP principals; and third, NAEYC's Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Standards. In Minnesota, early childhood teacher licensing and teacher preparation are all rooted in these three NAEYC distinctives.

Chapter three will provide a description of Post-Intentional Phenomenology (Vagle, 2014) which is the philosophy and methodology used to conduct this study. Chapter three also introduces to the participants and the processes used to gather data.

Chapter 3 Methodology

As stated earlier, the purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to explore how faculty from five institutions and staff from two child development centers in Minnesota shape the infant toddler content they teach in courses and practica that are part of baccalaureate early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. Post-Intentional phenomenology was used to examine the phenomenon of *how the content might take shape.* Post-Intentional Phenomenology is both a philosophical framework and methodology (Vagle, 2014). Findings from this study provide insights into the challenges and opportunities involved in shaping the content of courses and experiences focused on teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers. In using this methodology, I grounded my study in the philosophy expressed by Hans Gadamer, a German philosopher, who wrote about studying subjects when one is so close to the subject. In this epic work, *Truth and Method* Gadamer, (1994) wrote that as human beings we have some experiences in common, which make understanding possible. Gadamer did not see closeness to a subject (i.e. an experience, a topic, situation, etc.) as an impediment to studying it, but rather an acknowledgment that experiences in common could be an asset. Gadamer used the term horizon to describe "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point:" (Gadamer, 1994, p. 302). This means that a person with a horizon of experience with a subject "knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small" (p. 302). However, Gadamer wrote that: "The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text presents itself in all of its otherness and thus asserts its own truth against one's fore-meanings" (p. 269). Central to this study, in which my own

experiences parallel or sometimes mirror the subject's experiences, Gadamer's

philosophy would have me reflect on my horizon- in Gadamer's terminology – as a

shared base of understanding from which to further explore others' horizons of

understanding regarding teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers.

Gadamer wrote about the fact that horizons are not necessarily isolated and that they

cannot be formed without a past. Gadamer termed this situation as the 'fusion of

horizons' in which "the old and new are continually combining into something of living

value, without explicitly foregrounded from one another" (p. 306).   Gadamer's (1994)

work and writing as a philosopher did not articulate methods for monitoring bias or

conducting research using his philosophy. Vagle's (2014) created process and

methodology that is complementary to Gadamer's philosophy.

Choice of Method

A post-intentional phenomenology approach was chosen for this study because it

is a method suited to studying a complex phenomenon that may be experienced

differently by individuals. A central philosophical tenet of a post-intentional approach is

the post-structural re-framing of Husserl's theory of intentionality (Vagle, 2014).

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher, first theorized phenomenology as a branch of

philosophy early in the 20th century. Vagle (2010a) points out that intentionality is a

central philosophical commitment in phenomenological methodology (p. 2).

Intentionality refers to the meaningful connections, or relationships, that connect all

things in the world. Whereas Husserl viewed these as having stability, through a post-

intentional lens one assumes that the phenomenon and the relationships are not stable but

can shift and change over time. Post-structural philosophy asserts that whatever we come

to know or understand is both always "tentative and in process" (Vagle, 2010, p. 31). The post-intentional lens acknowledges findings are both a response to 'living in the world' and being 'shot through' the world.

Whereas Husserl's notion of a phenomenon is that it can be interpreted as an essence or core and as such phenomena can be 'discovered', post-intentional phenomenology views findings to be *tentative* manifestations. These findings are termed *tentative* manifestations because the findings are complex and contextualized and are not meant to be generalized. Vagle (2014) describes the complexity that is embraced in a post-intentional phenomenological study:

> Whatever understanding is opened up through an investigation will always move with and through the researcher's intentional relationships with the phenomenon – not simply in the researcher, in the participants, in the text, or in their power positions, but in the dynamic intentional relationships that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text and their positionalities, together. (p. 30)

Vagle explained that tentative manifestations in post-intentional phenomenology, are similar to what van Manen might call themes (van Manen, 1990) , Dahlberg (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2008) might term 'patterns of meaning' and "Giorgi might call 'meaning units' (Giorgi, 2009). Vagle (2014) sees conducting a post-intentional phenomenological study as situating oneself 'on the edge of things" (Vagle, 2014, p. 137)—that is, to study a phenomenon is to explore how that phenomenon might take shape, which means paying particular attention to the "edges" of ideas. Lather (1993) in writing about validity in research after poststructuralism stated: "It is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but seeing what frames our seeing – spaces of

constructed visibility and incitements to see which constitute power and knowledge" (p. 675). In asking *how infant and toddler content might take shape* I am seeking to explore the phenomenon that frames the 'seeing' of the faculty and staff and results in what is made visible to students in learning about infants and toddlers. .

Vagle's five-component process for conducting a Post-Intentional Phenomenological study was used to conduct this study. Each component is elaborated in this chapter. By using these components I was able to reveal how the phenomenon was manifested in the study participants' experiences. The findings of this study represent tentative manifestations that reflect the contextual, fluid, and complex meaning of *how the content might be shaped* through an investigation of the experiences of those who are involved in teaching courses and supervising experiences.

Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1 the research questions that guided this study include one primary and one secondary question.

Primary Phenomenological Question

How might infant and toddler content take shape in BA/BS early childhood teacher preparation programs?

Secondary Question

What is important to know about teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?

Post-Intentional Methodology

Vagle (2014) proposed a five-component process for conducting Post-Intentional Phenomenological research that includes developing a phenomenological investigation, collecting data, analyzing data, and crafting a text to report the findings (p. 121). Below is an outline of this five step process including sub-components:

1. Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts

2. Devise a clear yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation

    a. Align data sources with research questions

3. Make a post-reflexion plan

    a. Create a post-reflexion journal

    b. Write an initial post-reflexion statement (included in this chapter)

    c. Post-reflex as data is gathered and analyzed

4. Read and write your way through the data in a systematic, responsive manner

5. Craft a text that captures the tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contents

    a. Re-state the multiple and varied contexts

    b. Brainstorm the potential form

This five step process provided a road map for me to proceed in my research and to keep myself open to the phenomenon.

Research Component #1: Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts.

This first component has six sub-elements that are used to frame a post-intentional investigation:

a. Identify and describe the research problem

b. Conduct a partial review of the literature

c. Make a philosophical claim relevant to the research problem

d. Identify the phenomena under investigation and develop research questions

e. Contexts

f. Participant selection

Chapter One describes the partial literature review, research problem, and relevant research questions. Chapter Two is a continuation of the literature review focused on the literature relevant to the context of the study and findings of this study.

Contexts Where the Phenomenon Resides

Descriptions of the phenomenon were found in the faculty and staff interviews of their experiences teaching students about infants and toddlers and in the documents used by faculty and staff to facilitate student learning about infants and toddlers. An analysis of the descriptions of the faculty's and staff's experiences teaching students exposed the phenomenon. The phenomenon also was reflected in the documents they used to guide student learning that included: course syllabi, descriptions of assignments, field experiences, practica, student assessments, and reproduced articles. The context of the study included six faculty members representing five different institutions, and seven staff members who were infant or toddler teachers in child development centers affiliated with the same two institutions of the faculty members.

Participant Recruitment

      In the spring of 2015, the Minnesota Department of Education listed ten higher

education programs that were approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching to offer

students the opportunity to earn an Early Childhood Educator license through BA/BS

early childhood teacher preparation programs. Of these ten programs, six are offered in

public institutions and four are in private institutions. This list of ten approved programs

was my starting point for moving towards finding participants. Participants were selected

from the pool of faculty who teach the infant and toddler courses in these ten programs

using the following process:

First: I identified all of the institution of higher education (IHE) programs in Minnesota

that offered the BA/BS early childhood teacher licensure through the Minnesota

Department of Education website. For a list of these programs see Appendix A.

Second: Once these programs were identified, I reviewed each of the individual IHE

programs to search for courses within the early childhood teacher preparation coursework

identified as having infant and toddler content in their titles and/or on-line course

description.

Third: In some instances, I was able to identify the specific faculty member teaching the

infant and toddler content course and made note of their email address. In other cases, I

called the institution's education department to inquire which faculty member taught the

infant and toddler course and requested contact information.

Fourth: I sent the faculty member identified as teaching a course focused on infants and

toddlers an email (see Appendix B) describing the study along with the Consent to

Participate (see Appendix C) and inviting them to participate. A total of seven recruitment emails were sent to faculty at institutions (in one IHE it appeared there were two infant/toddler courses of higher education and emails were sent to both faculty members).

A desired outcome in the final participant selection was that faculty and staff would represent various types of institutions offering the BA/BS early childhood teacher preparation programs: private colleges, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU), and the Minnesota University system. Upon learning that the infant and toddler course taught by two-year institutions are transferrable into any of the MNSUC four-year institutions, I recruited a faculty member from a two-year institution who teaches an infant and toddler course.

The initial affirmative responses appeared to be representative only of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Minnesota University system with no participation from private colleges. However, in two cases, I learned that the participants teaching in public IHEs had each taught in private university programs. One participant was willing to describe her experiences in both her current faculty position and her experiences in teaching infant and toddler courses at a private institution.

Participant Selection

All thirteen of the participants were female. The data reporting has been done carefully to maintain the anonymity of both the individual participant and their institutional affiliation. In the findings all participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity. No formal demographic survey was used. However, information

about the participants' educational backgrounds came from information listed on the IHE website and through the interview process. All faculty participants were experienced in the field of early childhood, meaning they had been in the field at least ten years though not necessarily ten years of teaching in higher education. Three participants had taught in higher education over ten years. Experience *in the field* was defined as experience teaching or directing in private child care settings, public school early childhood programs, Head Start, early childhood special education, early childhood family education, and leadership in organizations focused on early childhood education issues.

Faculty backgrounds.

Six faculty members from five institutions make up my faculty participants. Information about each faculty member is included below.

1 Jana, PhD, has been an adjunct professor and recently hired in a full-time tenure track at a public IHE. She had previous experience in a private early childhood business and held a position in an early childhood advocacy and leadership organization.

#2 Mary, PhD, served as an early childhood teacher educator in a private IHE for several years and now is in a position at a public IHE. She had previous experience in elementary education as well as child care.

3 Jean holds a master's degree (with significant work completed towards a doctoral degree) and was hired as an adjunct instructor for five years at a public IHE. She had previous experience in Early Childhood Family Education.

#4 Sarah, PhD, has taught at a public IHE for over ten years. She had previous experience in child care, early intervention, and an early childhood program that included home visitation.

#5 Claire holds a master's degree (enrolled in a PhD program) and has been an adjunct teaching a variety of courses in early childhood at both a public and private IHE. She had previous experience as a director of an early childhood program and teaching in early childhood education.

#6 Donna has a master's degree and has been hired to teach various courses at a public IHE for the past seven or so years (though not every semester). She had experience as an early childhood educator.

Welcomed expansion to the interview pool. At the site of the first faculty interview, a colleague from the Minnesota Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (MnAECTE) had arranged for me to meet with the staff in the child development center and invited me to interview the infant and toddler teachers. It was not possible to conduct individual interviews due to time constraints of staff being out of the classrooms. The group interview took place during a regularly scheduled staff meeting. Each staff participant signed the Consent to Participate and the same prompting questions were asked of the group members as were used in the faculty interviews. It was clear to me that the insights from the staff complemented the interview of the faculty member. This prompted me to invite another group of infant and toddler teachers at a university-sponsored child development center at my second interview site to participate.

They also agreed and the same process I used with the first group of infant and toddler teachers was followed.

Staff participants all had a minimum of bachelor's degrees though no formal demographic survey was done to determine if they may have additional degrees or if they are enrolled in advanced degree programs. Again, the data reporting has been done carefully to maintain the anonymity of both the individual participant and their institutional affiliation. In the findings all participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Staff backgrounds. Seven staff members from two institutions make up my staff participants. Information about each staff member is included below.

#1 Miriam, BA, graduated several years ago from the same institution where she is currently an infant teacher in the university-sponsored child development center.

#2 Martha, BA, is a recent graduate (five years ago) of the same institution where she is currently a toddler teacher in the university-sponsored child development center and had additional experience in an elementary education setting.

#3 Stacey, BA, graduated about ten years ago from the same institution where she is currently an infant teacher in the university-sponsored child development center.

#4 Kathy , BA, worked with infants in another program for five years before taking an infant teacher position in the university-sponsored child development center. She had previous experience in an Early Childhood Family Education literacy program as well as Head Start.

#5 Terri, BA, is from the same institution where she works as a toddler teacher in the university-sponsored child development center. She has been with the program for just over a year.

#6 Chris, BA, is from another institution than the one in which she has been a toddler teacher for approximately ten years. She added that she had previously worked in Head Start, parent education, and Early Childhood Family Education.

#7 Sally, BA, is from an out-of-state institution and has been an infant teacher for the past five years. She explained that she had previous experience at another university-sponsored child development center teaching pre-school aged children.

Two of the other institutions did not have on-site child development centers. Their students completed practica where they worked or by arrangements made in the community by the students. The third institution did not use their child development center for infant and toddler practica because students had other experiences in this setting and there was a desire to have them experience other models. I made no attempt to connect with staff at community placement practicum sites as they were not consistent placements.

Profile of the Students

Faculty members were asked to describe their student populations. The profiles of the students enrolled at each institution are taken from the descriptions given by faculty during the interview process. These descriptions are purposely not linked to faculty members in order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

Institution A. Our students are actually pretty nontraditional. In our program, about 80% of our students work in addition to going to school, so we have lots and lots of people who are active practitioners at the same time that they're taking classes. Our average age of students in our program is in the 30s, so we have a pretty wide range of everything from literally high school students (because we can have post secondary option (high school aged students enrolled in college courses) to students who are in their 40s and 50s and have been in the field a long time. So it is a pretty diverse group. Most of our students are part-time students taking anywhere from one class (2 or 3 credits) to a full load (12-15 credits). Much, much, much more weighted on the part-time. I think our average credit load in our courses right now is like 8 credits, so somewhere between 6 and 9 credits is kind of typical for our students.

Institution B. I would say approximately 80-90% would be traditional students that are between the ages of 19 and 23 or something like that. Generally I have two or three per class (class size is usually around 18-20) that are nontraditional students. They can be anywhere up to 50 years old. Generally I would say maybe 10% have children and the other ones don't. I would say probably (I'm just guessing here) 30-40% have worked either in a daycare situation or done nannying or something like that. As far as diversity, we don't for whatever reason have a lot of diverse students in this class from a cultural perspective.

Institution C. We have a lot of students who are parents. I think it makes for a richer conversation actually because we do have students who are parents. We always, always,

always have a relatively high percentage of students who are working in the field. Some

may or may not be working in infant toddler programs but actually a lot are.

Institution D. My students are very diverse. I have many Somali students. Most of my

students are women. Most of my students work in the city. There are not many that work

in the suburbs. Most of them are working in the field now, either in child care, Head

Start, some school district, but they're all in the field and they're all more nontraditional

students. They're not like 18-23… mine are very nontraditional. All, working. [She added

information about the class size] It will be about 20-ish, between 20 and 24.

Institution E. Mostly we have traditional college-aged students. We have a few that are

nontraditional… [there are] 30 students to a section. In the fall I teach three sections. In

the spring I teach two sections. In the summer I teach one section completely online.

Purposive Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study was the phenomenon of how infant and toddler

content was shaped. To explore this phenomenon it was key for me to interview the

faculty and staff to learn how the content was shaped through their experiences in

teaching courses or supervising practica. In addition I reviewed documents they accessed

or created. Interviews provided a rich description of how faculty and staff shaped the

content both in the course and practica experiences connected to the course. Documents

provided additional descriptions and added to the descriptions given in the interviews.

Visits to four of the five campuses to conduct the interviews allowed me to see and experience the environment in which the faculty/staff taught. In visits to the two university-affiliated child development centers, I was also able to see and experience the environments in which students interacted with infants and toddlers – and observe some pre-service students working in their classrooms. This provided me with a first-hand experience of the context in which the experiences of faculty and staff took place.

The Phenomena

To understand the phenomenon of how the content might be shaped, I needed to study the experiences of faculty/staff who teach infant and toddler courses. As Vagle (2014) pointed out, the phenomenologist is not studying the individual but is studying how a particular phenomenon manifests and appears in the world (p. 23). This study sought to describe and analyze how the content was shaped in infant and toddler courses through illuminating the phenomenon as it was experienced by the participants. Course descriptions, syllabi, and other resources used by faculty and staff in their courses provided further insights. To investigate my research questions, I gathered data by interviewing, transcribing and analyzing the interviews from six faculty members representing five institutions of higher education and seven staff members who were infant or toddler teachers in two university-sponsored child development centers. The interviews were focused on eliciting their experiences in teaching the courses or supervising practica. In addition, a total of 15 documents were shared by the faculty and staff participants that included syllabi, course assignment directions, observation guidelines, and reproduced articles.

Research Component #2: Devise a clear, yet flexible process for gathering data.

This study used a post-intentional phenomenological approach to gathering data using interviews with faculty and staff who teach pre-service early childhood teacher candidates. This study used face to face semi-structured interviews that were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to gain a description of the phenomenon. Analysis of the interviews along with an analysis of the 15 documents shared by the participants provided insights resulting in tentative manifestations of the phenomenon. In order engage participants in describing their experiences, a series of questions were developed as prompts.

Interview Questions: Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008) addressed the need to sequence the interviews so as to seek genuine insight into the phenomena and a person's individual experience. They suggested that the questions need to be crafted so as to open up the experience. At the same time, Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008) noted that "In order to engender and open dialogue interviews need to have a focus" (p. 190). The structure I used included a series of guiding questions with additional prompts to encourage the interviewee to provide more details.

Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008) wrote about the importance of opening questions providing an opportunity for the interviewee to feel competent to describe something of his or her world. For purposes of this study the opening questions were designed as questions the interviewee could answer competently based on his/her experiences and that also provided insight into the interviewee's prior experiences in the field of early childhood education. These questions led the interview in the direction of exploring the interviewee's experience as a faculty or staff member and then specifically

in teaching infant/toddler content. The first two questions allowed me to learn about the interviewee's history and background in the field of early childhood education and how they transitioned from being in the field into higher education.

1. Who were mentors or key experiences that kindled your interest in early childhood education?

2. Tell me about the journey that brought you into teaching in higher education.

The next four questions were used in the semi-structured interview to prompt the interviewee to describe the phenomenon.

3. What are key concepts and beliefs you want teacher candidates to gain in regards to infant/toddler content?

4. What types of experiences do you use?

5. What bodies of knowledge do you access?

6. What responses have you experienced from students in teaching infant and toddler content?

Additional prompts:

1. What resources, text books, etc. do you use?

2. What resources do you wish were available?

3. What do you wish others understood about teaching infant/toddler content?

Table 3:1

Alignment of the Data Sources with the Research and Interview Questions:

Alignment of the Data Sources with the Research Questions

Questions	Data Sources
Q1 What are key concepts or beliefs you want teacher candidates to gain in regards to infants/ toddlers?	• Analysis of transcripts from audio-taped individual interviews • Analysis of syllabi, written assignment directions, or other written artifacts • Researcher's reflexive journal and notes
Q2 What types of experiences are used?	• Analysis of transcripts from audio-taped individual interviews • Analysis of descriptions of practica, field experiences, and what students do in each of these • Researcher's reflexive journal including notes on impressions of visits to campus child development centers
Q3 What bodies of knowledge do you access?	• Analysis of transcripts from audio-taped individual interviews • Analysis of syllabi, written assignment directions, or other written artifacts

	• Analysis of assessments used to gauge student learning • Researcher's reflexive journal
Q4 What responses have you experienced from students in teaching infant and toddler content?	• Analysis of transcripts from audio-taped individual interviews • Researcher's reflexive journal

Data Collection Plan

Data was gathered through semi-structured in-person recorded interviews with five faculty members on their campuses. The sixth interview was conducted by telephone. I had recently met with the participant in person on her campus but time had not allowed for the interview that day. Interviews with the staff from the child development centers were conducted as group interviews. The same questions and prompts were used in the staff interviews as were used in the faculty interviews, and these group interviews were also transcribed and analyzed. Both faculty and staff provided written material they used to guide students such as syllabi, handouts and descriptions of assignments.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after the interview took place. I took notes during each interview – though I minimized this to ensure the conversation of the interview flowed naturally and so I would be attentive to what the interviewee was saying.

Data Analysis

An article entitled "QUAGOL: A guide for qualitative data analysis" (Dierckx de Casterle, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2012) provided specific ways to begin a whole-parts-whole analysis of qualitative data that appealed to me. Dierckx de Casterle et. al. (2012) gives this description of their process: "The method is systematic but not rigid. It is characterized by iterative processes of digging deeper, constantly moving between the various stages of the process. As such, it aims to stimulate the researcher's intuition and creativity as optimal" (p. 360). This process was complementary to Vagle's five-step process. To begin analysis of qualitative data, Dierckx de Caterle, et al. (2012) suggested after reading through the data to ask oneself the question, "How does this data answer my question?" I created a new word document for each interview and wrote my main research question at the top. I then read the interview again, stopping to type data from the interview that answered my question, "How does this data answer my question?" This produced specific insights for me to further investigate. Example:

Entry from my post-reflexive journal – August 4, 2015

How does this participant answer the research question?

She told me: The course is shaped by formal tools used such as the Infant and Toddler Rating Scale, The Basics for DAP, and finally the Gonzales-Mena text: Infant, Toddler Caregiver. Because it pushes the boundaries of what is found in Rule 3 and NAEYC standards. It is shaped by the belief that students need to know more and go deeper than what is 'required'. She describes ways the course was shaped when they had access to Infants and Toddlers on site and all could observe the same things and then compare and contrast the meaning of the

observations. She takes advantage of happenings such as the blueprints for the new space. She talks about the students observations are shaped by seeing and focusing on one child over the semester as development happens students see it. She discusses the lack of control when the practicum is selected by the student. The course is shaped by the experiences of the non-traditional students and the real life experience they have in their work or as parents. But a disadvantage is they come in with only one perspective.

This proved to be a useful process in that I was able to complete some initial analysis that then alerted me to look deeper into particular aspects of the interview. In this example, I became alert to ways in which faculty shaped the content by placing a focus on the fact standards often represent the minimum, but what might be best can be different.

The QUAGOL (Dierckx de Casterle et. al.,2012) article then described going through the data line by line and identifying topics in a non-hierarchical manner. I also used this method to begin my analysis and was surprised to see the variety of topics touched on within each interview.

Example:

Post-reflexive journal entry - June 13, 2015

Listing of Non-hierarchical concepts from this interview. The term non-hierarchical is meaning to say to make a list as the concepts are revealed in the interview rather than trying to give them a rank order or categorize them:

Example:

- o *Cognitive dissonance – learning about infants and toddlers while taking el ed methods*

- o *Methods courses are viewed so differently at different colleges*

- o *Declarative knowledge vs. application*

- o *Infants, young toddlers, toddlers –three distinct age developmental ages*

- o *Some coverage of infant and toddler content may be done in other courses*

- o *Not taking the Infant and Toddler until their junior year SEQUENCE OF COURSES matters*

- o *Child Development courses cover birth through middle childhood*

- o *Teaching students about a developmentally appropriate DAP environment for infants toddlers – not a K lesson*

I then used the line by line analysis method described by Vagle (2014). I read line by line a second time and used the Microsoft Word feature *New Comment* to insert comments on each line. Example:
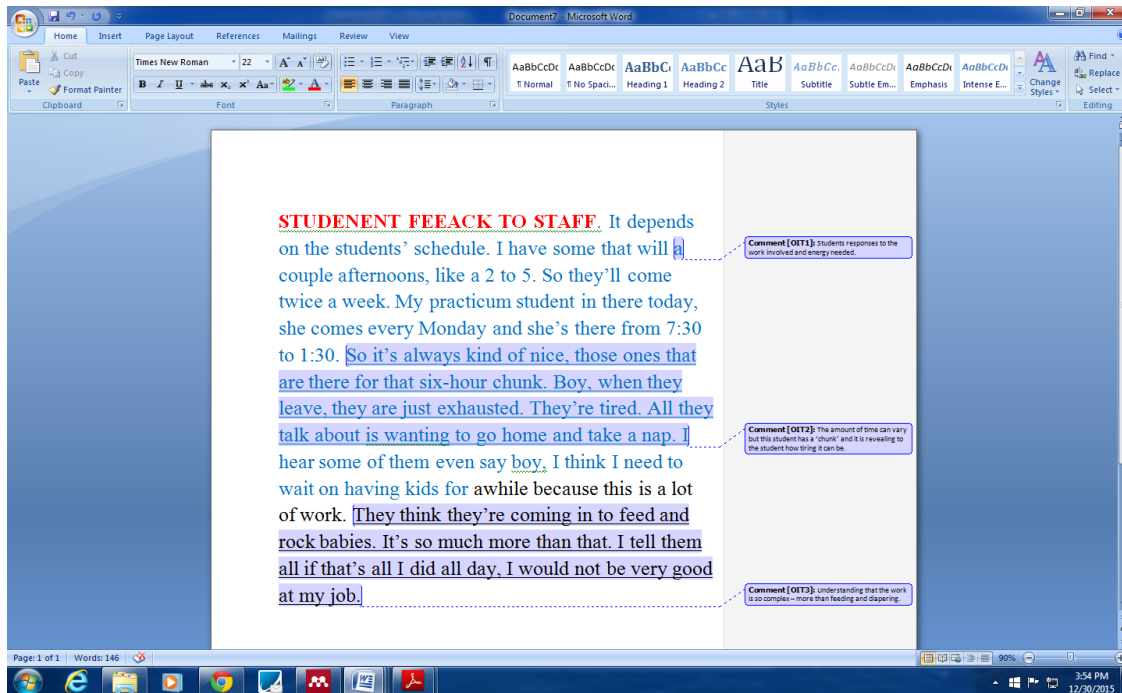
As I worked across each of the interviews, I began to identify the phenomenon through the ways in which participants described experiences in similar ways – as well as identifying the phenomenon through unique descriptions. I devised a color coding system based on data that provided similar descriptions. Using this color-coding system I worked through each interview again, turning sections and particular lines into the color that 'sounded similar '.

Orange = Critical Content

Green = Learning Activities

Blue = Students

Red = Realities

Purple = Differences (compared to teaching older children)

I then created a new word document for each of these color-coded categories and copied all of the identified sections, for example *Critical Content,* from all of the interviews into this new document, I did the same for each of the other color coded categories. I moved data to separate documents. By the final analysis the initial titles I created changed to better reflect the tentative manifestation.

I kept these initial descriptors in mind while I returned to re-reading the paragraphs I had written about *how does this data answer my question?*, and returned to an original copy of each interview to bold particular statements in the interview and in the documents that would help me think about my findings. I moved back and forth between the original transcript, the documents created to analyze them, my initial paragraphs documenting my impressions of "how this interview answers my question," the list of topics generated through each interview (non-hierarchical) and my post-reflexive journaling.

I found that returning to the original interviews and re-reading them after some time had lapsed gave me additional insights. For example, I recognized that within each of the color-coded set of descriptions were 'sub' categories that described various aspects of the phenomenon. At that point I decided to give the categories new names that were more descriptive of the shaping process. For example, whereas Red = Realities and Purple = Differences, the new merged understanding became Swimming Against the Current. These findings are thoroughly described in Chapter Four. I used the same analysis method with the documents.

3: My Post-Reflexive Plan

In a post-intentional study, the researcher embraces a post-structural philosophy that recognizes there is an interconnected intentional relationship of the researcher with the research (Vagle, 2014). My first post-reflexive journal entry was made prior to beginning the study in order to document my positionalities and assumptions. This is my initial post-reflexive journal entry:

From the start of my career, my professional identity has been as an early childhood educator with infant and toddler expertise. My first professional position was with the Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education program (ECFE) in one of the first pilot programs in the state. This very first professional experience required me to work with infants, toddlers and parents. Nothing in my BA program and teaching licensure process had prepared me to take on this role. My first year of teaching was marked with intensive self-study in order to create curricula for infants, toddlers and their parents.

In choosing my graduate program (masters) I was very intentional in deciding to attend Wheelock College in Boston, MA where they offered, at that time, a master's degree in Infant and Toddler Behavior and Development. It was through the Wheelock program I completed an internship with Dr. Berry Brazelton. Through the opportunities Dr. Brazelton and my Wheelock professors provided, I came to be more knowledgeable and very interested in infant and toddler content. I had a growing awareness that infant-toddler knowledge was critical but not always included in early childhood teacher preparation or even child development focused programs. The infant-toddler content I knew was valued. These early career experiences brought me a sense of professional

excitement and recognition from my peers. For example, I was invited to develop and teach courses that focused on infant-toddler parent content through the University of Minnesota, St. Cloud, and St. Thomas. With an infant-toddler colleague, I helped established the first infant mental health organization in the state. I was invited to be a guest speaker at local and state conferences. Two of my proposals (infant-toddler content) were accepted and presented at national conferences.

In moving from being an infant-toddler parent-teacher to a full-fledged faculty member in higher education at Bethel, I have learned more about how courses are constructed, how student assessment is done, the challenge of finding good placements for field experiences, practica, and student teaching, the need to meet the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards and perform other duties that contribute to the Institution but compete for one's time in teaching and research. A surprise for me was the realization that some students enter BA program unsure if they really want to be an early childhood teacher. (I had taught at the graduate level where students enrolled because of their career choices). Another factor I have been reflecting on is that the pre-primary endorsement is an 'add on' to the main Kindergarten to grade three or six license. As such there are just a few courses focused on specific pre-primary content and only one at Bethel specific to infants and toddlers.

Through conducting this study, I will broaden my own horizon of understanding what it means to teach infant and toddler content. I will be able to describe the tentative manifestations of infant toddler content as it is created and brought to life by faculty. This information will fill a void in the literature in by what shapes infant-toddler content. What bodies of knowledge are students exposed to? What types of experiences are used to

help BA students learn infant-toddler content? Why are these choices important to

faculty? I am confident there is much to be learned from my colleagues. I am intensely

interested in discovering what the breadth and depth of infant-toddler knowledge is that

is offered through our pre-primary endorsement programs.

On-going post-reflection.

The post-reflexive plan, in my case journaling, helped me maintain openness and the

ability to analyze and interpret the data. My post-reflexive plan especially helped me to

identify data that was surprising, shocking, concerning, exciting, absent, insightful,

unusual, and innovative.

My formal post-reflexive journal consisted of a series of word documents that

were dated and correlated to each of my interviews or visits to a campus. In addition, as I

worked through an analysis of data, other thoughts and insights were captured in new

word documents that responded and correlated to the part of the study in which I was

involved in. At times I typed my post-reflexive thoughts directly into the draft and later

copied and pasted them into a new document.

Example:

> *Jan. 3, 2016 - Today I went back to the original transcriptions and re-read each*
>
> *of them. Because I have been thinking so intently about the specific ways the*
>
> *phenomenon manifested itself based on how I have been thinking about it for the*
>
> *past months – I decided to open myself up and read with fresh eyes. Indeed there*
>
> *were 'things' that popped out that had not been included in my drafts…so I*
>
> *carefully copies and pasted these into the documents where they fit the best and*

labeled them 'raw' so I would remember why they are just 'sitting' in a particular document. It is creating more work – but work I welcome as one of my intents is to honor the data offered to me by my participants. I am finding there is no short cut to mining this data. This further confirmed for me that deciding to investigate infant and toddler content as a phenomenon – and use post-intentional strategies – was truly the best fit. The intentional relationships are becoming more evident – especially intentional relationships to the history of early childhood education in the USA and the influence of NAEYC.

There were occasions when thoughts and ideas came when I could not immediately sit down to type them, so I captured them in handwritten notes. I have returned to both the typed journals and handwritten notes through the study to deepen my ability to understand the phenomenon.

Throughout the analysis I continued to research the literature for reasons not always directly connected to this study but intimately related. For example, over the summer I completed a book manuscript for a national publisher that was focused on infant development and working with parents of infants. This book entitled *Pathways to Positive Parenting: Helping Parents Nurture Healthy Development in the Earliest Months,* will be published by Zero to Three in the spring of 2016. In conducting research for the book manuscript, I came across articles and books that continued to inform both my literature review and analysis of data for this study. Later in the summer I needed to prepare a new syllabus for the infant and toddler course I would be teaching in the fall. The literature searches done for the dissertation had identified many articles that were helpful in creating the new syllabus – as were ideas learned through

interviewing faculty and staff. My own immersion in the field while doing the research is an example of the intentionality that Vagle (2014) describes ties the researcher, the participants, and the produced text together. It also highlighted the need to be mindful through the post-reflexive journaling in order to keep open to the phenomenon as it was described by participants.

#4 "Read and write your way through your data in a systematic, responsive manner" (Vagle, 2014, p. 134).

As I continued the literature review, new insights about what I had learned from the study were created. As I dove deeper into the analysis of the interviews with both faculty and staff, I gained additional ways to configure the data to write about the findings about the phenomenon. The tentative manifestations developed as I recognized the similar ways in which participants described their experiences teaching the courses or supervising practica. The converging and overlapping activities - dissertation analysis and writing, completion of a book manuscript on a related topic, and the need to design my course and syllabus for the very content I was studying - served to help me think about the data from different perspectives. <u>In addition, once I had a draft of a particular tentative manifestation written,</u> I engaged in a modified member checking process. I requested feedback from other early childhood professionals who had experience with infant and toddler content. The individuals, who provided feedback as I crafted the text, were an early childhood faculty member with experience teaching infant and toddler courses, a toddler teacher and an infant and toddler specialist. Long verbatim quotes were included in the material they reviewed so that they could question and or validate the interpretations I had ascribed in identifying tentative manifestations.

#5 Craft a text that captures the tentative manifestations

This dissertation captures the tentative manifestation in their 'multiple, partial and varied contexts' (Vagle, 2014, p. 136) Through the words of the participants I have captured vivid descriptions of how the content in infant and toddler courses is shaped and gained insights regarding what is important to know about teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. Through Vagle's post-intentional methodology I was able to describe a phenomenon, how content is shaped, that has multidimensionality, multiplicity and differences (Vagle, 2014). I decided to craft a text with five chapters: Chapter 1 provides an introduction and overview; Chapter 2 a reviews the relevant literature; Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology used and description of the participants; Chapter 4 provides the findings in this study with connections to the current literature and some discussion. Chapter 5 situates the findings in terms of the secondary research question, *what might be important to know about teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers*, providing highlights of significant practical implications with additional discussion.

Summary

The experiences shared by the participants in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers provided an opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of how the content might be shaped. The context for the study were interviews with six faculty members (representing five different programs) who teach infant toddler courses and seven staff members who supervise students in practicum experiences as part of the courses taught by the faculty. In addition a total of 15 written documents used by faculty

and staff to guide students in learning about infants and toddlers were analyzed as part of this investigation.

In this chapter I reiterated the research questions that were the heart of this post-intentional phenomenological study of the investigation of how infant and toddler content might be shaped in these five early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. This investigation was guided by Vagle's (2014) Post-Intentional Phenomenological research methodology. The whole – parts – whole process of analyzing the data and writing through the data resulted in my identifying tentative manifestations of the phenomenon. Chapter Four will present the findindgs from this study.

Chapter 4 Findings

Presented in this chapter are the findings of a post-intentional phenomenological (Vagle, 2014) investigation of how infant and toddler content might take shape in BA/BS early childhood educations programs in Minnesota. In this study, infant and toddler courses are one part of a series of courses leading to The Teacher of Early Childhood Education (birth to grade 3) licensure in Minnesota. Therefore, the findings reflect the phenomenon as it is situated in courses and practica, taught by faculty and staff based in part, on their own educational preparation and experience in the field, within the larger early childhood teacher preparation programs. The tentative manifestations in my study were produced as a synthesis of the experiences of faculty and staff, attending to the Minnesota Board of Teaching's Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Standards (87100:3000); in dialogue with participants' personal preparation, experiences, beliefs, and convictions; with participants' considerations of the demographics of the pre-service students and in response to current issues within early childhood education.

Organization of Chapter

This chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section each of the six tentative manifestations are briefly described. This is to share how I am conceiving of the phenomenon. Second, I revisit and re-state the multiple and varied contexts where the phenomenon is situated. This section includes a review of the contexts in which the phenomenon was experienced by the participants, in such acts as creating syllabi, assignments, participating in discussions with students, modeling practices, and supervising students in their infant and toddler practicum. Third, I introduce the

participants who contributed to describing the phenomenon. A brief overview of each participant's professional background and role in the early childhood teacher preparation process is provided. This section also includes a brief profile of the demographic of students taught at each institution. The fourth and final section is where the nuanced, dynamic descriptions of the phenomenon are captured that illustrates each of the six tentative manifestations.

Tentative Manifestation Overview

These findings are based on an analysis of the descriptions of the experiences of the faculty and staff in teaching students about infants and toddlers – including an analysis of documents they use to guide student learning. The six tentative manifestations and their descriptions are described below and depicted in this graphic:

Figure 4-1.Overveiw of the Six Tentative Manifestations

Figure 4-1
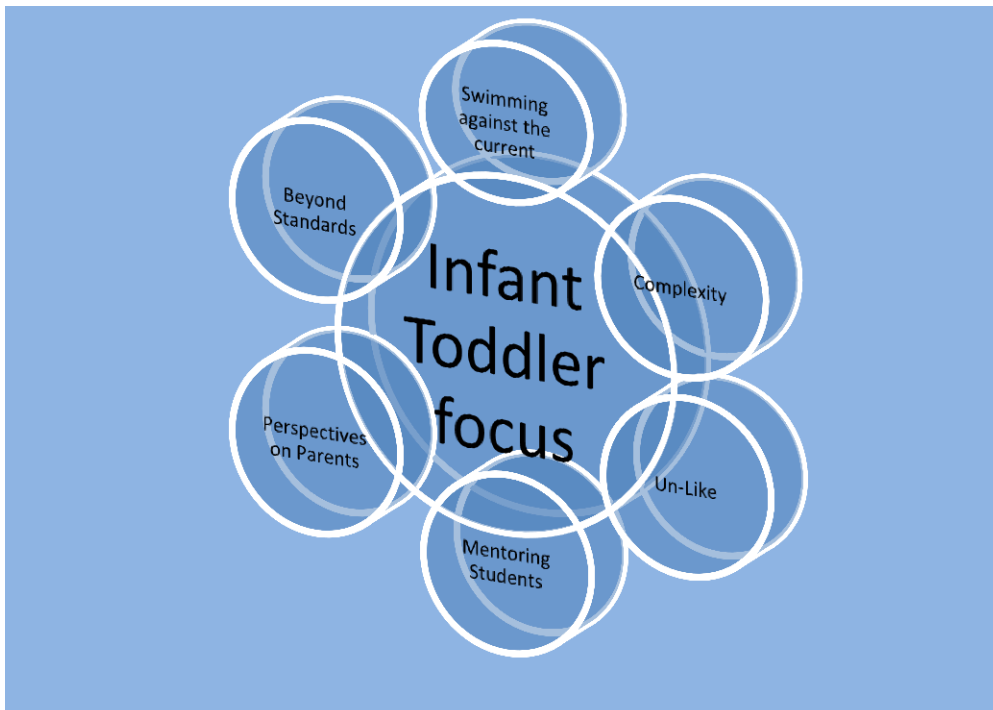
Swimming Against The Current

The content was shaped by actively attending to overcoming the stigma that teaching infants and toddlers is merely 'babysitting', not something considered a professional role or requiring education and training. This was in tandem with helping pre-service students embrace the importance of what children are learning in their infant and toddler years. It included actively counteracting poor examples of infant and toddler teaching witnessed by students completing practica in the community.

Complexity

The context was shaped by the complexity due to the multiple topics and bodies of knowledge that were accessed in the courses. From the participant's descriptions, there were multiple streams of information they deemed necessary for students to be exposed to in learning about infants and toddlers. This tentative manifestation dimension also reflected the perspectives and beliefs participants wanted made visible and tangible in the courses.

Un-like

The content was shaped by a focus on differentiating the infant and toddler curriculum, particularly the pedagogical strategies, as very different from curriculum and pedagogy that would be effective for preschoolers or older children. Included in this differentiation was a focus on what it 'takes' to be an infant and toddler teacher.

Mentoring Students

The content was shaped by intentional actions taken by the infant and toddler teachers to ensure the college students felt a sense of belonging and comfort in the practicum so they would be open to learning. Several staff members described having an understanding that the infant or toddler practicum presented an unfamiliar, challenging experience for college students – and that they took measures to address the unsettled feelings many students exhibited.

Perspectives On Parents

The content was shaped by helping students develop various perspectives on working with parents. These perspectives included a rationale for developing relationships with parents, supporting parents, and providing parents with information.

Beyond Standards

The content was shaped by an awareness of societal issues that impact infants, toddlers, and their families and openness to bringing discussion of these issues into the courses. This tentative manifestation involved moving course content beyond the structure of the MN BOT standards to help students engage in examination of larger issues both within the United Sates and globally. This tentative manifestation helped students become critical thinkers and advocates for infants, toddlers, and parents through questioning current practices and expanding the students' cultural horizons.

Multiple Contexts Where the Phenomenon Resided

Interviews with faculty provided a deep understanding of the phenomenon that was described as participants shared experiences, perspectives, and beliefs that they used

to shape the content of their courses. The phenomenon became visible in the descriptions of discussions they had with students or the way in which they privileged particular concepts in providing a conceptual frame or lens for the course content. Documents such as course syllabi also provided insights regarding the phenomenon.

Interviews with staff, who supervised infant and toddler practicum, also provided a deep understanding of the phenomenon. Through their mentoring role, staff modeled practices, coached students in learning to perform tasks, provided feedback as students engaged infants or toddlers, and engaged in intentional conversations about 'why's. They helped students find a comfortable place in the classroom from which to learn and grow in teaching infants and toddlers. Documents used by staff to guide students in the practicum provided additional insights.

Findings: Six Tentative Manifestations

This section of Chapter 4 includes the nuanced, dynamic descriptions and examples that were captured that illustrate each of the six tentative manifestations and describes them. The findings in Chapter 4 address both research questions in an integrated manner. The primary research question is*: How might infant and toddler content take shape in BS/BA level early childhood teacher programs*? The secondary question is: *What might be important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?* The integration of findings for both questions in this chapter has been accomplished by first presenting each of the tentative manifestations in individual sections *which describe how infant and toddler content might take shape.* Within each of

these sections, the finding and discussion of the finding are interwoven. The summary at

the end of each section addresses findings which inform the second research question:

What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and

toddlers?

Tentative Manifestation: Swimming Against the Current

Someone asked Sally, an infant teacher, what she did for a living. She answered

that she was an infant teacher. This was the response from the person who inquired:

"You teach babies? What could you *possibly* teach a baby?"

As I interviewed the staff there was a distinct sense of *swimming against the current* as it

related to defending their career choice as an important contribution to society and in

addition convincing pre-service teachers that teaching infants and toddlers was

important, worthy work. This tentative manifestation was described in the interviews

with the staff who host students in field experiences and practicum but was also evident

in faculty interviews. There were five aspects to this tentative manifestation. I have

named these aspects: *fighting for credibility; re-framing infant toddler teaching; reality*

of career possibilities (or not); countering bad examples; and being left behind. Each of

these aspects of the phenomenon is elaborated upon by presenting the data collected in

the interviews.

Fighting for credibility. Sally shared something she had heard just a few days

before on the radio:

I had heard a gentleman on the radio… I was just so upset when I heard it! It was

a gentleman and he was talking about some of the lowest paid jobs. Well, of

course, the second one they listed was early childhood. The gentleman on the

radio said I'm surprised they even classify that as a job. That's like a glorified

baby-sitter. How hard is it to say hey, here's some Play-doh and walk away*?*

Sally, the infant teacher who described the radio interview, said she found his comments

'derogatory and demeaning'. He was challenged to think of early childhood teaching as a

'job' and the teacher also expressed, and her co-worker agreed, that this man's views and

sentiments are reflective of the beliefs of many adults. She was also aware of students

coming into their field experiences and hearing similar disparaging messages in

conversations that occurred amongst college students. Martha, a toddler teacher, noted

that this type of rhetoric had an impact on how students may be thinking as they began

their infant or toddler practicum:

Yeah, I think the idea is there (with some of the incoming students) that think we

are 'fake' teachers and the kindergarten through 12 are the 'real 'teachers

…..When a student graduates as an early childhood teacher, do they see that as

synonymous like what you do in the birth to five age group as teaching? I don't

think in the rhetoric, as you listen and reflect and unpack, that they've really

crossed the threshold yet. This (infant and toddler) is teaching and just looks

different at different age levels.

Given this backdrop, those interviewed for this study identified a need to underscore the

importance of the work of early childhood educators not only in a general way, but more

specifically to focus on the importance of the foundational development that takes place in infancy and toddlerhood. The Institute of Medicine report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth to age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (Allen & Kelly, 2015). highlights a reason why the general public, parents, and even early childhood practitioners may not recognize infants and toddlers can benefit from teaching:

> This distinction between implicit and explicit learning can be confusing to early-childhood practitioners (and parents), who often do not observe or recognize evidence for the sophisticated implicit learning—or even the explicit learning—taking place in the young children in their care. Many of the astonishingly competent, active, and insightful things that research on early cognitive development shows are going on in young children's minds are not transparent in their behavior… This point is especially important because the cognitive abilities of young children are so easily underestimated. (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p.102)

In addition to not 'seeing' that learning is taking place, another factor is the professional status of early childhood teachers as compared to teachers in elementary school settings is not comparable given working conditions and remuneration, leading to a perception, as Sally identified, that teachers in child care settings are not 'real teachers' (Williams, 2012).

Framing what it means to teach infants and toddlers. Kathy, a toddler teacher, identified a reason for this challenge of being viewed a merely a 'baby-sitter'. It is a challenge because teachers of infants and toddlers carry out important responsibilities and must attend to each infant, toddler and parent in an individualized manner.

I think early childhood comes with a stigma of 'daycare' or 'baby-sitters'. So I

think sometimes it's always important to clarify with the students at this center

and others it is so much more than that.

To *swim against this current*, the infant and toddler teachers revealed their purposes in

dialoging with students about what they do and very importantly *why* they do it and *what*

is accomplished for the child. The intent was to make visible the teaching and

professionalism embedded into ordinary aspects of the routines performed while giving

care to the children. The teachers in the two university-sponsored child development

centers perform the critical work in supporting a child's development, not in the

traditional ways many people think of teaching, but by embedding important learning

opportunities for the infants and toddlers into every interaction they have with the child

during their time in the classroom.

The professional staff in the university-sponsored infant and toddler classrooms

identified an important mentoring role. They provided students with an understanding

about the work of an infant-toddler teacher creating important learning opportunities. In

working with infants and toddlers, teachers provide the daily care needed by all

dependent children that includes feeding them and changing their diapers. While these

tasks could be performed by 'babysitters' it is *how* the teachers use these care routines in

teaching infants and toddlers that is the difference. It is not *what* they do for the child,

but *how* they do it that transforms a care routine into a learning opportunity. Across the

staff interviews were examples of how they frame teaching infant and toddlers through

the way they approached the care routines and framed this in a larger picture of how

important building relationships with individual children is to children's development.

Below are some examples in which staff described framing of the work that is needed to help students embrace the importance of not only infant and toddler content but also to imagine what it means to teach infants and toddlers. Sally, an infant teacher, described the challenge of linking care-giving to teaching when care-giving is commonly not recognized as teaching:

> I will say for me a big part of this class is getting the students past the idea that infant and toddler teaching is just care-giving, that it's just about getting them fed and keeping them clean and putting them on their backs to sleep. There is teaching to this!

In conducting a study about professionalism and the birth to three practitioners, Manning-Morton (2006) identifies the origin of the divide that Sally found challenging to address with pre-service students who may view teaching infants and toddlers as only care-giving:

> Developing a professional identity that respects all aspects of practice and areas of knowledge is an ongoing and contested debate within the early year's community. The current situation has arisen from the historical context of early years provision that has traditionally been divided between 'care and 'education' and provision for children aged over or under three years. This context has allowed a concept of professionalism to emerge that values some practitioners' areas of expertise more than others'. This discourse has its roots in a concept of professionalism which values knowledge over skills, so knowledge about children's learning is seen as superior to the ability to help a child with their toileting. (p. 44)

Moreover, Morton-Manning's (2006) insights underscore the finding in this study regarding how the expertise of infant and toddler teachers is valued differs from other teachers. To address this key issue of the divide between care and education, Sally, an infant teacher, gave an example of how she re-framed this idea through discussions with students:

> We spend time talking about time! A lot of the content is about care routines. Yes, we have all these care routines that we do with infants and toddlers. How are they teaching? How do we build teaching into those routines? How is that building a relationship? How can we be supporting language development when we're doing that? When we're diapering a baby, how are we supporting attachment? How are we supporting their social and emotional development? What kind of cognitive learning could be happening during that diaper change or that meal time or just that tummy time on the floor? So a lot of it is getting them past the idea that all this time they spend in care routines is not teaching and I'd have to have separate time for teaching. No you wouldn't. You could actually be teaching WHILE you're doing these things and let's talk about what that looks like.

Sally elaborated on her initial description and gave a specific example of how she helps students re-frame a very common routine – diapering - that happens in the child care centers dozens of times per day. Sally, and other staff, described using teachable moments to mentor students in how to teach through care-giving routines. An example of this is the way in which this infant teacher explains what diaper changing should look like:

And bringing it back to what you said about diapering, oh 'just diapering'?
Oftentimes when they get to this point, they've been in our room and they've
gone through the trainings they need to, then we have them change some diapers.
We don't want them to think oh we're just changing diapers. This is a perfect
time to bond with the child one-on-one. I do a lot of singing. If the child is not
comfortable, I sing to them. I talk about I'm changing your diaper or I'm just
talking to them or making up a song with their name. So you're building in that
communication with the child and that relationship with the child. So it's not just
changing a diaper. It's so much more and it's a lovely one-on-one time.

What might be thought of as a low-level task, changing a diaper, in the eyes of the

professional staff is a task not even assigned to a student until they have had training in

the sanitary precautions *and* they know how to use the time with the child as a teachable

moment. This was also the way in which other care routines were framed from the

interviews. As described in Working Paper #11 from the Harvard Center for the

Developing Child, the very attuned interactions and rich interchanges Sally describes in

her work with infants built executive function skills as well as positive self-esteem

(National Center for the Developing Child, 2011) In addition Manning-Morton (2006)

points out that:

Young children's bodies are at the centre of their experience and are a key means
for learning. From the beginning of life children are using sensory and kinesthetic
experiences to learn about themselves, other people and the world around them.
In addition, because of their physical dependency, babies and young children

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spend a lot of their time being physically handled by people who are bigger and stronger than they are. (p. 45)

Chris, a toddler teacher, described the ideas and concepts she wants students to learn through their practicum – related to seeing the foundational skills infant and toddler teachers support. She frames curriculum as addressing all of the activities that take place:

I want them to look at it as this is part of your day. This is curriculum. I mean, you're building in curriculum in everything you do to hand-washing, self-help skills, hand-over-hand fine motor skills, and oftentimes it gets a little busy in there so problem-solving, social skills--there's so much that goes on. So the whole day is the curriculum.   And how important does a practicum student feel when you're in the bathroom with all those kids and it starts getting a little wild. Oh boy, then you know these kids need you! Can you imagine what would happen if there was no adult?

Sally gave another example of how she teaches students about what a professional response should be in an infant and toddler setting. She chose an example of a situation in which college students may not realize there is a professional way to respond when a child passes gas or has an especially aromatic bowel movement – things that are very much a part of the landscape of teaching infants and toddlers:

We talk a lot about positive talk. One of the first things I tell my students is if somebody toots, can I tell them I don't like any other word for toot, so we keep the f-a-r-t word out of my room.! I talk about a poopy diaper isn't gross. It's not pew, pew, you stink! No!! Anything that you would not say directly where their

parent is standing there looking at you while you're holding their child, you just

don't say it because then it's just inappropriate, whether they're there or not. So

runny noses aren't gross. Poopy diapers, yeah, you know what, they don't smell

the greatest but I'm not going to say oh you're stinky. A poopy diaper isn't

something that's a negative reflection on you. Good poop. It's not gross. It's a

good poop! I bet they're feeling so good right now, you know? I think I would at

this level focus on the word choice and that positive. I know I definitely would be

talking about the word gross. What's an alternative? That is really important to

me because there's nothing that takes your professionalism down several levels

than the kind of jargon or lack thereof that comes out of your mouth when you're

working with children and families.

As an experienced infant teacher, Sally was cognizant of the way in which infants and

toddlers learn about themselves through the reactions of others and was careful to not

make children feel they had done something bad or wrong in just being human. In turn,

she wants the college students to understand this and reflect on how what is said and done

in interaction with a very young child impacts the development of their self-image at a

very important stage in a child's development. She also challenged the college students

to recognize the importance of using professional language and recognize that

professional language is especially important in communicating with parents.

Another example of framing was used when it came to helping students

understand and respond to a child's crying. Sally's description illustrated that attention

and support of a child's emotional state is part of teaching infants:

I don't allow them to say anything about oh this person or child is bad or crying

because they're spoiled. I said they're crying because they can't tell you I need

this or they're biting someone because they can't say I'm frustrated. I said it's

your job to figure out what they need. Sometimes what they need is to cry. You

need to figure out that all their other needs are being met and they're just

practicing crying because that's what they should be doing. So that whole thing

where I think we need more people that work with infants and toddlers to really

take the time to listen to each individual child and find out what they need and be

okay with sometimes backing off and sometimes engaging depending on their

needs, if that makes sense.

Sally's description also highlighted the individualized approaches needed to teaching

infants. This individualized approach may be new to pre-service students' conceptions of

teaching and learning but is critical to working with infants and toddlers (Allen & Kelly,

2015).

Countering bad examples. The reality is that many teachers working in the field

with infants and toddlers may not have the knowledge and background to recognize these

teachable moments (Gloekler & La Paro, 2015). Jean, a faculty member whose students

complete practica in the community (versus a university-sponsored child development

center), found her students witnessing practices that did not mirror the practices she was

teaching them about:

Then my other frustration would be some of the settings that they are sent to are

doing what I think is developmentally inappropriate practice. A number of times

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that daycares will stick in a read on your own tape and plop the infants and

toddlers down in front of it and then they do something else.

Jean also shared that students reported to faculty that the infants and toddlers watch

videos while seated in infant seating devices referred to as 'infant containers'. This is a

concern for two reasons. First, screen time is not recommended by the Academy of

Pediatrics for children under the age of two (Brown, 2011); and, second, when children

spend time in infant seating equipment, they do not exercise – leading to setting the stage

for obesity and delayed gross motor skills (Koren, Reece, Kahn'Daposangelo, &

Medeiros, 2010). This situation meant Jean needed to counter what the students saw in

their practicum sites. Jean offered an explanation as to why some of the practicum sites

were problematic:

> I don't know what you found in your research, but what I discovered from a
>
> number of years with working with daycares is they have a high turnover rate
>
> with their staff.... Some of these places are non-degreed people. I think they may
>
> lack in developmentally appropriate practice sometimes. It's not all of them.
>
> This is not their career. It's a part-time job while they're doing something else. It
>
> doesn't mean they don't care for the children and that the children aren't getting
>
> quality care, but I think it's different than what we're sometimes telling our
>
> students.

Jean also described the conversation she had with students regarding why they may not

be seeing best practices:

So I tell them they're probably going to be very discouraged sometimes going to this field experience because they're going to be in places where the passion and the commitment is not as evident as what they might have expected.

Jana, a faculty member whose students often complete practica in child care centers where they are employed as teachers or assistant teachers, described another aspect of countering bad examples:

Sometimes they have bad habits. Maybe is a good way to put it that they bring to the conversation. We have to talk a lot about the difference between best practice and what might be happening every day in their program. That can be sensitive sometimes but important. As Jana described this situation, it meant having careful conversations around practices students describe that may not be what is termed best practice. For Jana this was a sensitive issue because the students were often completing practicum in their places of employment.

Jean and Jana needed to acknowledge what students may see in settings with less than desirable practices by offering explanations of why this may be the case. They also described needing to do this carefully because in some cases, these were the programs where students were employees. The practica in which the practices did not match what was being taught in the courses led to specific conversations with students to help them understand that what they were seeing and experiencing were not as they should be. Jean indicated that she encouraged students in these situations to take action:

It is still intimidating to go into a classroom where there's a teacher that is not integrating best practices. I said that doesn't give you an excuse just to stand

there and not do something else. I'm telling them they're going to have to move

beyond their comfort level sometimes and engage children.

Jean described what it is like to have students in these problematic placements

and how she encouraged students to 'take action' and step in and interact with the

children. The lack of high quality practicum opportunities has been found to be an over-

all challenge within early childhood teacher education. Whitebook and her colleagues

(2012) have pointed out that within the K-12 teacher education community there is an

emphasis on frequent and earlier exposure to supervised student teaching. However, in

the early childhood field these experiences are sometimes not required and when they

offered they may be "poorly integrated into the course of study, lack rigorous supervision

or focus, or occur in poor-quality settings" (p. 10). The challenge to find high quality

early childhood placements is acknowledged in the NAEYC standards for Teacher

Preparation. The challenge appears to be expected because solutions are proposed within

the NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation (2009). This is how NAEYC suggests

programs addresses experiences which lack quality:

> When the settings used for field experiences do not reflect standards of quality,
>
> students are provided with other models and/or experiences to ensure that they are
>
> learning to work with young children and families in ways consistent with the
>
> NAEYC standards (NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation, 2009. p. 7).

Findings in this study suggested that in some cases a practica be the only infant or toddler

practicum offered within the program. Therefore it would be challenging to provide an

additional experience to 'counteract' what may have been problematic in their infant or

toddler placement. The findings from this study also indicated in only one program was

there a requirement for both an infant and toddler placement – and that the number of required hours in an infant or toddler setting varied widely from twelve hours to fifty.

Reality of career possibilities (or not). Both staff groups recognized that university based child development centers in which they worked were not necessarily comparable settings to what students would find replicated their community in terms of earning a living wage caring for infants and toddlers. Within early childhood education, the low remuneration often leads to a high staff turnover rate. Chris's comments revealed her understanding of the privileged position she held compared too many of her colleagues in the community. The benefit she described was not only to her personally but to the children they served – who could count on staff being there consistently over time.

> We're very blessed. We have some longevity, which is so important, as you know; especially in infant and toddlers where they're not having to reattach themselves to a new person coming in every six months…We have a very slow turnover rate for educators here.

The students placed in field experiences and practica at the university-sponsored sites had the advantage of staff that had a history with the center and felt acknowledged in their roles. On the flip side was the experience of both faculty and staff who had moved out of positions working with infants and toddlers due to the low pay. Mary, a faculty member, described her personal experiences being employed in a child care center:

I only did it for a year because I did not like poverty. It was not a very good pay… I loved it, thoroughly enjoyed it. The pay was the piece that was just ridiculous as far as I was concerned.

Mary was referring to the divide between how teachers of children birth to five are both valued and compensated. The field of early childhood education (children prior to kindergarten) developed in such a way in the United States to not be as valued in terms of professional status as reflected especially in remuneration. The Institute of Medicine Report (2015) corroborates Mary's view by stating:

> The recent follow-up (2013) report to the 1989 National Child Care Staffing
> Study found that little progress has been made over the past 25 years in
> addressing the need for increased supports and compensation for early childhood
> professionals. Despite advances in the science of child development and
> knowledge of the impact of care and education professionals on the development
> of young children, many of these professionals still are receiving low wages. The
> result is high turnover rates in the field and increased economic instability among
> staff. (p.461)

The report went on to give some specific examples: Childcare workers earn an average of $10.33 per hour, while a kindergarten teacher earns an average of $24.40 an hour. Ronald Lally drew attention to the *Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years after the National Child Care Staffing Study* (Whitebook, Philips, & Howes, 2014). Lally commented on the findings – especially as they related to the infant and toddler workforce:

Of particular interest to For Our Babies is the data on infant/toddler providers. The study points out that those working with infants and toddlers face the harshest consequences of early childhood employment in the United States. They earn the lowest wages, receive the smallest premium for their education, and because of their low earnings, are more likely to experience the highest level of economic worry and reliance on public income supports. When we talk about investing in babies, we need to talk about investing in the infant toddler workforce. (Lally, 2015. p.1)

As a result, the younger the child the teacher works with, the more likely remuneration is less. Staff at both university-sponsored child development centers pointed out that they were lucky and fortunate to be working in these particular settings. Both faculty and staff said things that revealed they had reservations about promoting careers focused on working with infants and toddlers. Sally expressed this hesitation in promoting working with infants and toddlers by summarizing both the lack of appreciation coupled with very low remuneration:

I think there are so few places that appreciate what we do. You're not going to find many that are going to pay a person a living wage. So when you go to college and you have all these student loans, are you really looking for that job that's going to maybe pay you minimum wage or if you get into a good place a little over, and is that what you're going to do with your education? So I feel like they need to understand what it's all about and what we're doing to promote better educators at that level because you want a good job. You maybe want a family and you want to be able to support that family.

It's a little discouraging sometimes when you can go out and see what hard work

and everything that goes into it for such little appreciation, not that monetary is

the only form of appreciation. But when you're a college student and you've

been broke for the last five or six years, you're looking for a step up.

Her co-worker Chris added what she imagined some college students might be thinking:

I think that's what some of them are thinking is oh not for this pay. I've got to get

into elementary. I've got to get into high school.

Donna, a faculty member, offered additional thoughts about why it might be better for

college students to be placed in elementary school settings:

I think as much as I'm passionate about early childhood, I would want my

students to have the best possible experience in the framework of their licensure.

I think they're going to have a better chance getting a job if they have a student

teaching experience in a school, which is going to be very different than what it

would be like in a preschool. If they didn't get that, I would worry that the

principals would be weeding them out, wouldn't consider them even though they

would have the skill set and the abilities to do it. And, I wonder if the students

would not feel confident enough to apply at the big bad school. Sometimes I

think you just have to be in there just to kind of see what it looks like. So that's

the piece that I do worry about. We are fortunate to work here where we do, but

we all know people are working in early childhood that are not at the rate of pay

we're at or the benefit level we are at too.

Both staff and faculty were aware of the power and pay differentials that exist

between early childhood education and elementary education. While all could be

described as passionate about their work, the caution about steering college students towards a career working with infants and toddlers was also palpable.

Being left behind.

With the discussion of the possibility four year old programming being universally available in public school settings (much like kindergarten is universally available) being established in Minnesota and the requirement adopted by many programs that a student complete additional teaching licensing requirements, staff at one center believed this had resulted in the elimination of student teaching in the infant and toddler classrooms. Sally led into this when she stated:

> The Minnesota Board of Teaching has changed things so no one does their student teaching here [in the infant room].

Chris, Sally's colleague, explained that in the past college students not only had field experiences and practica in the infant and toddler classrooms but also did student teaching with infants and toddlers. She believed with the adoption of a new practice in evaluating pre-service teachers called edTPA came the change that students no longer student teach in infant and toddler classrooms. (The edTPA, created by the Pearson Company, is a performance-based assessment process designed by educators to answer the essential question of whether new teachers are ready for the job. Chris believed that because the ed TPA assessment has a rubric geared to teaching groups of students , primarily literacy- and mathematics- based lessons, student teachers are assigned to older children where they can practice the strategies on which they will be evaluated on through the edTPA. Chris's description seemed to reveal a pattern of decreasing

emphasis on students completing field work and practicum with infants and toddlers in their program:

> I know this program (referring to the institution) has a little bit more just because they have an infant-toddler placement, but that's it. We get them for five hours a week for the semester--six hours. We get them six hours a week for the semester and that's it. That's their experience with infants and toddlers. It's not for both. So one of them will get placed in an infant room and one could get placed in a toddler room. They're not doing both. Then our preschool is even less. They all get a preschool placement if they choose to student teach in an early childhood program. But if they choose to student teach in a primary...that's been a switchover for us in that way.

Both Chris and Sally expressed a disappointment about this change in priorities within the early childhood teacher preparation program that moved away from providing robust experiences with infants and toddlers. In *being left behind*, the content was shaped by a decreasing inclusion of actual time spent in practica.

Summary: Swimming Against the Current

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

The first aspect of this tentative manifestation was *fighting for credibility,* both in the public's eye but also with college students whose views may mirror the public's view. Staff and faculty sought to have students embrace the important teaching and learning

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that infant and toddler teachers facilitate. Based on findings from this study, those

teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers should consider the possible

understanding and misunderstanding of pre-service students about teaching infants and

toddlers. The findings also point to a need to include a strong base of information from

the science of child development. This information was used to underscore the

importance of the learning taking place during a child's earliest years. The science of

child development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2011; Phillips

& Shonkoff, 2000) helped define the context for teaching children under three in which

teachers were intimately involved with children both physically and emotionally – that

differed from teaching older children. This information was also used to counter a

perception that infants and toddlers are not capable of much learning. Participants in this

study highlighted web-based resources they used to help access up to date findings from

the science of child development that they shared with their students. Appendix E lists

each of the websites mentioned along with textbooks and other articles used in the

courses. It is important to know that juxtaposition of information from the science of

child development with practical applications helps frame the importance of teaching

infants and toddlers within the larger frame of human development.

Third was the aspect of *countering bad examples*, which revealed that in some

instances faculty shaped the content by having to counter the example of students'

experiences in their field placements. Faculty who encounter this situation highlighted

that they needed to discuss these situations with care. Findings from this study indicate

that in situations where students may be in problematic placements, the opportunity to

process what they experienced may be key to countering poor examples and encouraging

students to step up as they can in particular situations. Awareness of the potential for low quality placements is addressed in the NAEYC Teacher preparation standards: "When settings used for field experiences do not reflect high quality standards, candidates are provided with other models and/or experiences to ensure that they are learning to work with young children and families in ways consistent with the NAEYC standards" (NAECY, 2009, p. 42). One of the circumstances that led to 'poor' field placements had, in this study, to do with a desire for students to be placed 'out in the community'. For example, Jean's teacher preparation program had a child development center. However since students complete some of their practicum (the pre-school age group) at the child development center, the intent was to place students in programs with other philosophies or models. The IOM report included a discussion of field experiences and placements that entertained the notion that "some believe there are opportunities for reflection and learning even when practica are completed in poor-quality settings" (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 374). Jean described the challenges these poor quality placements created. In Jana's program, her institution did not have an on-site child development center. Students found their own placements. In Claire's institution students were often working full time in the field. To accommodate them, students often completed practicum where they worked. The range of hours completed in practicum was 12-50, with two programs requiring 30 hours. The quality of practice in some of the placements was questionable and required the faculty member to counter bad examples with descriptions of what should be done.

The fourth aspect of this tentative manifestation, *realities of career opportunities (or not),* revealed that while the staff in the child development centers felt 'lucky', they

did not believe that pursuing a career working with infants and toddlers was a viable option due to the low wages. It appeared that students received both subtle and overt messages from both staff and faculty about this. It is important to know that students may be discouraged from seeking work with infants and toddlers if these are the messages they take in as a result of discussions both direct and subtle.

The final aspect of *swimming against the current* was a marginalization from within the early childhood teacher education program by which pre-service students no longer completed student teaching experience in the infant or toddler classrooms because experiences student teaching older children were privileged. The infant and toddler content was shaped by being *left behind.* In addition this change in policy resulted in students, in this program, being only assigned to work with infants or toddlers when in the past students had experience with both age groups.

The challenges outlines in *Swimming Against the Current* are realities. However difficult, the inclusion of both infant and toddler experiences is needed to provide a complete understanding of the scope of a birth to third grade license. Early childhood teacher educators need to be advocates for robust inclusion of infant and toddler courses in early childhood teacher preparation and provide strong rationale.

In summary, both faculty and staff describe the tentative manifestation of the phenomenon*, swimming against the current*, in which faculty and staff used intentional communication to convince students that one can *teach* infants and toddlers, that professionalism extends to all aspects of the work, and that at times what students see and experience in practicum may be far from ideal. Both staff and faculty expressed

ambivalence about promoting teaching infants and toddlers as a viable career option –

while at the same time they wanted students to see how important this work was to the

development of the infants and toddlers. *Swimming against the current* encapsulates the

challenges of teaching students about infants and toddlers when the pre-service students

themselves may not see this course as adding value to their development as a teacher as

sensed by the staff participants in this study. This finding suggests that what might be

important to know about teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers is that

faculty and staff may need to be very intentional in exploring what pre-service students

know or believe prior to taking the course or being placed in practica; and be intentional

in helping frame their thinking to align with the science of child development. In

addition, career options focused on infants and toddlers other than in child care could be

added to spark students' vision of ways to apply information about infants and toddlers.

Examples are home-visiting programs like those affiliated with Early Head Start and

early childhood family education programming. The findings from this study suggested

that 'careers' in working with infants and toddlers were singularly focused on child care.

Tentative Manifestation: Complexity

> Kind of how I work the class is I obviously talk about early underpinnings of the
>
> biological development that happens. Then I talk about relational impacts. I talk
>
> about societal impacts. I talk about learning style impacts. All the while, I'm
>
> doing a tandem conversation about the present moment in a child's life and the
>
> long-term impacts. (Sarah, a faculty member describing her course)
>
> **Disciplines interwoven.**

As I read and re-read this relatively short passage from the transcript of Sarah's interview, I was struck with the number of disciplines she drew upon to teach her course. The funds of knowledge she mentions are associated with biology (biological impacts), psychology (relational impacts), sociology (societal impacts), education (learning styles), and sociopolitical (institutional impacts). Sarah followed up the above statement by contextualizing how she conceives of these subject areas inter-weaving to teach pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers:

> First of all, I love it, because what I am able to do is bring a level of understanding to academia, if that makes any sense, about the critical nature of that early development…. Typically they're not tuned in to what they're about to experience…I always start class with first we're going to talk about the babies because when you're a third grade teacher, that eight-year-old was a baby. Let's talk about what developmental trajectories might have been important or not important, what relationships are like. So unlike probably traditional infant/toddler teachings, I use brain development because that helps me ground it and give meaning to it. It gives it credibility, quite frankly, and then I move pretty quickly into the impact of relationships.

Analysis of data revealed that within each course and its practicum the array of concepts being taught was remarkably broad and interwoven, similar to Sarah's description of her course. Complexity is a tentative manifestation that describes the inclusion of a broad array topics and interweaving of topics to set the contents for learning about infants and toddlers. The recently published IOM report (Allen &Kelly, 2015) opens with this paragraph that offers insight for why these expanding, overlapping, and interweaving

circles of learning may be present in courses designed for pre-service students about infants and toddlers:

> Children are already learning at birth, and they develop and learn at a rapid pace in their early years, when the environments, supports, and relationships they experience have profound effects. Their development is not only rapid but also cumulative. Children's health, development, and early learning provide a foundation on which later learning—and lifelong progress—is constructed. Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and responsive to their individual progress. Thus, the adults who provide for their care and education bear a great responsibility. Indeed, the science of child development and early learning makes clear the importance and complexity of working with young children from infancy through the early elementary years, or birth through age 8. (p.1)

Indeed, in learning to provide for young children's learning, pre-service teachers need access to three broad areas of knowledge: the science of child development (brain development, relationships, health considerations), curriculum content, working with families – and considerations for working with children from diverse language and cultural backgrounds (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). While the IOM (Allen & Kelly, 2015) focuses attention on the foundation for preparing early childhood educators (birth to age 8), this span of development begins with the infant and toddler years. Participants in this study described the complexity of teaching courses focused on infants and toddlers not only because of what the science of child development research has revealed but, as

Jana, a faculty member, pointed out, "A lot of times there are program policies that really don't match well with what we know is best for infants and toddlers, so we do have to talk about those a good bit." One such example was described as the ratio of 4 infants to 1 adult being inadequate in terms of giving each child the attention needed. The realities in the field produced complexity because faculty and staff used an approach to teaching that embraced these realities in the field alongside the science of child development. Complexity was also produced in response to timing of the courses within a program, student demographics, practicum placements, and supervision. Each of these will be discussed in the following sections. This tentative manifestation was identified as I explored the terrain of the interviews and noted many situations and realities for which faculty and staff addressed.

Timing of courses. In this study it was found that some pre-service students may be taking the infant and toddler course as their first course in their education program; while other students take the course alongside core courses in elementary education. Complexity regarding the timing of the course is illustrated in this comment by Mary:

> Yes. Yeah, we have traditional undergrads in this program. So, with that, they think back to baby-sitting and they're all in the midst of their junior methods courses. So they're learning about elementary at this same time. Do you understand the cognitive dissonance they're going through?

For pre-service students the timing of the course may influence the ways in which they take in information. In Mary's example, the fact that students are in their junior year means they have been admitted to the education program and are learning about teaching methods – in the large context of elementary education. Mary points out that this can be

disorienting because the methods they are learning in the infant and toddler course differ

significantly as described in *swimming against the current*. At another institution,

students can take the infant and toddler course with no pre-requisites – meaning they may

take the course outside of being an 'education student' or having a foundational course

prior to jumping into an infant-toddler course. Nolan and Rouse (2013) found that the

timing of the early childhood practicum (within programs with a birth to age 8 focus)

appeared to be of vital importance in determining career aspirations. For example, in

comparing two universities, the university in which field placements and practica were

undertaken later in the student's course of study appeared to lead to students considering

positions in early childhood settings (over elementary positions). When students

undertook the early childhood practicum placements early in their programs, it lead to

fewer students considering early childhood settings as future career options. Due to their

finding, Nolan and Rouse (2013) pointed out it seems crucial to have early childhood

placements later in the course of study, in order to have a greater number of students

consider early childhood positions over elementary positions .

Students. While Mary's mostly traditional undergraduate students are studying

early childhood and elementary methods at the same time in their junior year, in Jana's

program the infant and toddler course may be the student's first course in education. In

addition, her non-traditional students bring real world experiences that she processes

carefully:

Some may or may not be working in infant toddler programs but actually a lot are.

So they obviously have real-world experiences to bring to the conversation, which

is nice. Sometimes they have bad habits (maybe is a good way to put it?) that they

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bring to the conversation. We have to talk a lot about the difference between best

practice and what might be happening every day in their program. That can be

sensitive sometimes but important.

Jana's interview revealed two aspects of complexity. First, her students are

working in the field with young children – and may be employed in programs where

quality is an issue. The reality is that many child care centers often struggle with a high

turnover rate and are not required to employ teachers specifically trained in early

childhood much less specifically trained in working with infants and toddlers. Studies

regarding the quality of child care consistently document low-to-mediocre quality of

infant and toddler group care (de Schipper, Risken-Walraven, & Geurts, 2007; Phillips &

Lowenstein, 2011). A recent study (Ruzek, Burchinal, Farkas, & Duncan, 2014) found

that for children under three in non-parental care, 13% experienced low quality care, 61%

medium, with only 26% in care that could be described as high quality. The second

aspect of complexity Jana described was the need to 'call out' poor practices knowing

that these exist in the very settings where students are employed and may not have much

ability to change. Jana believed she must do this to ensure students learned what quality

was despite possibly making students uncomfortable in their places of employment.

Practica. Practica placements in programs were varied in length with the least

amount of time being 12 hours per week and the longest amount being 50 hours over the

course of a semester. Even in the one faculty member's course that did not require a

practicum, she still depended upon those currently in field experience or with past field

experience to help support the discussions through their experiences. Two programs used

their university-sponsored child development centers for the infant and toddler practicum

while two other programs used sites in the community for their practicum placements. The challenges regarding practicum in community settings was that often those settings reflect the current quality in the field: teachers not specifically trained in early childhood education and low wages resulting in high turnover rates – all of which impact the quality of the center. Donna, a faculty member, summed up the value of having a practicum but she described the liabilities if the practicum takes place in a setting where what is taught in the course does not match the practices in the site:

> You can talk about it all you want but I don't think it becomes real until you're seeing it in action. My hope is, well I sometimes cringe when I hear them talking about what they're seeing out there. Please know that's not how you do it! That's what worries me too. Everyone is impressionable, especially college students who are learning the field. If they don't see it done right, do they know it's not done right nor do they see it as oh that's how it's done. So that's my worry.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2013) affirmed Donna's worry when she wrote, "It is impossible to teach people how to teach powerfully by asking them to imagine what they have never seen, or to suggest to them to "do the opposite" of what they observed in the classroom. No amount of course work can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do" (p. 98). Indeed, in this study, the practicum played a key role in helping students link course material to how it might be implemented. Very importantly, the practicum provided opportunities for students to observe and interact with infants and toddlers to gain an understanding of their development. Recchia and Shin (2010) had discovered that some pre-service students had

never even held a baby prior to their practicum experience. This underscores the importance of an infant or toddler practicum. Nolan and Rouse (2103) pointed out that they found that a positive practicum experience 'is likely to impact on self-confidence, attitudes towards teaching and learning and a willingness to enter the teaching profession" (Nolan & Rouse, 2013, p. 7). The opposite has been found true as well. Negative practica can influence pre-service perceptions of a career in teaching and lead to pre-service students changing their aspirations for career choices (Torquati, et al., 2007)

Thoughtful supervision. Complexity also shaped the practicum experience as Donna described the dual roles the infant and toddler teachers played when they supervised students in a university-sponsored child development center:

> We talk about that because being who we are, where we are, myself and my teachers take this job very, very, very seriously about that people are watching us and they're learning from us and that we're their role models. This might be their only experience with infants and toddlers or preschoolers. Let's make sure they know why we're doing what we're doing and that we do it right.

In her description Donna reveals the awareness of the infant and toddler teachers and the pressure they put on themselves to 'do it right'. Donna then went on to describe a reflective process in which staff strive not only to 'do it right,' but when they feel or sense, for example, that they may have spoken too harshly to the child, to bring it out as a teachable moment for students who may have witnessed their mistaken actions. These actions reflected both mindfulness about to one's own practice and a demonstration of humility to share these mistakes to teach students. Members of this staff have purposed to bring a high level of self-awareness into their practice:

If we don't do something as stellar as we hoped, we try our best to pull that

student back and say "I didn't say this exactly the way I wanted to say it. This is

how I would have wanted to say it." We try to do that as best we can. But like I

tell my staff, they're perfectionists when it comes to their work. So we talk about

that a lot as a staff team and we kind of debrief and we just go it's okay. We're

going to make mistakes. I said your mistake that you're stressing about is so

minor compared to what I know is going on out there. So let's put this in

perspective. We all make mistakes. So we just kind of go wow I did say that or

that came off as sounding a little more harsh than I wanted it to sound, you know.

Or, I think I was a little bit more frustrated with this parent when I was talking

with them than I would have liked, and that's okay. It's, again, part of the big

whole picture.

As Donna described her teachers' approach to supervising practicum students, she

pointed out the need to have not only self-awareness but also the ability to address what

the students may have seen or heard and help them process this. Donna's description

revealed that it is more than being a good infant and toddler teacher; it extends to

developing relationships with students in such a way as to construct trust and mutual

respect. Manning-Morton (2006) emphasized that in working with very young children,

"By providing a training context that is process as well as content focused, a model of

relationship-based learning will reflect positive early years practice" (p. 50). My findings

make clear that practicum sites differed greatly. This particular site, and its staff,

provided an example of the deeper level of work that is involved in providing a practica

in which relationship-based learning can take place. This dual focus on children and

students described the complexity of teaching pre-service teachers about working with infants and toddlers.

Courses and assignments. Each of the six faculty members interviewed taught a course that had a focus on infants and toddlers as part of an early childhood teacher preparation program leading to a Teacher of Early Childhood Education license in Minnesota. However, how these courses are configured within the teacher education programs within their institutions varied based on how courses within the institution had been assigned to meet the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards in their institution's approval process. Four faculty members described their courses as being an infant and toddler "methods course" – meaning that the intent of the course was to focus on ensuring pre-service students learned about curriculum planning for infants and toddlers. The remaining two faculty members described their courses having a specific focus on infants and toddlers but within a large age focus of 0-8. This information provides a background for the information that follows in terms of the variations in the course foci. The variations and configurations provided more insights into the complexity that shaped the content in these courses.

Course descriptions. Documents collected included syllabi from four of the five faculty members. These course descriptions are presented in this next section, not to compare them, but to illustrate the varied ways in which the courses are described and the range of practicum hours associated with each course. These descriptions provide insights regarding how they are conceptualized. Course descriptions A, D, and E are from courses in which the focus is exclusively on teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. Courses B and C were developed to complement other courses

within the teacher preparation program at an institution where the 0-8 range is the basis for most of the courses within the licensure program.

A course description. This course is designed to introduce teaching strategies for infants and toddlers with and without disabilities. These strategies include, but are not limited to, assessment, intervention, program development, project based learning, daycare facilities and co-teaching. A twelve (12), hour field experience in an infant and toddler room is required. 3credits.

B course description. Exploration of developmentally appropriate methods and materials for the integration of art, music and movement experiences, ages birth to age 8. An emphasis on using the arts to support development of concept of print, the alphabet, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, comprehension, motivation, and other literacy skills. 4 credits/ practicum hours as needed to complete projects.

C course description. This course will address issues related to early brain development and the biological underpinnings of early emotional and cognitive development. A biological view of attachment, social vulnerability, language, reading, math and creativity will also be addressed. (No required practicum as students are typically concurrently in practicum through other courses they are enrolled in. However experiences gained in practicum are important to this course credit number not listed.)

D course description. Study in this course includes physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative development in the first two years with an emphasis on care in group settings. Exposure to integrated curriculum, appropriate teaching strategies, inclusion, and assessment. Intentional lesson planning aligned with Minnesota Indicators of Progress to achieve positive outcomes for young children will be emphasized.

Evidenced based methods in developing curriculum to enhance child health and well being for infants and toddlers. 4 credits/ 30 hours practicum.

E course description. This course examines developmental theory and caregiving skills unique to infants and toddlers. Also included are strategies that support diversity and anti-bias perspectives, environment, and research-based curriculum models that are developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers. (2 credits/ 50 hours practicum – 25 infants/25 toddlers)

Looking across the course descriptions I saw that the courses highlighted different 'entry' points into to the subject of infants and toddlers. For example, Course E used a lens of developmental theory and caregiving skills, while Course A begins with a description of teaching strategies. It appeared that because the courses cover either a wide range of topics or a wide age span the descriptions reflected the need to address multiple areas of development and/or multiple concepts. Course C links topics on attachment to language, reading and math while Course D focuses on curriculum, teaching strategies, inclusion and assessment. While each of these courses focuses on infants and toddlers, the description reveal the broad range of topics that were deemed necessary to cover.   In writing about teaching students about infants and toddlers, Branscomb and Ethridge (2010) found:

> Due to the short period of time we had together, I felt pressure to "cover" a great deal of material about infants and toddlers rather than taking time to allow students to truly engage in and process the topics we were

studying. As a result, some components of the teacher research project felt

rushed. (Branscomb & Ethridge, 2010, p. 216)

Practicum hours.

Again, there is a wide range in the required hours of infant and toddler practicum.

Interestingly, while the greatest amount of hours was fifty (25 with infants and 25 with

toddlers), a study by Gravis and Pendergast (2015) found that in programs in which

students completed 80 hours of infant and toddler practicum, the majority of students felt

they had minimal or partial knowledge of working with infants and toddlers after their

practicum experience. Some students in the study held the opinion that working with

infants and toddlers required a higher level of responsibility than working with older

children and that even after the practicum (80 hours) they did not have the practical skills

necessary to implement the care routines for very young children. These findings,

juxtaposed with findings from this study about the variable range of hours (12 to 50) calls

into question how students in the programs included in this study might respond if asked

about their level of confidence in working with infants and toddlers after completing a

practicum.

Assignments. In this section I present a selection of assignments from the

courses' syllabi to illustrate complexity. Complexity is illustrated through the wide range

of assignments – observation of children, planning for children, the environment, gaining

parent perspectives on child care, preparing information for parents. What was striking

about the assignments was that in almost all syllabi, assignments were directly linked to

the practicum. In other words, the faculty members' assignments were heavily dependent

on the students' participation in the practicum whether it was completed within a

university-sponsored child development center or in the community.

Observation of children. In Assignments A and B students completed

observations. In Assignment A, students were asked to focus on one assigned child. This

assignment represented the summary and culmination of a series of observation

assignments regarding this particular infant or toddler. In addition to summarizing

developmental observations, the student was directed to write a summary as if this were

to be presented at a parent conference and to project learning goals based on what the

student learned through observations of this child.

Assignment A Case Study/Portfolio Presentation:

For this presentation, you will use the observations you have made and any work

samples you have collected to create a (modified) case study documenting the

development of your focus child. You will then write up a summary form that you

could have presented and used with the family if you were holding a parent-

teacher conference. For our purposes, your information should include a

description of the child to share with the class, including biographic information

(first name, age, family and home life description, and temperament). You will

describe the child in terms of his/her development in each of the 5 domains of

development (Social-Emotional, Language/Literacy, Creativity and the Arts,

Cognitive, Physical/Motor) as well as indicators as they apply. Finally, you need

to consider what goals you would plan for the child in the upcoming months

based on learning and developmental needs.

In Assignment B, also an observation based assignment, the focus is on comparing and contrasting environments designed to serve different age groups of children. The observation exercise is framed with a focus on how literacy was embedded and what theoretical constructs appeared to be used in the classroom. In addition, outcomes of this assignment were to result in students being able to have a clear picture of each age group and be able to offer suggestions for creative activities and adapt them to the various age groups.

Assignment B Field Observation:

After spending several hours in your 1) infant/toddler, and 2) a preschool setting as directed, you will be required to give a comparative picture of the two age groups in the form of a write up. Below is a list of questions to guide your write up. Be sure to talk about literacy in each of the questions.

1. Describe the physical environment and explain how it supports children's creativity. Use chapter 2 of our text to enrich your response

2. Explain how what the teachers say and do support the children's individual creative expression. Use the relevant theories in chapter 1 to explain the teacher's role. Relevant theories I would like you to make reference to include behaviorist, psychologically safe environment, socio-cultural theory, and the multiple intelligences theory

3. Describe the use of music and movement, with a few examples

4. Describe the use of visual arts, with a few examples

5. Describe the use of play, with a few examples

6. What is your overall impression of the settings?

7. What would you do differently?

8. Suggest and describe two activities you would implement/promote with the infants/toddlers and then suggest ways you would adapt the two activities to meet preschoolers' developmental differences. Be detailed enough to give me a clear picture of your understanding of the developmental needs of the two groups of children. Explain how the activities support the creative expressions of the children.

Descriptions of each of these observation based assignments linked directly to the students' practicum. Assignments described complexity in the ways in which students were asked to attend to multiple influences such as the theoretical constructs, the environments, the materials, strategies used, and differentiation needed given the age of the child - and in Assignment A consideration for future needs.

Curriculum planning. This is an example in which students are learning to plan for the full day for an infant or toddler classroom, including an emphasis on literacy, creativity, motor development, and a parent connection. Students are also required to align activities they plan for the infants or toddlers to the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. In addition, at this institution, the infant and toddler course is used in preparing examples for the edTPA.

Assignment C Infant/Toddler Daily edTPA Display Board/Power Point Presentations: In Groups of 2 or 3 you will be researching, compiling and presenting theme based curriculum used in a classroom that includes the various components of an Early Childhood Education infant and/or toddler's day. Boards can focus on Infants or Toddlers. Display boards will include the following age appropriate

areas: **1.** Warm in Activity **2.** Morning Meeting (Name/Circle Time) Activity **3**. Book **4**. Art Activity **5**. Learning Station # 1(Tummy Time) **6.** Learning Station # 2 (other) 7**.** Snack **8.** Large Motor Activity **9**. Parent Appreciation Gift. **10:** Lesson Plan of one of the above activities using the edTPA format.   Display board will include a Written explanation and Photograph of all areas. Each group should share in developing and giving a 10 to 15 minute presentation, which includes the following information. 1. Describe the age for which the activities are intended. 2. How each activity meets the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (Birth to 2). 3. How theme enhances activities. Explanation (brief – can be what is on board) of each activity.

Interestingly, while two staff members had previously described the edTPA being responsible for the elimination of student teaching in the infant and toddler classrooms and reduction of practicum, at this institution, edTPA was incorporated into the infant and toddler practicum and student teaching experiences. This unevenness in how edTPA influenced an emphasis or de-emphasis on infant and toddler practicum is an aspect of complexity.

*Environment assignments***.** While the observations focus on the infants and toddlers in the practicum sites, other assignments described in the syllabi and interviews focused the students' attention to their role in thinking about and creating environments for infants and toddlers. Assignment D provides an example where students must demonstrate their ability to create a floor plan that embeds elements of practices focused on in the course.

Assignment D Environment Design

Students will create a floor plan reflecting best practice in developing

environments for infants and/or toddlers. The student may use an on-line software

program or a paper drawing to convey the design. In addition to a basic floor plan,

students will submit an electronic file (Word or PowerPoint) describing the

furnishings, materials, and decoration/arrangement of the environment reflecting

best practices and the philosophies discussed in class.

In Assignment E, the faculty member is asking students to verify what they are seeing in

their practicum site and think beyond what they see to what they would want to see.

Assignment E Environments Real and Ideal (described in an interview)

I have them draw what they see because then we talk about the reality. Reality is

early childhood doesn't have the money to go in and make the ideal. We use

what's there. So notice what's there and how they've changed it. Would they like

something different? Oh, you bet. But I need them as the students to identify the

difference between what is the ideal and what is the real. If we only look at what's

real, it's like they can't see beyond that. So I like them to see that ideal.

The faculty member acknowledges that often funding in early childhood is not plentiful

and that what students may see reflects this reality. Here complexity is described as the

need to adapt what is 'real' in the field to what is 'ideal'.

Parent focus. Each course (including Course C that did not have a required

practicum) required an assignment that addressed parents in some way. As seen below,

Assignment F is preparing students to serve as information sources for parents.

Assignment F Family Communication (Choose 1)

Create an informative display (bulletin board) for families of infants or toddlers.
Your display should focus on one topic that impacts families with infants or
toddlers and demonstrates your ability to be a professional resource for the
families you serve. You may choose any topic but must approve your topic with
the instructor before you begin work. You may use commercially developed
pieces but the overall concept and work must be your own. Students must
purchase a tri-fold presentation board, available at stores such as Wal-Mart,
Office Max, etc., for the project. This project will be submitted electronically.
Therefore, students will create the display (bulletin board), photograph it, and
create an electronic file showcasing the work as described in the class content.

OR

Create a 2 page 'newsletter' for families of infants and/or toddlers that
demonstrates your professional knowledge on a topic and your ability to provide
valuable resources. The newsletter should be topical information, not classroom
'news' of the day. You may use computer generated clip art or photos but must
also include information you have written. Cite your sources and do not
plagiarize! The newsletter can be scanned or uploaded as an electronic file to the
drop box

In Assignment G there is a focus on parents but instead the task is for students to *learn
from* parent insights. This assignment depends upon parents' willingness to share
information with students.

Assignment G Parent with children in daycare/preschool Interview:
Student interviews a parent of a Toddler/Infant/Preschooler and asks them

questions the student is curious about (from a personal or teacher perspective) and from a list of questions that the students in class have developed.

Collect Data: 1. Parent's and Child's Name (You will not be mentioning specific names during your presentation due to data privacy.) 2. Child's Age 3. Daycare facility used (You will not be mentioning the particular daycare facility name in class, for privacy reasons.) 4. Asset's daycare facility has. 5. Challenges daycare facility has. 6. Cost of daycare: If hourly, weekly, etc. 7. Other relevant information you feel would be valuable to share.

This assignment provides pre-service students an opportunity to summarize the findings from an interview of a parent who uses child care. Again, positioning students to seek to learn from parents.

Taken together, a review of the assignments reflects the broad range of topics included in the courses, and a desire for students to 'go deeper' through the assignments. The assignments also provide an opportunity for faculty to assess the students' learning and provide feedback to the students.

Summary of Complexity

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

Complexity is described through the ways in which multiple layers of information and a wide array of concepts are included in order to cover the aspects deemed important by both faculty and staff. While these examples were taken from selected syllabi, each

syllabus individually reflected some of these varied and interwoven concepts that comprise the tentative manifestation of *complexity*. These findings suggest that faculty believe that multiple concepts must be addressed in the course content when teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers. In addition, findings from this study suggest that teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers necessitates students accessing infants, toddlers, and parents through practicum experiences. In this study the practicum provided an important base for students to link what they were learning in class to children – and this makes the course 'come alive' as Mary described: "So whenever I'm talking about any domain, I'll mention something and the engagement goes up hugely as soon as one of them can say oh I saw this!"

These findings also suggest that how the staff in the child development centers process with students and self-reflect is important. Staff member's ability to identify their own mistakes, while seeing part of their role as mentoring college students, appeared to contribute to a situation in which students and staff had opportunities to process the actions and reactions of the day. This finding suggests that it is optimal to have infant and toddler practicum placements in sites where the staff embraces their dual roles as teachers of children and teachers of college students.

Tentative Manifestation: Un-Like

Jana, a faculty member, described how infant and toddler teaching differs from teaching other age groups within the early childhood age range of birth to age eight:

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I do see it as being different. I think that for most professionals, infant and

toddler work--not that all early childhood isn't relationship-based, but infant and

toddler is unbelievably relationship-based.

Working with infants and toddlers requires emotional engagement on behalf of

the teacher and a commitment to remain open to identifying a child's need and then

responding to the child's needs. This type of work requires "considerable personal

insight and openness" (Press & Mitchell, 2014, p. 232). Infant and toddler teachers must

be able to balance individual needs of children while building a sense of community

amongst the children, allowing infants and toddlers to initiate interactions and be poised

to provide timely responses to the child's bids for interaction. Teaching infants and

toddlers looks very different from teaching preschoolers, but the differences are crucial to

supporting the way in which infants and toddlers learn best – through relationship and

interaction (National Council on the Developing Child, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015).

   Differentiating. In both the staff and faculty interviews, it was evident

that what shaped the content was a need to differentiate infant or toddler teaching from

teaching older children, as different in both content and teaching strategies. Because of

this described need to differentiate, this tentative manifestation was titled *un-like*.

Because infants and toddlers are dependent on relationships as a way to understand and

be in the world, having a focus on developing a positive relationship is essential in

providing what infants and toddlers need to learn. As Jana stated, infant and toddler

teaching is "unbelievably relationship-based."

Jana's highlighting of the importance of relationship-based teaching with infants and toddlers is an important finding from the science of child development. This type of relationship based interaction has been found to be critical to a child's development of cognitive and self-regulation skills (Allen & Kelly, 2015). A paper that can be accessed on the website, Harvard Center for the Developing Child –Working paper #11 explains how early experiences shape the child's executive functioning. Executive function is the child's ability to use working memory (the capacity to hold information in mind), inhibitory control (regulate emotions), and cognitive or mental flexibility. The authors of Working Paper #11 state:

> The building blocks of children's capacities to retain and use new information, focus attention, control impulses, and make plans are acquired during early childhood, but the full range of executive function skills continues to develop into the adolescent years. The rudimentary signs of these capacities emerge toward the end of the first year of life. (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2011, p. 4)

Children need a sensitive, responsive caregiver who individualizes teaching for the child and scaffolds learning experiences to develop executive function skills. The authors also describe how the availability of an adult who has the time and inclination to make time for children to practice their skills is central to the child's development of executive functions (Center for the Developing Child, 2011).

Jana described how she frames this for her students who she says are challenged to see the care-giving routines as providing infants and toddlers with an education:

Well, they'll mostly bring it up in terms of time. They'll say well that would be nice but all of our time is taken up with feeding and changing and they'll kind of list all these things they have to do all day. We spend time talking about time! A lot of the content is about care routines. Yes, we have all these care routines that we do with infants and toddlers. How are they teaching? How do we build teaching into those routines? How is that building a relationship? How can we be supporting language development when we're doing that? When we're diapering a baby, how are we supporting attachment? How are we supporting their social and emotional development? What kind of cognitive learning could be happening during that diaper change or that meal time or just that tummy time on the floor? So a lot of it is getting them past the idea that all this time they spend in care routines is not teaching and I'd have to have separate time for teaching. No you wouldn't. You could actually be teaching WHILE you're doing these things and let's talk about what that looks like.

Jana's description reveals the manner in which she discussed the complex learning that is taking place through everyday interactions. The other point she made clear was that development is not divided into clear areas but rather that development is dependent on the dynamics of the adult's responsiveness coupled with the child's receptivity that opens many important opportunities for the adults to teach and the child to learn. Not only is this type of interaction important for infants and toddlers to learn, and develop executive function skills, but this type of attention to the child builds the foundations of resilience in children (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015). It can even alter how genes are expressed (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010).

What may look like simply being a 'nice' care-giver has far greater implications for how a child experiences his/her day and in turn is actually building a child's foundation for life-long learning.

Teaching strategies. Because of the dearth of research about teaching infants and toddlers (Branscomb & Ethridge, 2010), a default is to try to apply the models developed for pre-school aged children to infants and toddlers. Recall how Donna, a faculty member with several years of experience working directly with very young children, described how she needs to focus students when it comes to learning new ways to teach:

> I think that the sort of struggle that we have in all of early childhood to get students to resist the temptation to do everything as a group is even more magnified in infant and toddler. You just can't do infant group time. You really can't. So they have to think about planning for these children as individuals that they really have to focus on their individual developmental trajectories, their individual interests, and their individual temperament. It's a huge challenge.

Chris, a toddler teacher, described the curriculum in her classroom in this way and gives an example of how teaching infants and toddlers if frame differently:

> This is curriculum. I mean, you're building in curriculum in everything you do - hand-washing, self-help skills, hand-over-hand fine motor skills, and oftentimes it gets a little busy in there so problem-solving, social skills--there's so much that goes on. So the whole day is the curriculum!

What Chris is describing is an understanding that the quality of their interactions with the children, throughout the day, including all activities is what makes up the curriculum for

infants and toddlers. Research conducted by National Institute of Child and Human

Development (2002) found that "in infant toddler child care quality interactions have

been associated with increased cognitive competence measures when the children reach

preschool age. Therefore the perspectives offered to students by Chris helps frame how

curriculum 'looks' in the infant and toddler classrooms.

Sally, an infant teacher, described her curriculum in this way:

> If I have maybe a child that's really fussy or crying, it's not about just making
>
> them happy so then I can go take care of this one and now I can go and do this.
>
> It's about building those relationships. It's about creating trust. It's about
>
> bonding. ..It is not, boy, I just need to make it to lunch, so here I just want you to
>
> be happy and you can play with this toy, and here you can just be happy and I'm
>
> going to change a diaper. It's so much more than that, and I feel like that gets lost
>
> sometimes with students because it's stressful. It's a lot of work. You have to
>
> know that and you have to still power through it and enjoy it. It takes a certain
>
> breed of person to be able to work at this level.

Again, Sally is describing another key skill in teaching infants and toddlers, which is the

need to invest in building personal relationships with each infant or toddler. It also means

working through a child's strong emotional reactions in which there must be an

investment to understand 'the emotional life of the nursery' and provide 'professional

love' that are "inevitably part of a good quality infant and toddler care and education"

(Press & Mitchell, 2014, p. 231).

Sally provided a description of how she individualizes teaching in her infant room

– examples she points out to practicum students:

I have a couple right now that are strong crawlers but are having a little trouble

with the walking, so I want to make sure I have things on top of my shelves for

them to pull themselves up. I like proximity with materials. If they want to let go

from one and maybe take a couple steps, we have the little push toys. So we try

to do that with all the ages.

 Even though the terms 'infant' and 'toddler' are often used to describe the full span of

children birth to three, in reality there are marked physical, developmental differences

even within the first year of life. Sally's description provides insight into how the

physical developmental differences must be attended to in curriculum planning.   Parks

(2014) wrote an article to provide infant and toddler teachers with ideas for sensory-

motor activities. Parks, like Sally, attended to the physical differences by delineating

activities for newborns (birth the three months), 4-6 months and 7-12 months and

describing how to adapt activities for the sitting infant, versus the infant who is pulling to

stand.

The approaches to teaching infants and toddlers described by Sally and Chris

provide examples of what is recommended in the IOM report (Allen and Kelly, 2015).

The IOM report (Allen & Kelly, 2015) points to an important teaching strategy: to focus

on the child's interests and stimulate them through opportunities made available in the

classroom. The authors of the IOM report recommended this approach, which matches

Chris's and Sally's description of how they view their work and their conceptualization

of curriculum for infants and toddlers.

Structure relies on the educator's knowledge of the developmental progress for

which children of this age are ready, the interests of the particular child, and the

effort to create a classroom or other context that has materials to which children

can respond. (Allen & Kelly, 2015, p. 252)

Complexity around teaching strategies is the need to shift from the apprenticed image of

what it means to teach. Lortie (1975) discusses the process by which students becoming

teachers often re-enact models of teaching they have witnessed. However, when it comes

to students preparing to teach infants and toddlers, the model of teaching they may be

able to recall from their pre-school experiences must be entirely shifted to embrace a

model in which teaching is an individual endeavor within a group of children. Given that

infant and toddler teaching is so different from kindergarten or even preschool, a whole

new conceptualization of teaching and learning is presented to pre-service students.

Sally also acknowledged that pre-service students are often looking for lesson

plans when they are assigned to her classroom. She used this inquiry as an opportunity to

explain and demonstrate how planning for infants in her classroom is done – not through

a posted, formal lesson plan:

I'll have them look over the binder that I have. It has some of those activity cards

so they can see because they'll come in and ask what are you going to do for your

lesson--where's your lesson plan? I do have one posted on the wall, but it is

literally a list of the different areas, the benefit of that area, and then the materials

we have that meet the age of the kids that are in there now. They immediately, I

think, come and they're expecting all of this structure and it sometimes takes a

different form. Here is another example of a shift in thinking in which students

expected to see a 'lesson plan' with content areas included. Instead they see

'areas and materials' and must use the areas and materials to engage children in learning in spontaneous ways.

The manner in which Sally guides the students is to have them realize that the way the environment is created has an enormous impact on the infants – as does the way in which the teacher uses that area of the classroom to interact with the child. She is describing the art of building upon the child's natural interest and extending the child's learning through interaction with the teacher and the materials provided.

She said she explains to students:

> We can do activity ideas for one-on-one but, as far as I'm concerned, I feel a level of inappropriateness in that room with a regular lesson plan. There's no way I would get all eight infants together to sit down and work on an activity, so I always tell them if they are looking for something with a specific child for an assignment, then they will pull out materials and the classroom is our lesson plan. So maybe those are the things we have on the shelf and when you need to do that activity, go ahead and bring that child and anyone else that wants to come over and they can work on it that way.

Sally described students being surprised by the lack of lesson plans and the notion that teaching was one-to-one for the infant group. Jana, a faculty member, described emphasizing to pre-service students the importance of relationships and considering how teachers connect with children – a key in teaching infants and toddlers:

> So understanding children's temperaments. Creating that good fit. We talk a lot about goodness of fit with each child. Making sure that we're forming attachments and that we're putting practices in place that supports the ongoing

nature of those attachments as much as possible. Like I said, responsive care-

giving is huge.

So in addition to the lack of a group lesson plan, students also were directed to learn

about temperaments and how these figured into supporting individual children in the

classroom. Moreover, students were asked to consider that teaching infants and toddlers

involved finding an individualized way of relating to each child.

Avoiding inappropriate adaptations. Donna, a faculty member, described that

those unfamiliar with teaching infants and toddlers tend to try to adapt what they used

with pre-school or early elementary aged children to infant or toddler settings. She

described why this is problematic:

I don't like the watered down where people go I'll just adapt it, I'll water it down

like it was a preschool lesson but I can teach it to toddlers. I'm like no, you can't.

That for me is the main piece I want my students to know about the difference

between infant and toddler care than preschool, kindergarten, first. It's just as

valid if not the most valuable because this is the time we're building up their

confidence, their social skills, they're just being able to adapt in a group, being

bonding with their teachers, with the people that they're in care with. That's

really important.

This challenge exists in the community as well. Mary, a faculty member who supervised

students in community settings, explains:

What I have found out from previous experience and even in the centers if they're

elementary-trained, they use elementary strategies, which are so

inappropriate…you really have to just get on them about not using kindergarten lessons.

Mary is describing the default that occurs when teachers who have a background in elementary school teaching become infant and toddler teachers. Lacking the insights about how to implement infant or toddler curriculum (relationship based, individualized) they rely on ideas and concepts that are appropriate for elementary aged students (group activities, direct instruction) to teach. When this occurs, pre-service students are not gaining experience in differentiating teaching of older children from what infants and toddlers need.

Mary added:

But infant-toddler, it's a gift. That's the reality. We're given little gifts to take care of and we need to do our very best. It's so much more important, the learning that happens during those two to three years is much grander as a base than anything in that elementary world. I think that's really key. Yeah. It's just as important but boy is it.

In Mary's course a theme that shaped the content was an emphasis on the important foundation set early in a child's life. In the quote above, she shared her perspective that within the first two to three years, the learning that occurs is far more than what will happen during the elementary years. Mary explained she held this perspective because it was in the earliest years the architecture of the brain was built and young children were learning what to expect from the world. Because much of what babies and toddlers learn at this stage is 'unseen', this perspective within the infant and toddler courses may have been new to pre-service students.

Different environment necessary. Donna described ways in which the environment should reflect the developmental and learning needs of infants and toddlers:

I don't want to see paintbrushes and paint in the infant room. I think that's just inappropriate, and that's a mindset. That can be hard because I think a lot of young teachers/students, it's all wrapped up around that lesson plan, curriculum piece. I talk with them a lot. I know when I was supervising students in our infant room; I said this is our lesson plan: It's our room structure and how we're setting it up. We're bringing in activities. We do small things, like I'll bring in sensory bottles for the infants and I'll sit and we'll interact with them. But it's not going to be we're sitting at the table and we're doing sponge painting, you know, that type of thing. You need to do it for a reason that's going to be developmentally supportive of these children, not just because you think it looks fun and cute and someone else did it in their classroom.

Donna's comments reveal that shaping the content in the practicum involves a shift away from the image of what many pre-service students may imagine a classroom should look like – to creating an environment that is focused on supporting developmental objectives.

Donna also wanted to highlight the value of teaching infants and toddlers to pre-service students:

I want them to understand that an infant teacher is working just as hard as a teacher of a toddler, preschooler, and kindergartener. It's just going to look different. It's not going to be a set lesson where they're going to do a small group activity, you know?

Even the idea of what work for a teacher constitutes was *un-like* what work for teachers in say a second grade classroom might look like. This was another understanding and image shift that staff desired pre-service students to make during their practicum experiences.

Not for everyone. Donna went on to describe a situation in which a teacher decided to leave the center because that teacher did not find her personal concept of what it meant to teach a good fit for what was needed in the infant room:

I've had a teacher in here (she's no longer working here) who had a really hard time with that because she attached all of her thoughts about being a teacher around an activity. I'm not being the teacher I should be if I'm not doing a more structured activity. I said well that's not in infants; that's not how we do infants. So that's my main piece that I want all of my students who come through our program to know about infants and toddlers is that your activity is structuring that environment and what you're putting in there, why you're putting it where it is, what you're adding to it to help support their learning as they grow and develop, and that you know how are you interacting with them to support their learning. That's your curriculum. That's your key piece.

Donna's example highlights that teaching infants and toddlers may not be a good fit for early childhood teachers who identify teaching with providing more structure and directed activities for the children. In teaching infants and toddlers, the children provide the structure for the teacher by virtue of their immediate needs, emotional states, developmental capabilities, and needs for embedding education into the child's care needs. Teachers of infants and toddlers must continually seek to understand children's

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needs, respect children as individual and unique learners, and be aware and reflective of interactions that lead to security, autonomy, and competence (Swimm, 2014).

Summary of Un-like

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

In the tentative manifestation *un-like*, the content is shaped by differentiating infant and toddler curriculum from curriculum for older children. Faculty and staff indicated that underscoring differentiation is an important aspect of pre-service teachers learning about teaching infants and toddlers. This tentative manifestation, *un-like*, suggests that faculty and staff should anticipate that students will be surprised at the differences. For example, instead of planning group learning activities, or focusing on specific concepts in literacy or math or science, teaching infants and toddlers relies on a curriculum arising from teachable moments that happen within the routines of the classroom. In addition, infant and toddler teaching as described in this study was based on building relationships, creating an environment that supports the child's development, needing to individualize lessons for each child. While this is the structure best suited to teaching infants and toddlers, for many pre-service students this is not what they expected to learn about 'curriculum' or teaching. Faculty and staff found a need to provide pre-service teachers with a strong rationale based on understanding infant and toddler development. These findings suggest that the challenges presented to pre-service students in embracing new ways of conceiving of teaching can be addressed by providing

a strong base of information from the science of child development in conjunction with practicum experiences in which the practices support what infants and toddlers need.

Tentative Manifestation: Mentoring Students

Sally, an infant teacher, described why she is careful to support students as they begin their practicum experience:

So my biggest goal the first two weeks is just making them (college students) feel comfortable. I do that through conversation, having them with a smaller number of children, strategically placing them sometimes with kids that I know are going to be pretty easy-going, you know? You don't want to give someone who's scared of an infant, an infant that you know is going to cry quite a bit. I mean, they're going to run out of here and never come back!

Practical experiences are considered foundational in early childhood education teacher preparation. Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris (2009) point to these experiences as providing a critical factor in enhancing a pre-service teacher's ability to influence a child's development and learning in a positive direction. Staff from the two university-affiliated child development centers provided detailed information about how they shape the infant and toddler content in the practicum experience to help students feel comfortable and take on tasks in a manner that builds their confidence and competence.

Staff in these two programs talked about their own feelings of positivity about their employment at the center and also described the opportunities to work with college students as being something they enjoyed. On the other hand, data collected from faculty whose students completed practicum in a variety of community sites raised concerns about what students might be experiencing and witnessing. The first section will describe

the experiences of staff from the two university sites in mentoring students. Next I will include descriptions from a faculty member that raise concerns about the practicum experiences of her students and discuss potential risks.

Mentoring students surfaced as a tentative manifestation that shaped the infant and toddler content in the practicum portion of the infant and toddler course. Across all of the staff interviews, staff members in the two university-sponsored child development centers described their awareness of the discomfort of students in their classrooms. They also described the measures they took to help the college students find a comfortable base in the classroom.

Once students were comfortable, staff described students as being able to develop relationships in the classroom with both themselves and children, observe and learn about the intentional design of the environment, plan learning opportunities for the children, use developmentally appropriate teaching strategies, work as a team, learn to document events such as a child's minor injury, and learn ways to address challenging behaviors. Data from the staff interviews suggested that the establishment of a base of comfort for the college student in the classroom was essential to the student being able to maximize their learning opportunities.

Hosting students. In addition to identifying the discomfort of the students, staff also identified some of the specific reasons why working with children in a particular age range could be challenging while another age range offered more opportunity than challenge. For example, young infants can offer particular challenges to college students newly beginning their field experience placement:

A lot of them (college students) are not very comfortable when they start.

Typically they'll come in and they're pretty quiet because, as much fun as it is to

hold a happy baby, babies can be very intimidating because you don't know

exactly always what's going to make that baby happy or that's going to calm them

down or who they're going to connect with, who's going to be the one that they're

able to take a bottle from? These are all unknowns. We don't necessarily know.

So the students come in very quiet.

Sally acknowledged that babies are very individual. Because the students are just

meeting the baby, they will not have any experience in relating to that child – to know

their likes, dislikes, or specific ways to help calm them if they should become upset –

leading to the college student potentially feeling intimidated. Sally identifies the

potential for *intimidation* to occur based on the reality of babies being very individual in

their response – and that adults, who are generally able to regulate themselves, may be

impacted by the dis-regulation of an infant. While there are obvious maturity

differentials between college students and infants, this is an excellent example of how

being out of your comfort zone can impact an adult's feelings of confidence and

competence when it comes to trying to sooth an upset baby – just as can occur in the

parent-infant relationship where a parent feels frustrated and unsure of themselves.

While infants may often be wary of a student who they don't know, Martha highlighted

how the age of the child and the natural inclination to be curious can be a bonus in

helping students feel comfortable and have a role in the classroom with toddlers:

That's what's really great about toddlers is, if they're (the college student) sitting

down, they'll (the toddlers) just swarm them. I'll just tell them to sit down and

the children will come. They'll grab a book. They'll grab a toy. There are blocks

in the area, so anywhere they sit, the children will grab an activity. I've never had

somebody who's been on the floor that the children haven't come to. Mine are all

walking. In fact, some of mine are pretty unsteady, so if you're just sitting down,

eventually they'll just trip and fall in your lap because they're still working on

those skills. Toddlers make everything better!

The contrasting description of working with infants versus toddlers reveals that there is a

potential for students to have a very different experience based on whether they are

assigned to work in the infant or toddler classroom. Gloecker and LaParo (2015) pointed

out that often 'infants and toddlers' are grouped together – though they are very distinct

developmental periods "and need to be considered separately in terms of children

experiences and outcomes in child care" (Gloecker & LaParo, 2015, p. 47). Whereas

infants are very dependent, in toddlerhood children are increasingly self-aware, have

increased self-regulation, and have a desire to develop skills in being independent

(Gloecker & LaParo, 2015). Supporting infants involves a different set of knowledge and

skills than does supporting toddlers. Notable in this study, is that only one program

required a practicum experience with both infants and toddlers.

Creating community. Terri, a staff member, also described the 'two way street'

of not only the students getting to know the children but also the children getting to know

the students as an important context for college students joining the classroom:

One of the things I want them to feel is comfortable working with the children,

you know, maybe for the first couple times they're in there, they're just kind of

getting to know the children and the children are getting to know them, they're

building this little--I don't know if you'd call it a community or whatever, just a comfort level working with young children.

Sally shared some of the important questions she asks to help her get to know the students as individuals, and that would help her understand their prior experiences with children. Sally was intentional in wanting to better understand the teacher candidate's prior experiences to help her position them in the classroom both to help establish a beginning comfort level and to provide challenge if they already had some prior experiences with infants.

I'll often ask them if they worked with young children before and what ages and have they worked with toddlers because if they've worked with preschoolers, that's great. Toddlers are different. Or if they worked with infants, that's great. Toddlers are different. So kind of get to know them a little bit.

Martha, a staff member, said she intentionally kept the classroom activities simple in order to lessen the pressure on the college students as they got to know the children and the classroom routines. Like Sally, she wanted the teacher candidates to feel comfortable and be able to ease into the classroom routines as well as get to know the children:

To help them feel comfortable those first couple weeks, I don't plan too many activities. I just tell them to just come in and sit and observe and feel free to play with the kids and have conversations with the kids. If you feel like singing, go ahead, but most of them are pretty shy to that. Yeah, just a feeling comfortable thing and having conversations with them.

Another version of 'keeping it simple' was offered by staff member Stacey.

Her emphasis was in relaxing expectations of and directives to the student. Given how busy an infant or toddler classroom could be, Stacey was careful not to simply give out assignments to teacher candidates in order to lessen her responsibilities. She, like Sally and Chris considered the emotional state of students as an important way to welcome them to her classroom:

> I think the very beginning is making them feel comfortable and not having a huge number of expectations those first couple of times they're in your room. So we're not sitting there well you should be doing this or you should be doing that. I tell them right away I want you to just find a spot on the floor. I want you to play. I want you to just absorb and get a comfortable feeling. I don't know, I think that puts them more at ease because when you're not at ease, everything's very rigid and everything's very scary, you know.

Miriam remembers what it was like for her to be a practicum student and used her memories to guide her in supporting students in her classroom. Miriam recalled wanting to feel she was contributing right from the start so offered students some suggestions to help them engage:

> One thing I do also is I benefited when I was doing my practicum and student teaching was getting right in there and doing something. So before they're assigned anything, I just have them come up with something, even if it's just taking the blocks and having them build towers, just to get their feet wet rather than waiting.

Terri, Sally, Martha, and Miriam each offered insights into the ways in which a focus on students shaped the content of the practicum. Each staff person focused on the need to

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help students feel supported and comfortable in their classrooms. The intent of their actions was to help students have a positive experience in their infant or toddler practicum. Their efforts could have important implications for future career choices of these teacher candidates. In a study conducted by Thorpe, Aliwood, Brownlee and Boyd, (2011) it was found that while pay, conditions and the status of early childhood educators act as barriers to entering the early childhood workforce, students who had positive practicum experiences are more likely to consider entering the early childhood workforce.

Desired outcome for students. Chris shared insights about the types of interactions that took place once the students found a level of comfort in the classroom:

> Each week you kind of see that connection grow where they can take on one or two infants and read a book or sing a little song or do a finger play. Then by the completion of the practicum, they're really so much more at ease, able to take their lead on their own, and really they're more conversational with us well as the children. In developing a base of comfort, Sally, a staff member, also hoped it encouraged open and honest dialogue between the staff and student – leading to the student gaining more insights into classroom/child decisions made by staff. Rather than have the student make assumptions or have the faculty member try to interpret a situation they had no first-hand knowledge of, students were encouraged to bring these questions and issues up with staff to learn the reasoning behind a particular interaction or decision that was unclear to the student.

Sally explained, it is key for the students to understand the intents behind each teacher's actions with specific children. While, what the teacher does could seem

unusual, it might in fact be being done at the request of a parent or due to the teacher's knowledge of a particular child's temperament that leads her to handle a situation in a particular way.

> I always stress if you have any questions on why something was handled this way with this child, and something that was similar was handled in a different way, please ask because it could be an error on our part or there could be a perfectly good explanation on why this benefited the child and this benefited this one, so please ask. Or they go back and ask their teacher. Well, their professor doesn't know because they weren't here. Then a lot of speculation goes on.

As the conversation on the topic of students was concluding, Donna shared one of the potential outcomes she hoped might come from students having a welcoming, supportive experience in the infant or toddler classroom:

> Aside from what they said too, just to become comfortable with the infants and toddlers... I don't think it's an age that many (college students) see themselves teaching in the future and maybe after being in our classrooms, they'll change their mind and want to be a child care teacher to be comfortable with that age.

Staff participants described an intentional focus on supporting college students through attending to their emotional states and individualizing the orientation based on the student's comfort level and prior experiences. I was struck with the mindfulness and attention paid to how to receive the students in order to 'win them over' to valuing infant and toddler teaching and perhaps even wanting to pursue a career in teaching infants and toddlers.

Education of staff matters. While I did not formally collect demographic information regarding the educational levels of the staff in these centers, during the interview process each staff member spontaneously revealed the program where they studied early childhood education and from which they had graduated from. This information made clear that they all had a minimum of a BA/BS and had studied child development. This level of educational attainment coupled with special knowledge and training in early childhood development is not the norm in child care settings (Torquati, Raikes, & Huddleston-Casas, 2007). In addition, their affiliation with the universities appears to have provided a setting in which staff felt supported and positive about their work. An example is that in both child development centers several staff expressed satisfaction with their place of employment similar to what Miriam stated:

> I saw this job and I was so excited to work with college students AND children, and I said oh my gosh should I apply? .They want all these things. I really wanted this job and I didn't think I got it… Then when I got a call, I was clapping! I probably clapped for the first three years. So anyway, I stopped clapping. So it's wonderful because I work with awesome people, and it's just the best.

Sally offered this insight into her job satisfaction which also reveals that the child development center where she is employed is a highly sought after place of employment for early childhood educators:

> We have a very slow turnover rate for educators here. I think when a spot opens, you're looking at people right away noticing that there is a position open and boom, you're interviewing left and right or you have applications coming in…I kept my eyes open for an opening here because you hear such wonderful things

about this new center that's opening. It's a wonderful place. It's a gem among early childhood opportunities. This is just fantastic. Great director. Great staff. Great families. Great program. We're spoiled.

There is a compelling body of research that indicates quality of children's experiences in child care is linked to the staff's qualification (Alex & Kelly, 2015; Norris, 2010; Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000). With higher-level qualifications, early childhood educators were more likely to engage in appropriate interactions that reflected sensitivity and engagement – both important ingredients for supporting the learning and development of infants and toddlers (Norris, 2010). Findings from this study suggest that the sensitivity and engagement staff modeled with infants and toddlers extended to being sensitive and engaged with the college students. However, in this study only two of the five institutions hosted infant and toddler practicum students in their own child development centers. Data collected from faculty who did not have students placed in affiliated child development centers offered insights into the challenges encountered when students were placed in settings where teachers seemed not to have this background or training.

Problematic experiences. To provide a full picture of how practicum can shape the infant and toddler content, Jean shared the difficulties that arise when students are placed in centers where staff qualifications and practices are questionable.

It's sort of a conflict because they need to do this field experience but we know sometimes where we're sending them is they're not practicing what they're learning in class as being developmentally appropriate and whatever. So I find myself as an early childhood teacher saying you're going to go into this class and

you're going to see things that may not be developmentally appropriate. A lot of
times I'll be talking to them about one of their roles is to be a role model as to
what should be happening in a classroom that's developmentally appropriate.
Some of these places are non-degreed people. That doesn't mean that they're not
of fine quality, but I think they may lack in developmentally appropriate practice
sometimes. It's not all of them. This is not their career. It's a part-time job while
they're doing something else.

In the other programs included in this study, students may be completing a practicum in a
child care center where they work – or they make their own arrangements – or the
university has established some partnerships in which students are placed. Donna
commented on the impressions that experiences may leave on college students who have
no other models to compare to:

I think just overall, I think it's so important to give students experience in these
classrooms. You can talk about it all you want but I don't think it becomes real
until you're seeing it in action. My hope is I sometimes cringe when I hear them
talking about what they're seeing out there. Please know that's not how you do it!
That's what worries me too. Everyone is impressionable, especially college
students who are learning the field. If they don't see it done right, do they know
it's not done right or do they see it as oh that's how it's done. So that's my worry.

Jean's descriptions of her concerns coupled with Donna's concern about poor
models raise the issue of what happens when the placement itself does not mirror the
practices being taught to students in their coursework. Findings from a study conducted
in Australia titled *Problematic Placement: Pathways Pre- service Teachers' Perspectives*

on their Infant/toddler Placements (Rouse, Morrissey, & Rahimi, 2012) provide insights. The researchers concluded that when students did not have good role models, the students did not believe they were learning anything new – nor did these problematic placements help pre-service teachers develop a sense of identity in teaching infants and toddlers:

> The student teachers' expressions of dissatisfaction with the infant/toddler practicum reflected the absence of key elements for effective professional experience placements as identified by research. That these pre-service teachers already felt they possessed skills, knowledge and experience in working with this age group, in conjunction with their expressed aspirations to work with older children, can also be seen as complicating factors in the development of a teacher identity in this placement. This was compounded by the lack of available models of teacher practice with this age group, and the placement supervisors' confusion regarding the purposes and expectations of the placement. (Rouse et al., 2012, p. 96)

On the other hand, when the practicum is done in a setting where there is support and an emphasis on modeling appropriate practices, the students' experiences were described by Recchia and Shin (2010) as transformative. In a study of infant practicum outcomes, Recchia and Shin (2010) followed four pre-service students over the course of a semester long infant practicum. They found through an analysis of the students' weekly journals that students were challenged to think deeply about teaching and learning. Their findings showed that the infants themselves were powerful teachers as students engaged in hands on learning (Recchia & Shin, 2010).

Summary of Mentoring Students

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

Findings from this study suggest the experiences students have with infants can be very different than the experiences with toddlers – because of the developmental differences. Students only having a practicum with only either infants or toddlers may be missing important opportunities to see the continuum of development as well as the shift from working with children who are dependent to working with children whose developmental agenda includes autonomy. In addition, findings from this study suggest that students beginning a practicum may need specific support and guidance in the classroom in order to feel comfortable and able to engage in learning. This study adds information about how staff in the two university-affiliated programs mentored the students' experiences in specific ways: considering the student's level of experience; weighing the risks and challenges students would confront given the age and development of the child group they were assigned; and ensuring that the experiences were structured in such a way students had success with the children that contributed to the college students becoming more confident and competent. In addition, this finding suggests that when students are in a situation in practicum where staff do not have a focus on mentoring students, the faculty member must take a purposeful role in helping students process experiences in problematic placements.

Tentative Manifestation: Perspectives on Parents

The finding, *perspectives on parents* is the name of I have given to the tentative

manifestation of shaping infant and toddler content by exposing college students to

various aspects of relating to, educating and supporting parents that shapes the infant and

toddler content. *Perspectives on Parents* was addressed by faculty and staff through

assignments, readings and observations and discussions with students. Infant toddler

content is shaped by teaching students about *Perspectives on Parents* in both the courses

and field experiences Expressed by faculty, an important perspective to be learned by

students can be summed up in the words of Jean: "I want them to know parents are the

first and most important people in the life of a child."

Jana, a faculty member, provided a description of the important concepts she

wants students to have in tending to relationships with families of infants and toddlers in

a child care setting:

> We talk about relationships. Relationships are as important with the parent as the
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> baby because you have to be on the same page. You have to be respecting what
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> their cultural or family values are, and also making sure your setting is a good fit
>
> upfront because not every setting is the right fit for every family. So talking
>
> through how do you do that, how do you have those conversations and tell
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> families we want it to be a good fit for you. So we need to kind of talk about
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> what our philosophy is and how we do things and explain what primary care-
>
> giving is or whatever, you know.

Jana's description includes respect for cultural and family values, a fit between the program and the child, the philosophy of the program – and the need to talk these things through to help students know how to have these conversations. The finding *perspectives on parents* is the name I have given to the tentative manifestation of shaping infant and toddler content by exposing college students to various aspects of relating to, educating, and supporting parents. *Perspectives on parents* was addressed by faculty and staff through assignments, readings and observations, and discussions with students. Infant-toddler content is shaped by teaching students about *perspectives on parents* in both the courses and field experiences. Expressed by faculty as an important perspective to be learned by students, *perspectives on parents* can be summed up again in the words of Jean: "I want them to know parents are the first and most important people in the life a child." One of my assumptions going into this study was that courses about infants and toddlers would include a focus on parents. This is because:

Our lives are always linked to those of others, but this is especially true for infants and toddlers, for whom nearly every aspect of development is mediated by parents or other caregivers. Parents provide the "envelope" in which the earliest weeks and months of development proceed, and their own health and well-being play a key role in determining how well children thrive during the first few years. Thus, we cannot talk about how infants and toddlers are doing without some reference to how their parents are doing. (Murphey, Cooper, & Forry, 2013, p.5)

With this concept in the mind, the *perspectives on parents* phenomenon was described by faculty and staff through their focused attention on helping students gain skills in communicating and collaborating with parents, consider how to provide

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education for parents, and learn what teachers do to provide support to parents. Both faculty and staff had robust contributions to describe the tentative manifestation of *perspectives on parents.* The nature of *perspectives on parents* is described by Mary, a faculty member, who uses these questions to stimulate her students' thinking about working with parents who may come from a variety of backgrounds:

> How do you handle the families that are not the typical family system, whether it
> be grandparents? Well, we have families with two moms or two dads. As a
> professional, how do we deal with that? How do we deal with the families that
> are just a different culture? How is it that you not only help the children but then
> also how do you work with the parents? What might you do with the family
> where women don't speak to men and you're the female child care provider and
> the dad comes in? How do you respect his culture?

Mary uses these questions in a small group activity to ensure students have an opportunity to participate in the discussion. And she further challenges them through disrupting their thinking – challenging them to understand that they come from a particular 'white' perspective (white perspective was the descriptor she used to indicate dominant culture):

> So it's done with a lot of scenarios that I've written up. We start with I generally
> will give them a couple scenarios on cards at their tables and then they talk about
> them and then they come back and we talk about them as a class so that they have
> that safe piece and then we discuss them. I'll tell them I will be the "YES BUT"
> person and, from the beginning, it's like okay that's great but do you realize that

you just looked at that through middle class white eyes? What does that look

like?

One of the challenges is that in early childhood education, the vast majority of both

teacher candidates and faculty are Caucasian , while the 'new majority' of children are

children of color and this can result in privileging of Euro-centric views of child

development (Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006).

She further described her intent in this student activity:

> Then I do push really hard about that we partner with families, we collaborate,
>
> and what does that look like, what does that mean? That means we can talk with
>
> them about a question or concern they might be having but ultimately it's the
>
> parent. It's the parent's child. Whether we agree with a decision or not doesn't
>
> matter, as long as it's not harming the child. We need to do that piece. We talk a
>
> lot about that.

Faculty members also developed specific assignments to address shaping the

content to include *perspectives on parents.* The assignments had varied intentions from

which students experience, consider, and learn. This example of a series of three

assignments, created by one faculty member, illustrates multiple facets of the

manifestation of *perspectives on parents* through seeking to learn from parents.

Gaining an understanding of what parent's experience.

To help students gain insight about how early care and education may look from a

parent's vantage point, students are asked to pose as parents. In this first assignment –

calling a child care facility and posing as a parent, students are placed in the 'shoes' of

parents, having to think through what they would like to know about the center and perhaps learning if there might be an opening for their 'imaginary ' infant or toddler. To the surprise of students, they learn that many centers do not have openings for infants and that waiting lists for infant care can be lengthy. Jean, a faculty member, described the first assignment in this way:

> One thing when I started about three years ago that it turns out to be really interesting is I have them do three interviews. One of them is they need to call a facility. I have some preset questions that they have to ask the facility from a parent perspective. So they have to pretend, for lack of a better term, that they're a parent and come up with questions that they think would be relevant to ask a daycare.

The second assignment extends student learning from the first assignment. In the second assignment they are directed to interview a parent whose infant or toddler is currently enrolled in child care. This assignment provides an opportunity for students to interact directly with parents and learn from a parent perspective. Because of value placed on the parent's perspective, the faculty member is also conveying a message she wants all of her students to understand regarding valuing the parents' perspectives. Some of the questions students were prompted to ask included finding out from the parent's perspective "assets of the facility, challenges of the facility, cost and other relevant information you think is valuable to share." This is how she explained the second in the series of parent assignments: "The next interview they had to do was they had to interview a parent of an infant and a parent of a toddler and talk about what they would want in a day care."

The third assignment asks the students to be a silent observer in order to conduct a naturalistic observation of parent-child interaction. Jean described this assignment:

Then they do an infant-toddler observation where I send them to our local mall or they can go to a restaurant or whatever, and I want them to just observe a parent and either an infant or toddler for approximately a half an hour observing what the interactions are like and what's happening.

The description in the syllabus for the third assignment reads as follows:

Parent/Infant/Toddler Observation:

Pick a spot where you can visually see a Parent and Infant/Toddler interacting. Be as non-intrusive as possible. Record what you observed for 30-45 minutes. What was happening (explain circumstances, what was being said (parent and child), Behaviors you noticed, Things that surprised/annoyed you! Each of the preceding assignments was designed to help students take a parents' perspective or learn from a parent. Alerting teacher candidates to consider what parents experience and to value the parents' perspectives may help students to be empathic towards parents. Empathy is an important ingredient in building relationships with parents – especially for students who are not parents. As seen in the interviews with both faculty and staff, working with parents surfaced as an important facet of a focus on infants and toddlers.

Providing information to parents. *Perspectives on parents* also involved helping students think about information to share with parents and how to create opportunities to provide education to parents. Jana, a faculty member, designed an assignment that required students to select topics that would be of interest to parents and relay the information in one of two formats:

Family communication (Choose 1)

Create an informative display (bulletin board) for families of infants or toddlers. Your display should focus on one topic that impacts families with infants or toddlers and demonstrates your ability to be a professional resource for the families you serve. You may choose any topic but must approve your topic with the instructor before you begin work. You may use commercially developed pieces but the overall concept and work must be your own

OR

Create a 2 page 'newsletter' for families of infants and/or toddlers that demonstrates your professional knowledge on a topic and your ability to provide valuable resources. The newsletter should be topical information, not classroom 'news' of the day. You may *use* computer generated clip art or photos but must also include information you have written. Cite your sources and do not plagiarize.

Claire, a faculty member, created a parent education focused assignment that involved hosting a parent night at the campus child development center where the students were completing their infant/toddler practicum. To complete this assignment students came up with a concept for a parent education activity, designed and distributed the invitation, planned the parent-child activities that would take place that evening and created handouts to accompany the activities that highlighted what a child learned through the activities, and were present to host the event. In the syllabus this description appeared as stated below:

Family night presentation

Work with a small group to develop domain specific presentation including

domain development continuum and 3-5 learning opportunities which

parents/guardians may engage in with the child to promote development in a

specific domain. List of materials with samples to be used, games, and simple

directions should be ready to be handed out the evening of the Family Night.

Jean, a faculty member, designed assignments that called for students to have

thoughtful and controlled interactions with parents. This is an example of how a faculty

member coached students to have gradual parent contact experiences. In this next section

is a description of the directions given to students to help them interact with parents in a

respectful, appropriate (to their role as student) way.

I encourage them to do an observation when they first go. Part of that is they start

out with observing interaction of parents and children during transition time,

whether it's picking up or drop off or whatever. Then one of the requirements I

have is they have to do is record (in the student practicum journal) what their

interactions with parents were like and what the topic was. So this week I want

you to make a genuine effort to interact with a parent and tell me how you did it.

So I do encourage them each time to make sure, if it's possible without being too

intrusive or taking up the parent's time, if they're in the classroom and a parent

comes in.

The comments by this faculty member regarding directing the student *not to be too*

intrusive or taking up the parent's time, parallel a concern voiced by a staff member who

is present with students and parents in the classroom. In the child care settings, the

professional staff described the importance and efforts they made to develop their own

positive relationships with the parents of each of the infants and toddlers in their care. This staff member described how she preferred students learn to interact with parents:

> A lot of times I tell my practicum students I would prefer them not to relay information…I have a parent ed licensure. I'm very careful on how I say things with parents. I'm very careful on what information that you tell. Maybe a (child's) first step happened and you don't want to spoil that for them. No parent wants to hear that they missed that. So I usually tell my practicum students please leave the parent communication to me. Feel free to introduce yourself. Feel free to interact with the child in front of the parent, to play if the parent is sitting to play, but as far as this is what I've noticed and this is what we've seen or asking questions about any bowel movements or any new foods, at this point if I had a student teacher (which they no longer have) that would be great. At that stage (field experience and practicum), I think I need to be involved in the parent communication….I take that on myself.

This quote reveals the concerns and considerations Stacey, a teacher in the infant room, takes into account in deciding what to share and what not to share with parents. She considers what it might mean for a parent to learn from the staff her child has taken first steps – and the value of perhaps not sharing this – allowing the parents to discover this for themselves. She also reveals that communication between herself and the parent is important; and that changes in the child's schedule, such as bowel movements and new foods, are important pieces of information she needs to hear as the child's teacher. This staff member described what she hopes is happening as students observe the way she interacts with parents:

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You know, the other thing is you're role modeling too, building those relationships with the parents. I think that's also important that they see that you're taking that time to build that relationship and how you relate to the parent. Well, obviously in our classrooms usually we have pick-ups or drop-offs while practicum students are in the classroom. So I do what I normally do. I don't really change anything. I want them to see how I interact for that modeling purpose. They'll certainly ask questions about certain things or what not or, if something comes up, I'll kind of explain I did this because...I wanted this person to know that because...so I do a lot of explaining in that regard too. They do a little bit, I think, in class with some mock parent-teacher conferences. So they'll ask us some questions about that or maybe look for that and observe as we're doing some of that with our parents. Yeah, it's obviously modeling.

Stacey provided insight into the challenges and vulnerabilities in *perspectives on parents* in terms of guiding parents as she shared an example of a situation she would not want repeated:

We had a person that kind of stepped over their boundaries and would go greet the parents and say oh so and so had a bad day and they did this…..That would be something that we tell them that you're responsible for the kids and not to say so much to the parents. I mean, you can be friendly and that's good and positive, but not to say words like oh your child was crying all day and we couldn't get them to stop….I once had a substitute tell the parent that their child had been naughty all day, and I just about had a heart attack! You can't greet somebody (a parent) with that!

Summary of Perspectives on Parents

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

Research has consistently shown that when families, across all socio-economic, race and ethnicity categories are encouraged and involved, their children benefit from increased academic achievement and personal development. (e. g. Baum & Swick, 2007). A key principle that forms the foundation of learning to work with families is a recognition of the central role the family, rather than the school, plays in the life a of child – because of the family's constant presence in the life of the child (Epstein, 2001). According to Gestwicki (2007), early childhood teacher preparation programs should help pre-service teachers develop three constructs. The first is that pre-service teachers need to develop an understanding of the parent as the child's primary educator; second, early childhood educators need to extend their role to being family educators; third, they must develop the skills and dispositions that result in engaging parents in supportive, meaningful ways. Baum and Swick (2007) point out that with an increasing focus on early childhood teacher preparation, the area of focus having to do with parents is key:

> This emphasis is being strengthened by the increased attention being paid to standards for early childhood teacher preparation programs, such as those published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. While many teacher preparation programs have made revisions to their curricula, granting the importance of high quality relationships with families much needed attention, some assessments suggest that early childhood pre-service teachers still

lack an understanding of what empowering relations with families require (p. 579).

In this study it was found that both faculty and staff desired students to learn to develop positive relationships with parents, and that desire shaped the content. Faculty and staff described a variety of strategies for helping students develop these skills and perspectives. It is important to note that there were identified challenges and potential risks described in putting students in situations where they might interact directly with parents. These risks included that students may not know how to relay the information or that when students received or relayed information, it may disrupt the communication between the parent and the professional staff person. This was the case because staff described that the relationship between themselves and parents is an important one in which staff are careful to maintain specific boundaries, carefully choosing what to say and not say to individual parents. In this way, the staff members intentionally nurtured a trusting relationship between themselves and the families they served. The risks involved sharing this relationship with students who did not have a history with these parents include students' lack of knowledge of how to appropriately relaying information to parents; and a risk that students might inadvertently breach confidentiality.

What is important to know is that while students may not have the opportunity to practice these skills directly, there can be opportunities to learn through observation and thoughtful processing of the observations made in the practicum. Findings from this study suggest that pre-service students may not recognize the complexities and considerations that are involved in supporting a diverse range of families, and the students need to be exposed to these concepts and perspectives.

This tentative manifestation, *perspectives on parents*, shaped the content by including a focus on parents as an important aspect of learning about infants and toddlers. Through assignments some students stepped into the shoes of parents to begin to understand their viewpoint, selected information to share with parents, used various techniques to share this information, created opportunities for parents and children to interact, and observed how staff built positive relationships with parents through thoughtful and considerate conversations and interactions. Yet, as this comment by Donna a faculty member acknowledges, providing students with robust experiences of working with parents may be constrained by the limit of time and opportunity in the field experience setting. At the same time she hoped that the opportunities and insights offer a platform for deeper learning later.

> I don't know how ready the students are, and I don't even know if they would be ready. I think it's going to be one of those things, I believe, that when they get into the field, they're going to have that aha moment. That's what they meant when I was in my practicum experience and they were talking about that. Now I understand. I think it's one of those things that I don't know how ready they are developmentally to really kind of view what that means to totally and completely collaborate with the family. My hope is that they'll be able to go oh I remember hearing about that. I think those are my big goals. While working with parents is critical to all of early childhood education, it has a heightened importance when it comes to working with infants and toddlers.

As the findings indicated, there were a wide range of both concepts and skills around working with parents that were included in the courses and practicum. These included

developing empathy, being able to support parents, educate parents, and partner with parents. Being able to provide in depth information and experiences was beyond what could be accomplished in one course in a semester. However, both faculty and staff were committed to ensuring students were both aware and had experience with some of these facets of working with parents in order to begin to build a construct of working with parents of infants and toddlers.

Tentative Manifestation: Beyond Standards

In Chapter 3 of *Teacher Educator's Discourses and Languages,* Sarah Shimoni (2014) describes types of discourses that came from her in-depth analysis of materials from teacher educators. Shimoni (2014) defined discourse as the usage of language when performing a communication activity (verbal or written) within a given context. One of the types of discourse Shimoni (2014) described was radical-critical discourse:

> Radical-critical discourse revolves around educating a critical thinker who strives to initiate social change. It is about developing students' political consciousness and critical awareness. Its pedagogies are leading dialogues, deconstructing social conventions and critically studying normative power relations in order to generate social change and achieve social justice. (p.45)

Drawing from Shimoni's description of radical-critical discourse, I titled this manifestation *Beyond Standards.* Much like Shimoni's description of radical-critical discourse, *beyond standards* shaped the content by purposefully engaging dialogue that questioned conventions and standards. For example, Jean, a faculty member, had a goal

of encouraging students to 'buck the system'. *Beyond standards* shaped the content

through intent to move student's thinking beyond what is required.

Is it good enough? Minnesota Rule 3, published by the Minnesota Department

of Human Services, provides the regulations that must be followed in Minnesota to

operate a licensed child care center (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2015)

In addition, the NAEYC standards provide another level of voluntary standards child care

centers can decide to follow and become NAEYC accredited. In this case Claire desired

that her students think critically about the difference between what is required (thorough

regulations/accreditation) for children in child care settings versus what might be needed

based on a child's needs. For Claire, the textbook she had chosen focused on the needs

of the child was not bounded by the rules and regulations in child care – it instead

focused the students to think about what the child really needs. Claire provided an

example of how the content is shaped when faculty engage students in thinking and

learning outside of the parameters of standards:

> We use the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale, The Basics of
>
> Developmentally Appropriate Practice for Infants and Toddlers, and then
>
> Gonzales-Mena Infant Toddler and Caregiver text, which I love that text because
>
> it kind of pushes the boundaries of thinking from what people do because I think
>
> in Minnesota we're following Rule 3 and NAEYC standards and whatever. But
>
> this (Gonzales- Mena, 2012) is like a little out there and just *very tuned into the*
>
> *child*. Right! So what do infants need? Let's get deeper into that!
>
> In response to the juxtaposition of information she highlights from the Gonazales-

Mena text to Rule 3, Claire challenged students to think differently from what they are

experiencing in their field experiences or child care sites where they work. Claire wanted

them to think beyond what child care regulations for infants and toddlers set as *a*

minimum and focus on *what a better practice might be.* For example, in terms of adult to

child ratios, Claire indicated:

> My students are always like well we couldn't possibly do that (referring to
>
> recommendations from the Gonzales- Mena textbook) with a 1:4 ratio (which is
>
> the ratio for adults to infants prescribed in Rule 3). So the text is not like
>
> formatted to go here's what your standards are in Minnesota; it's what's really
>
> good for infants and toddlers. That's what I love because that challenges their
>
> thinking.

She expressed her valuing of the particular text because it is about what children need,

not restricted to what regulations, such as Minnesota Rule Three, set as a minimum but

often set the standard. She challenges the students to think about what might be done

differently and why this should be done.

Beyond western culture. Claire also used other strategies in teaching her

students that illustrated *beyond standards*. For example, she wanted students to consider

that the western way of thinking and caring for children is not the only 'right' way. She

acknowledged that we live in a diverse community of families in our country –headed by

parents who may have been raised outside of the United States. These individuals may

have valid but very different strategies for child rearing than practices deemed 'best' in

the United States. Claire utilized the movie *Babies* in her course for disrupting a focus on

western ways of child rearing as 'the right ways'. The movie *Babies* follows four

children – one from the Mongolia, one from Tokyo, one from Namibia, and one from the

United States - from their first moments at birth through their first birthday. As the film

proclaims what is portrayed is "the earliest stages of the journey of humanity that are at

once unique and universal to us all" (Blames, 2009). Claire explained why she shows the

movie *Babies* (Blames, 2009) in her course:

> But it (*Babies*) shows that developmentally these babies are fine even though it's
>
> maybe not how we in Minnesota go 'oh this would be how you raise a child'.
>
> They (the parents in the movie *Babies*) are interacting with the kids. They're
>
> growing. They're learning. They all have the same trajectory of development
>
> and there's not a right or wrong way to do it. So I have to set that foundation
>
> early.

In 'setting the foundation early' Claire signaled to her students the need to value other

cultural practices. Given Claire's students were non-traditional, this openness also

appeared to allow her students to share from their cultural backgrounds, adding to the

depth of discussions in her course.

Questioning goals. Claire also used the *Babies* film to help students consider

how children are cared for in other cultures that may be very different and have important

cultural goals:

> Even if you think of the woman in *Babies* how her baby is always connected to
>
> her and even how we teach kids at such a young age to be independent, like
>
> sleeping in their own crib and all that kind of stuff, I think I always kind of go we
>
> don't have it all quite right. I think if we were more collective and we cared more
>
> about the common good instead of the individual in our country, we'd be better
>
> off. And we talk about that. We talk about how does where we are influence

what we think about children and families? I think we have some societal

judgments that occur based on that, and we talk through those in class because we

all have different backgrounds and experience. If you have nine children in your

home and we have the 2.14 or whatever, what's the difference there and how does

that collective caring for kids change in a large family versus a small family?

How does that play out as we work with kids? It's very interesting.

Claire's comments about 'caring for the common good' echoes a concern and a

call for change that is being lead by Dr. Ronald Lally through his "For or Babies

Campaign". Lally (2013) points out:

> The problems that families with babies face are much wider and deeper than any
>
> individual family can handle on its own. However, American's strongly held
>
> beliefs about the sanctity of the family in child rearing matters and concerns about
>
> the loss of individual freedoms are standing in the way of providing babies with
>
> the supports they so desperately need. (p. 11)

Zero to Three, a national non-profit organization that is committed to supporting the

optimal development and health of infants and toddlers, has launched a campaign to

support the *The Child Care Access to Resources for Early-learning Act (Child C.A.R.E.*

Act). This bill is designed to ensure that all low-income families with infants and

toddlers have access to high quality child care by 2021. In addition to pointing out that

61% of mothers of infants and toddlers are in the workforce, the Zero to Three campaign

notes that:

- Research shows that the foundational brain architecture for important functions

  such as sight, hearing, language, and cognition, is formed by age three.

- Infants and toddlers in the lowest socio-economic group lag behind the children in higher socio-economic groups, with gaps appearing by age two.

- In high-quality environments, children have been shown to have enhanced vocabularies, have more sophisticated attention and memory skills, and get along better with peers.

  - National studies have found that the majority of infant-toddler child care is of low to medium quality—very little is of the high quality children need to flourish. (Zero to Three , 2015) Both Lally (2013) and the Zero to Three (2015) organization assert that current policies do not put into practice the science of child development.

Models outside of the United States. In Mary's class she described a discussion sparked by students in comparing and contrasting how infants and toddlers are provided for in other countries:

> But then they started talking about in some countries where child care is provided all the way down, what does that look like? Interesting discussion because it goes so far beyond the class. And yet, I really didn't participate as much as I allowed the conversation to continue. Does that make sense? Because they were talking about some of the give-and-take of if we do allow the government to be providing child care, what do the families lose out on? What isn't being done? What happens to them? My question to them was well what happens to the respect of the family values? Whose values trump? That was so eye-opening.

In this description Mary supported the students' exploration of a topic outside of her course syllabus as an opportunity for her students to expand their horizons of understanding. In this case some students had learned that in some European and Scandinavian countries, parents have access to high quality affordable infant and toddler care that is publically financed and governed by the country. Mary used this discussion to enter another regarding what the implication might be for the families if the state is so involved in providing care and education for very young children. Support of these types of conversations and exploration of these types of topics arose spontaneously and shape the content by creating a larger context for key issues. And indeed these are key issues affecting infants and toddlers and their parents. The IOM (Allen & Kelly, 2015) report acknowledges the growing needs of American families based on societal changes. Murphey et al (2013) stated, "Parental leave, high-quality child care, and access to early intervention services, are among the public- or private-sector supports that are out of reach of many families raising infants and toddlers. For example, the U.S. is an outlier internationally in providing no guaranteed paid leave for new parents" (p.3). Mary allowed the discussions in her class to bring in discussions that set these issues within a much wider context.

Value clarifications. Mary also described having a strong focus helping students think about the development of values. She framed her focus on this by saying:

> What all is involved in development? We don't only have to think about the
> development of the child but also from where they came. Then so we will talk
> about our own beginnings and what values do we have now. What values do you
> have now? What values do you want for your children? So because they are

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female, because they are of this age, and juniors in college are looking to get

engaged and get married, you have that segment. So that's an opportunity to talk

about that and talk about what about the values they hold themselves.

Mary engaged students in discussion about these questions in which she interrupted the

students' thinking. Not only did she purposefully disrupt their thinking, but she also

called out that their responses often reflected a white, middle class perspective. This was

Mary's description of how she intentionally disrupted thinking and challenged students to

recognize their bias:

Right, right. I know some eye openers are usually they'll say well, usually about

halfway through the semester, I sometimes will be what may be interpreted as

rude but I'm just very clear...oh, that was a middle class white way of thinking.

Think about it.

With the rapidly changing demographics in the United States, Mary's press to recognize

how values are framed provides opportunities for students to disrupt their thinking within

the relatively safe confines of a college course. This drive within infant and toddler

courses is key because "America's youngest children—12 million infants and toddlers—

are the leading edge of a demographic transformation in the U.S. They herald a nation

more diverse with respect to race/ethnicity, country of origin, language, and family type

than at any time in our recent history" (Murphey et al., 2013, p.1). This also means that

early childhood educators will be on the leading edge of teaching this wave of

demographic transformation.

Getting personal. Jean's students were sometimes completing practicum in

classrooms that did not reflect what she was teaching. In addition, Jean stated that at

times students reported situations Jean had called out as inappropriate. However, Jean used this platform of poor quality or inappropriate practices to challenge students to help change practices. Jean wanted her students to have this 'take away' message:

> I think it's one of those classes where I hope the students have learned a lot because I really talk a lot about perceptions of infants and toddlers and how they need to change some of their perceptions that may not be developmentally appropriate, and they're needing to do that in a classroom setting as well. So that would be, I guess, the biggest thing is there's someone bucking the system.

Jean used a personal image to encourage students to push for change by having students think about the children in practicum as perhaps one day being their child:

> If you have children or you intend on having children or whatever, I want you to picture where your precious little girl would be going to daycare and how you'd want that child treated. I talk about that a lot. Then I do talk about bad situations where there is little engaging interaction. I think if I can make it personal, then they know okay I don't want my three-month-old just laying there on the floor or bouncing in a little bouncer for five or six hours while I'm away.

Jean used this powerful image to underscore one of the reasons she encouraged her students to 'buck the system.'

Summary of Beyond Standards

This summary addresses findings which inform the second research question: *What is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers?*

Claire, Mary, and Jean invited students to question or explore issues that reflected important ideas related to working with young children and their families that valued diverse perspectives and could potentially lead students to become advocates for change. *Beyond standards* shaped the content by purposefully engaging dialogue that questioned conventions and standards.

The pre-service students in these programs will graduate with a BA/BS in early childhood education. They are on the path to becoming not only future teachers but perhaps leaders in the field. They will become taxpayers and voters. Being informed about policies and practices outside of the United States or exploring issues of diversity and culture may serve as a foundation to turn these conversations and discussions into action outside of the classroom. The examples of how the content was shaped *beyond standards* provided opportunities for students to practice critical thinking and take action.

Claire's use of the movie *Babies* called for a questioning whether how we conceptualize development or care for children is necessarily the best way,. Claire's actions and perspectives reflect the shift within the field away from a universal understanding of development to a view of development that is more culturally situated (Lobman & Ryan, 2007). Other advocates for young children such as Ronald Lally, (2013), points to the fact that many of our policies around 'child caring' are based on inaccurate theories of child development and outdated notions of family life.

Lally, (2013) gives the example that with the ever increasing number of women in the workforce and decreasing number of informal supports, raising a child is a difficult task. He (Lally, 2013) believes that in the United States a long held value of the sanctity of the family in child rearing matters and individual freedoms have interfered with

providing the supports needed given the changing society. Lally, (2013) also sees that

the image of caring for infants and toddlers as little more than 'baby-sitting' keeps the

public from an understanding that caring for infants and toddlers is an important

educational enterprise. In 'calling out' a white perspective , Mary pointed to the

changing demographics in our country and the changing views within the study of child

development (Spodek and Saracho, 2003) in which diversity must be embraced and

valued . Jean describes how she shapes the content by encouraging the students in

problematic placements to consider if it were their own child in this classroom – and then

encourages them to 'buck the system'.

Both Mary and Jean wanted students to think critically and consider actions to take.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of a post-intentional study to explore *how the*

content of courses focused on infants and toddlers might take shape in baccalaureate

early childhood teacher preparation (birth to age 8) and *what might be important to know*

about teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. This chapter opened with

an overview of the six tentative manifestations. The tentative manifestations in my study

were produced as a synthesis of faculty and staff: attending to the Minnesota Board of

Teaching's Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Standards (87100:3000), in dialogue

participants' personal preparation, experiences, beliefs and convictions, with participant's

consideration of the demographics of the pre-service students and in response to current

issues within early childhood education.

The six tentative manifestations were: Swimming Against The Current; Complexity; Un-

like; Mentoring Students; Perspectives On Parents and Beyond Standards.

Throughout the interviews highlighted in this chapter were many implications to

answer the second research question, *what might be important to know in teaching BS/BA*

level students about infants and toddlers? Chapter 5 will identify these implications and

discuss them.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I first provide a brief overview of the study with a summary of the findings within the framework of the primary research questions. Then, I discuss the practical implications of this work with a focus on implications for those teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. The chapter concludes with an acknowledgement of the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

Overview of Research Study

As described in Chapter 3, I used Vagle's (2014) post-intentional phenomenology to investigate how the content might be shaped in courses designed to teach pre-service students in BA/BS early childhood teacher programs about infants and toddlers and to learn what might be important to know about teaching students about infants and toddlers. I interviewed six faculty members who teach infant and toddler courses and seven staff members who supervise pre-service students in infant and toddler practicum experiences. In addition, faculty and staff provided a total of fifteen documents they used to guide students in learning about infants and toddlers. The transcripts of the interviews along with the fifteen documents were analyzed using a whole-part-whole iterative process (Vagle, 2014).

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of *how infant and toddler courses might take shape* in early childhood teacher preparation programs and *what might be important to know* about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers. As

Lather (1993) wrote, "It is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but rather seeing what frames our thinking to see what frames the seeing spaces of constructed visibility and incitements to see which constitute power and knowledge" (p. 675).

Therefore, rather than analyze syllabi or course descriptions, I sought to explore what framed the thinking of faculty and staff members who had experience in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers and which in turn shaped the content of their courses. This was important because in a previous study researchers found that simply gathering course descriptions or identifying the topics in courses did not provide much insight into the depth of a topic's coverage or how to compare it across institutions. Whitebook et al. (2012) wrote:

> Instead, research about higher education for ECE practitioners has typically focused only on the topics included in a course of study. While counts of particular topics included in program descriptions may indicate what is missing from a course of study, they offer insufficient information for understanding the range and depth of student exposure to particular content. Even multiple mentions of a topic do not guarantee depth of coverage. And while examination of course syllabi, including assignments, may paint a more detailed picture of curricula, the usefulness of this approach is limited by the lack of equivalent and comprehensive materials for courses within and across institutions. (p. 12)

Through using a phenomenological approach, I was able to illuminate six tentative manifestations. These tentative manifestations were produced as a result of faculty and staff attending to the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards, the individual

faculty and staff members' experiences and beliefs, and the specific settings with
particular student demographics which produced the phenomenon expressed in six
tentative manifestations.

One primary question and one secondary research question guided this study.
They are as follows:

Primary Phenomenological Research Question

How might infant and toddler content take shape in BA/BS early childhood
teacher preparation programs?

Secondary Research Question

What might be important to know about teaching BA/BS pre-service teachers
about infants and toddlers?

Research Context

How the content might take shape was investigated within the context of courses
taught by six faculty members at five different IHEs as a part of their BA/BS early
childhood teacher preparation programs, and infant or toddler practicum supervised by
seven infant and toddler teachers in two university-sponsored child development centers.
The interviews with faculty and staff provided rich descriptions of how the content was
shaped. A total of 15 documents faculty or staff used provided additional insights.
Chapter 3 provided information about the participants, their institutions, and
demographics of students and descriptions of the written documents.

As described in detail in Chapter 3, I used Vagle's (2014) post-intentional phenomenological investigation, which involves a five component process not meant to constrain the researcher into 'lock-step' methodology but rather to provide a guide to: 1. Identifying the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts; 2. Devising a 'clear yet flexible process' for gathering data that includes being open and creative about the data gathered; 3. Creating a post-reflexion plan that is intended to help the researcher remain open to the phenomenon by engaging in an on-going interrogation of the researcher's pre-understandings of the phenomenon as well as the researcher's developing understanding of the phenomenon; 4. Reading and writing through data in a systematic and responsive way; 5. Crafting a text that captures the tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts.

Connections Between Post-Intentional Phenomenological Findings and Practical Implications

In addition to providing findings which describe how the content in infant and toddler courses is shaped, this study also yielded significant practical implications for faculty and staff who teach pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers. The interviews and documents that contributed to identifying tentative manifestations that shaped the content held implications for pedagogy in teaching infant and toddler courses. Presented next are each of the six tentative manifestations, with implications for practice that were revealed as part of the analysis of the interviews and documents.

Swimming Against the Current

The content was shaped by actively attending to overcoming the stigma that teaching infants and toddlers is merely 'babysitting', not something considered a professional role, or something that requires education and training. This task was made difficult by lack of supporting evidence in the community that teaching infants and toddlers was 'worthy work' – especially as reflected in remuneration as noted in Chapter 2. As a result, finding high quality practicum sites in the community proved challenging because of the high turn-over rates as well as the variable background and training of community-based staff who were asked to mentor students. The stigma of teaching infants and toddlers as being merely 'babysitting' was pervasive. This reflects a larger issue in our society:

> While children are biologically immature, cultures decide how childhood is understood. These understandings are reflected in policy design and pedagogy and have repercussions for the expected roles of children, teachers, families, communities, and government, as well as purposes and outcomes of early childhood education. (Press & Mitchell, 2014, p. 229)

Until policies in the United States are reconciled with the changing needs of our society, in a way that acknowledges those who teach infants and toddlers are truly engaged in noble work, infants and toddlers and parents in the United States will not be able to benefit from the science of child development. This is ironic because I found several studies from researchers in other countries, such as Finland (Happo, Määttä, & Uusiautti, 2012), Sweden (Karila, 2012), Australia (Gravis & Lemon, 2014), and New

Zealand (Harrison & Sumsion, 2014), that had made significant changes in their infant and toddler education and care policies based on research conducted in the United States. Lally (2013) points out that in our country lack of movement is typically thwarted by strong beliefs around the sanctity of the family to rear children and concerns about loss of individual freedoms. In the meantime, despite the abundance of evidence that the infant and toddler years are a critical window in human development, opportunities are lost to build a strong, stable infant and toddler workforce – as many in the field find it's temporary work (Williams, 2012) and others simply cannot afford to stay in work they have a professional love (Press & Mitchell, 2014) for. As pre-service students are educated about infants and toddlers, part of that education should include a focus on exploring the context of current policies and what political action might be appropriate given the realities faced every day by millions of infants, toddlers, and parents. See Table 5.1 below for other ideas of what might be important to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

The following table identifies the practical pedagogical findings which addressed the secondary research question: What might be important to know in teaching pres-service students about infants and toddlers? A table has been created for each of the six tentative manifestations and what is important to know about teaching preservice students about infants and toddlers. .

Table 5.1 Practical Implications: Swimming Against the Current

Table 5-1

Swimming Against The Current	What might be impotant to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
The content was shaped by actively overcoming the stigma that teaching infants and toddlers is merely 'babysitting', not something considered a professional role, or something that requires education and training.	Explore the students understandings (and mis-understandings) of what it means to teach infants and toddlers.
	Infuse the course with a strong base of information from the science of child development to underscore the important development and learning that takes place in the infant-toddler years.
	Frame care-giving routines as teaching times linking interactions between teachers, infants and toddlers as opporutniites to optimize the child's learning.
	Seize opporuntities when bad examples are encountered by students to teach students 'what is wrong with the pictures' and encourage them to implement changes as they can.

Complexity

The context was shaped by the need to bring multiple topics and bodies of

knowledge into the course to frame the importance of focusing on infants and toddlers. In

early childhood teacher education, historically, there has been a broad focus on learning

how to provide experiences that support a young child's emerging cognitive, social,

emotional, behavioral, language, and physical development while including parents and

taking into account the culture of the child (Copple, 2001). Early childhood teachers are

charged to work with 'the whole child' rather than discreet academic content

(knowledge) goals that make up much of the content in elementary teacher education.

More complexity is added to what early childhood teachers must know when one

considers the watershed of research (Allen & Kelly, 2015; National Scientific Council

and the Developing Child, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015; Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000) about the

sophisticated ways in which infants and toddlers depend on relationships with their

caregivers to make sense of the world and experiences in the environment to practice and

learn (Allen & Kelly, 2015). Neuroscience researchers have discovered that experiences

in the earliest years impact an individual's lifelong learning journey because of how a

child's brain develops. The foundational architecture is built through relationships,

experiences, and learning in the earliest years (Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; Patterson &

Vakili, 2014). Other research illuminates the critical interplay between nature (the

child's genetic endowment) and nurture (including their nutrition, surroundings, care, and

stimulation (Shonkoff, 2010). Not only does the quality of experience in the earliest

years impact learning capacities but also physical health throughout one's lifetime (Anda

et al., 2006). This description of pedagogy for very young children from *Lived Spaces of*

Infant and Toddler Education and Care (Press & Mitchell, 2014) affirms the inherent

complexity: "The content of pre-service education for early childhood must cover the

infant-toddler years in ways that illuminate the complexity of this developmental period

and uncover the sophisticated interactive worlds inhabited by infants and toddlers in early

childhood settings" (p. 236). The complexity involved in understanding development

during a child's early years was also taken up in the IOM report (Allen & Kelley, 2015)

and called for using an interdisciplinary approach: "Many argue that curricula should be

integrated or combined across domains and subjects because (1) real-world topics and

phenomena are inherently interdisciplinary, (2) children's worlds typically are not

divided neatly into disciplines, and (3) disciplines can work synergistically" (p. 248).

It is against this backdrop that pre-service students engage in learning about

infants and toddlers in their early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota.

Findings from this study indicated that multiple disciplines of knowledge (anthropology, biology, psychology, sociology) were deemed necessary to access in order to establish the contexts within which infant and toddler teaching takes place. Across the interviews (faculty and staff) were affirmations of the importance of juxtaposition of information from multiple disciplines with real life experiences from the practicum. The practicum provided an important base for students to link what they were learning in class to children – and this made the course 'come alive' as Mary described, "So whenever I'm talking about any domain, I'll mention something and the engagement goes up hugely as soon as one of them can say oh I saw this!" These findings also suggest that how the staff in the child development centers process with students and self-reflect is important to create opportunities to learn in which students felt comfortable in asking questions and staff were comfortable even in sharing possible missteps. The following table (Table 5.2) depicts findings with significant practical implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Table 5.2 Practical Implications: Complexity

Table 5-2

Complexity	What might be important to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
Complexity was described through the ways in which multiple layers of information and a wide array of topics were included in order to cover concepts deemed important to teaching students about infants and toddlers.	Provide an integrated view of human development as it expressed through various disciplines (biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology) and the critical role of early experiences and environments play in human development.
	Provide opporutnities for students to process this information so as to resolve cognitive dissonance students may experience in learning this information.
	Create assignments that provide opportunties to interact with very young children, assess early learning enviroments, plan and implement learning opportunities and work with parents.

.

Un-Like

The content was shaped by a focus on differentiating the infant and toddler curriculum as differing from that of even preschool-aged children who are just a year or two older. The need to develop intimate relationships and provide individualized curriculum with infants and toddlers is different than how one typically thinks of being a teacher. When Recchia and Shin (2010) analyzed the experience of pre-service students who had been engaged in a semester-long practicum in a high quality infant care setting, they found that teaching and working with infants provided unique experiences. For example, students found that the level of intimacy required for teaching infants was different than the level of intimacy involved in working with older children. The students

found the close physical activities (diapering, feeding, holding) resulted in developing close intimate relationships. Recchia and Shin (2010) also identified the tensions that developed for students as they were engaged in close intimate relationships – yet tried to maintain professionalism. Because infants' communications skills were in development, students discovered they needed to interpret the infants' non-verbal behavioral cues and match their response to perceived needs. These experiences led students to view infants "as very powerful social beings, who taught them something quite meaningful about being an early childhood teacher" (Recchia & Shin, 2010, p. 141). Findings in this study complement Recchia's and Shin's study by describing how the staff supervising students helped them understand the nature of teaching infants and toddlers.

Data from this study provide insights into how faculty and staff shifted the students' image of what teaching and learning was like for older children to what was different and very necessary in teaching and learning with infants and toddlers. For example, Mary, a faculty member, framed lesson plans to be learning opportunities. Sally, an infant teacher, framed care-giving activities as teachable moments. Donna, a faculty member, framed a large part of teaching infants and toddlers to be attending to the learning environment of the classroom. All of the faculty and staff infused the need to partner with parents and develop relationships with the parents as key to quality work with infants and toddlers. Table 5.3 depicts findings with significant practical implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Table 5.3 Practical Implications: Un-like

Table 5-3

Un-Like	What might be impotant to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
The content was shaped by a focus on differentiating the infant and toddler curriculum as relationship based and individualized – and even different from that of preschool aged children.	Shift the image of teaching as a curriculum for groups of children implemented by the teacher to teaching as invididualized, emotional and relational and led by the child's needs and agency.
	Prepare students to understand that infant and toddler teachers must be able to emotionally engage with the children but also be able to step back and reflect on one's interactions.
	Make visible the important teachable moments that can be accessed through care-giving interactions and highlight all that children learn through these interactions.

Mentoring Students

The content was shaped by purposeful actions taken by the infant and toddler teachers to ensure the college students felt a sense of belonging and comfort in the practicum. Previous research has provided insights from the pre-service students' point of view while this study uses the lens of faculty and staff.   An example of a study depicting how students views shift is in, Recchia's and Shin's (2010) study which found that the students who were mentored in high quality infant classrooms "experienced a shift from seeing the teacher as an authority and control figure, to seeing the teacher as a learner being led by the children" (Recchia and Shin, 2010, p. 144).

Recchia and Shin (2010) analyzed the experiences of four pre-service students over the course of a semester in an infant practicum and found students used words like "scared," "confused," "nerve-wracking," and even "shocked" as they began their practicum experiences (p. 139). Recchia and Shin (2010) assert that the source of these feelings were, for some students, in part because they had never had experiences with a very young child.

Findings from this study provide insights into how staff shaped the students' experiences in their classrooms to take them from a place of being scared or nervous to being able to learn from their experiences. Findings in this study point to a need for mentor teachers to understand both their role in mentoring students and in modeling practices. Table 5.4 depicts findings with significant practical implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Table 5.4 Practical Implications: Mentoring Students

Table 5-4

Mentoring Students The content was shaped by intentional actions taken by the infant and toddler teachers to ensure the college students felt a sense of belonging and comfort in the practica.	What might be important to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
	Orienting students to the practicum with an intention to making students feel comfortable. Help create a safe base from which students can explore what may be a very unfamilar setting.
	Recognize that individual students may feel intimidated by infants and toddlers who are displayng strong emotions. Avoid placing sudents in situations where a child is likely to have a strong negative reactions
	Create opporutnities for students to experience interactions (or classrooms) wth both infants and toddlers.

Perspectives on Parents

The content was shaped by helping students develop various perspectives on working with parents such as developing relationships, supporting parents, and providing parents with information. Because of the nature of working with infants and toddlers, faculty and staff created a number of learning opportunities for pre-service students related to working with parents. Findings in this study revealed that both faculty and staff purposefully aimed to help students gain perspectives on working with parents as part of the natural flow of working with infants and toddlers. Chief among the findings in this study was that both faculty and staff viewed parents as partners and as the most important influence in a child's life. Given these perspectives held by both faculty and

staff, assignments and experiences were created to help students develop these perspectives and begin to develop skills in working with parents.

It is important to note that this study identified challenges and potential risks described in putting students in situations where they might interact directly with parents. These risks included that students may not know how to relay the information or that when students receive or relay information, it may disrupt the communication between the parent and the professional staff person. The risks involved sharing the relationship with parents with students who did not have a history with these parents, it that students lacked knowledge of how to appropriately relay information to parents, and might inadvertently breach confidentiality.

Findings from this study suggested that while students may not have the opportunity to practice these skills directly given the risks, there can be opportunities to learn through observation and thoughtful processing of the observations made in the practicum. Findings from this study suggest that pre-service students may not recognize the complexities and considerations that are involved in supporting a diverse range of families and need to be exposed to these concepts and perspectives. Strategies used by faculty and staff to shape *perspectives on parents* included interviewing parents to gain insights from a parent perspective, selecting information to share with parents, using various techniques to share this information, creating opportunities for parents and children to interact, and observing how staff built positive relationships with parents through thoughtful and considerate conversations and interactions. In Baum's study (2007) of pre-service teachers' perceptions of parents, she found that the students had misconceptions about and little experience with families during their undergraduate

training. Knowing pre-service students may have misperceptions, providing opportunities

for students to explore their perceptions and concerns could facilitate creating new

conceptions and perceptions. Table 5.5 depicts findings with significant practical

implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Table 5.5 Practical Implications: Perspectives on Parents

Table 5-5

Perspectives on Parents	What might be important to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
The content was shaped to help students develop various perspectives on working with parents such as developing relationships, supporting parents and providing parents with information.	Create opportunities for students to observe the professional staff communicating with and interacting with parents - and process these observations.
	Provide guidelines regarding communicating and interacting with parents in practicum settings so that students are aware of both risks and opportunities and understand their boundaries.
	Create assignments in which students learn from parents (interview parents) create helpful informaton to share with parents (parent education) and explore their expectations about parents.

Beyond Standards:

The content was shaped by embracing discussions of societal issues or critical

review of current practices as part of the students' learning opportunities in the course

that contextualized issues both locally (state standards) and globally. Findings from this

study suggest that preparing pre-service students to be change agents was a goal of

faculty and staff. Information can be a powerful tool in the hands of young professionals

who are eager to put their knowledge to work. The way in which these discussions of

societal issues and global information shaped the content has the potential to link course

content to political action by students. For example, students who become aware and knowledgeable about the importance of parental leave may decide to actively support the *Zero to Three* (2016) public policy initiatives in which *Zero to Three* is pressing for the United States to develop a national family and medical leave policy. The examples of how the content was shaped in this tentative manifestation provided opportunities for students to practice critical thinking and consider actions they might take to 'buck the system' or bring evidence from the science of child development to bear on analysis of current policies.

In some instances, the courses took shape by contextualizing 'what is' within a larger sphere of 'what could be' or how 'others do it better', with an intent to help students engage in examination of larger issues both within the United Sates and globally. This tentative manifestation shaped the content in ways which encourage the students to think critically through questioning current practices and expanding the students' cultural horizons. Table 5.6 depicts findings with significant practical implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Table 5.6 Practical Implications: Beyond Standards

Table 5-6

Beyond Standards The content was shaped by embracing discussions of societal issues or critical review of current practices as part of the students' learning opportunities.	What might be important to know in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers?
	Analyze current policies and pracitices in light of the science of child development findings.
	Highlight current policies and practicies that might be improved upon and explore what improvements might be.
	Include global persepctives on issues such asparental leave, infant mortality, etc.
	Have students explore websites of organizations such as Zero to Three, The Center for the Developing Child, Children's Defense Fund, For Our Babies, etc.

Significance of this Study

The literature review revealed that there were few studies related to teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers. The few studies in the United States that have been conducted focused on the practicum portion of the course and only with infants. Researchers used the lens of student experiences of gaining new insights from the infant practicum or insights from parent interviews of infants (Branscomb & Ethridge, 2010; Recchia & Shin, 2010). This study contributes insights from the faculty and staff who teach pre-service students about infants and toddlers within early childhood teacher preparation programs. It provides an exploration of what frames the thinking of the faculty and staff in teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers, as well as an exploration of what is important to know about teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers.

This study revealed that teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers compelled the faculty to cover a wide range of topics drawn from multiple disciplines. Both faculty and staff took on the task of framing infant and toddler teaching and learning as differing from even teaching and learning for preschoolers. In addition, this study provides insights into how the practicum experience was designed to help students become comfortable and open to learn in a setting that for many students could be intimidating. Although previous studies focused on students in practicum, this study provided a systematic investigation of how the courses, the practicum, and the interaction between the two shaped infant and toddler content in these pre-service courses. Given that the science of child development points to the infant and toddler years as key, and the *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth to Age 8* (Allen & Kelly, 2015) report has identified infant and toddler training as lacking, this research contributes to an understanding of 'what it takes' to teach pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

This research study aimed to answer the primary research question: How might infant and toddler content take shape in BA/BS early childhood teacher preparation programs? The use of post-intentional phenomenology allowed for multiple voices to describe the phenomenon. This study explored what framed the thinking of both faculty and staff that in turn shaped the content. The interviews also revealed significant practical implications for teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Limitations

This study was designed as a post-intentional phenomenological study; and offers deep contextual insights from multiple institutions situated in one state. As such, the

findings are not meant to be generalized. However the findings from this study are situated in a state with standards that are based largely on NAEYC's definition of 'developmentally appropriate practice' as well as adoption of the NAEYC range of birth to age eight as a definition of early childhood. As highlighted in Chapter 2 in the Literature Review, the reach and authority of NAEYC runs broad and deep in the early childhood community, not only in the United States but also internationally. Therefore, programs also using NAEYC teacher preparation standards (2009) or NAEY's DAP focus on children birth to age eight may find insights from these findings relevant in their settings; especially in programs designed for pre-service students to study infants and toddlers as part of a birth to age eight early childhood model.

In addition to the deep ties to NAEYC, the status and remuneration issues identified with working with infants and toddlers as having an impact on teaching students about infants and toddlers are not bounded by this study, but exist across the United States (Allen & Kelly, 2015). The strong influence of NAEYC coupled with how infants and toddlers are educated and cared for in our country, may make the findings more applicable. Insights from these contexts can be taken up, analyzed, considered, and potentially applied to contexts outside of the United States. For example, Nolan and Rouse (2013) are Australian early childhood scholars who conducted an exploratory study of career choices of pre-service teachers. Like programs in the United States, early childhood programs in Australia also offer the birth to age eight early childhood certification, and Australian pre-service students can enroll in dual programs in which they can earn both an early childhood and elementary (termed primary in Australia) school license. Like the United States, Australia has a national focus on raising the

qualifications of its early childhood workforce. In reviewing the literature from

Australian researchers (Grarvis, et al., 2013; Garvis & Pendergast, 2015; Nolan & Rouse,

2013; Press & Mitchell, 2014; Rouse et al., 2012; Thorpe, et al., 2011), there was

frequently cited work of American researchers (Norris, 2010; Recchia and Shin, 2010) in

early childhood and particularly when focusing on infants and toddlers in pre-service

education. This is perhaps due to the dearth of research not only nationally but

internationally. Common issues encountered by both American and Australian

researchers, studying a pre-service focus on infants and toddlers, were low status, low

remuneration, finding quality placements which impacted negatively on students seeing

themselves in a future career with infants and toddlers (Allen & Kelly, 2015; Nolan &

Rouse, 2013; Whitebook, et, al. 2014). To some degree, programs that are based on

DAP, may find that DAP ties many programs together across contents and results in

providing opportunities to learn from one another.

Future Research

To build on this research, I plan to design a qualitative study to focus on the

experience of pre-service students in a toddler practica. My literature review did not

reveal even one study about students' experiences in toddler practica.   As findings in this

study indicated, staff described significant differences between working with infants and

toddlers. A study designed to explore students' experiences working with toddlers would

provide valuable insights into what students' experience and take away from practica

experiences with toddlers.

In addition, I would like to conduct a study using a focus group of faculty members to identify and describe specific assignments that have been deemed particularly successful in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers and/or parents. One of the joys for me in conducting this study was learning about the varied assignments created by faculty and staff to help students learn about infants, toddlers, and parents. In particular, I found the approach to helping students learn to relate to parents was challenging yet participants in this study used a variety of creative approaches and assignments. A study designed to provide ideas and insights from faculty and staff to other faculty and staff may generate useful ideas for teaching pre-service teachers about working with infants and toddlers.

Finally, this study included two models of programs – both leading to a Teacher of Early Childhood Education license. Three of the programs had most or all of infant and toddler content contained in one course that included a practicum. The other two programs distributed infant and toddler content across several courses that each focused on the full span of birth to age eight. A study to explore the perceptions of students completing a Teacher of Early Childhood Education (birth to age 8) license about working with infants and toddlers could provide feedback to programs about which model may be more effective in teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers .

Conclusions

` Findings from this study strongly suggested that teaching pre-service teachers about infants and toddlers took shape through an approach in which linking to a practica experience was essential to teaching pre-service students about infants and toddlers.

Faculty viewed the practica experiences of the pre-service students as imperative to pre-service students' learning about infants and toddlers as reflected in the assignments students were given and the ways in which the students' practica experiences were used in the course discussions. This was true whether or not the practicum was in a high quality setting (the two university sponsored centers) or in the community where the quality was variable and at times yielded concerning examples and observations of practice.

Faculty and staff described the content taking shape not only in ensuring students understood all areas of infant and toddler development – but situating students' understanding in the context how this information was translated into actions by teachers of infants and toddlers that nurtured and supported the children's development. From a pedagogalogical standpoint, the content took shape as the assignments and course discussion were designed to help pre-service students embrace a concept of teaching of infants and toddlers as relational and highly individualized. It was shaped by differentiating this teaching as different from the traditional teaching paradigm in which teachers direct the learning of the children. In this study, there was an intentional focus on pre-service students needing to learn that children's needs and interests drove the curriculum and created teachable moments. Faculty used practicum experiences and reflections of the students to make the case for an approach to teaching that differs significantly from teaching older children.

In addition, the content took shape in that faculty directed students to learn about and better understand the role parents in the lives of their children. This learning took shape primarily in the environment of child care setting where teachers also play an

influential role in the lives of infants and toddlers- but must privilege the parent's role. This dual lens (building a positive relationship with each child and with each parent) was found to be challenging due to needing to honor the relationships between the infant or toddler teachers and parent while trying to allow students to practice developing relationships and build skills working with parents.

.   In addition, the content took shape as some early childhood teacher educators examined the policies and practices with their pre-service students that have parents of very young children returning to work due to financial concerns and without readily available ,high quality, affordable care and education options for families. The infant and toddler practicum being marginalized in terms of time spent in practica (in comparison to other practica) to fulfill requirements- as well as the policies and practices that have led to many programs requiring only practicum with infants or toddlers but not both.

Given the compelling findings from the science of children development, inclusion of this important information in pre-service courses along with juxtaposition and comparison to current policies in the United States, would facilitate critical thinking on the part of pre-service students. These students are poised to become the next generation of the early childhood workforce and some will become leaders in the field. This study found that *how the content was shaped* was through six tentative manifestation of the phenomenon: Swimming against the current, Complexity, Un-like, Mentoring Students, Perspectives and Parents and Beyond Standards.

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<div align="center">**Appendicies**</div>

<div align="center">**Appendix A: Approved Programs**</div>

Retrieved January 17, 2016 programs with only post-baccalaureate were eliminated (Walden, U of MN Twin Cities) Crown not listed by MDE

<div style="background-color:#7a1f1f; color:white; padding:4px">Approved Licensure Programs (baccalaureate level only)</div>

Early Childhood Education Licensure Programs

Grade Level range: birth – grade 3
Minnesota Administrative Rule
8710.3000 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8710.3000)
Licensure Programs

Note:
o   Updated June 2015
o   Please contact the college for entrance requirements.
Bethel University

St. Paul, Minnesota 55112
651-638-6339
Visit www.bethel.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate
Concordia University – St. Paul

St. Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-641-8200
visit www.csp.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate
Martin Luther College

New Ulm, Minnesota 56073
507-354-8221
visit www.mlc-wels.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate
Metropolitan State University

St. Paul, Minnesota 55108
651-999-5920
visit www.metrostate.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate
Minnesota State University – Moorhead

Moorhead, Minnesota 56563
218-236-2096
visit www.mnstate.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate
Southwest Minnesota State University

Marshall, Minnesota 56258
507-537-7115
visit www.smsu.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate
St. Cloud State University

St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301
320-308-3023
visit www.stcloudstate.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate

University of Minnesota – Crookston

Crookston, Minnesota 56716
218-281-6510
visit www.UMCrookston.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureat

University of Northwestern – St. Paul

Roseville, Minnesota 55113
651-631-5180
visit http://www.unwsp.edu/
Coursework level: baccalaureate

Winona State University

Winona, Minnesota 55987
507-457-5350
visit www.winona.edu
Coursework level: baccalaureate

Appendix B: E-mail Invitation Script

"Hello _____ I am writing (or calling) to invite you to participate in a qualitative research study that will describe the infant and toddler content taught in BA Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs in Minnesota. I am contacting you because you are a faculty member in a BA early childhhood teacher preparation program and teach courses that may cover infant and toddler content." (in this conversation either via e-mail or by phone, I will confirm if indeed the faculty member teaches infant toddler content.)

  The purpose of my doctoral study is to describe the infant toddler content that BA level students are exposed to in the early childhoood teacher licsensing programs in Minnesota. The focus of the study is to provide rich descriptions infant toddler content in BA level early childhood teacher preparation programs by describing the knowledge and research students are exposed to, the types of experiences (field experiences, practicum, student teaching) that may be part of teaching infant toddler content . This would include descriptions of assignments that students given to help them learn infant and toddler content. The study also seeks to describe what drives and/or constrains the teaching of infant toddler content. Data collected will not be linked to particular institutions or individuals."

"If you agree to participate in the study, I will arrange a time to interview you at your convenience. It is anticipated the interview will take approximately 1-2 hours. This interview will be audio taped and transcribed. I may contact you again to clarify information in the intervew."

"As a study participant I will also ask you to share any course materials that are associated with teaching infant toddler content such as assignment descriptions, course syllabi, resources or any other materials you use in teaching infant toddler content. Again, no identifiers will appear in the final report linking a particular individual interview or institution to materials shared. The goal of the study is to be able to describe the infant toddler content is being taught in the Early Childhood Teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. Thank you."

Consent to Participate in Research

Primary Research Question:

How might infant toddler content take shape in BA early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota?

Secondary Research Question:

What is it like to teach infant and toddler content to BA students?

a. What are key concepts and beliefs you want the teacher candidates to gain in regards to infant-toddler content?
b. What types of experiences are used?
c. What bodies of knowledge are accessed?

Participants: Faculty members who teach infant toddler content as part of BA early childhood teacher licensing programs in Minnesota

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Jolene Pearson and I am a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research study which is concerned with describing the infant and toddler content that is taught in BA early childhood teacher preparations programs in Minnesota.

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct and interview with you at a time and location at your convenience on your campus. You will also be asked to share the descriptions of courses you teach that included infant toddler content (example: from course catalogs), course syllabi and/or descriptions assignments that are given to students to help them learn infant and toddler content.

It is anticipated the interview will last approximately 1-2 hours. With your permission, I will audio tape the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you agree to participate but feel uncomfortable about the recording I can turn it off at your request. Or is you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

Benefits

There are no known benefits for taking part in this study. However, it is hoped that this

research will provide a rich description of the infant toddler content taught in BA early childhood teacher preparation programs in Minnesota.

Risks/Discomforts

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, a number precautions are being implemented to minimize this risk.

Confidentiality

The transcribed transcripts will be stored on a password protected university computer. No identifying information will be contained in the transcribed interview. Any documents shared will not be linked to you or your institution and will be stored in a locked file cabinet. If results of the study are published or presented, individual names or other personally identifiable information will not be used.
.
To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will give your interview a code number, and only keep the data on a secured computer or if printed out in hard copy, in a locked file cabinet at the university. I will be the only one with access to the data.

Once each interview has been transcribed and put into a word document, the mp3 files will be deleted. The word documents will be store on a password protected university computer.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Rights

If you would like to ask questions about the study or find out more about it, you may contact me, Jolene Pearson, or my faculty advisor, Dr. Mark Vagle, at the University of Minnesota, or e-mail us at the addresses provided below.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researchers, you may contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; telephone 1-612-625-1650 or via e-mail at irb@umn.edu

Thanks you very much for considering participating my study.

Jolene Pearson – Doctoral Candidate University of Minnesota pear0115@umn.edu
(612) 735-4902

Dr. Mark D. Vagle, adviser vagl0006@umn.edu (612) 384-2262

Consent to Take Part in Research

I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in this research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature _____ Date_____

Appendix D: Faculty Resources

Textbooks used by faculty

Dodge, D.T., Rudick, S., & Berke, K. (2006). *The creative curriculum for infants, toddlers, and twos* (2nd Ed.).Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Gestwicki, C. (2013). Developmentally appropriate practice: Curriculum anddevelopment in early education. Cengage Learning.

Gonzalez-Mena, J. & Eyer, D. (2009). *Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers* (8th Ed.). NewYork: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc.

Greenman, J., Stonehouse, A., & Schweikert, G. (2008). *Prime Times: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs*. (2nd ed.) St. Paul. MN: Redleaf Press.

Isbell, R., & Raines, S. (2012). *Creativity and the arts with young children*. Cengage Learning.

Isbell, R., & Raines, S. (2007). *Creativity and the arts with young children* (3rd ed.)

Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Understanding, Preventing and Responding Effectively. (2nd Edition) by Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky. ISBN 0-205-49333-5

Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. Guilford Publications

Sousa, D. A. (Ed.). (2010). *Mind, brain, & education: Neuroscience implications for the classroom*. Solution Tree Press.

Articles

Center on the Developing Child Briefs -Working papers series.
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resourcecategory/working-papers/

Three faculty members noted they use articles from this organization. Specific articles were not identified. There are thirteen papers that can be accessed on topics such as:

- Working Paper #1 Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships
- Working Paper # 3 Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships or
- Working Paper #13 Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience

These were specific articles listed in syllabi:

Zull, J. E. (2002). *The art of changing the brain: Enriching teaching by exploring the biology of learning*. Stylus Publishing, LLC..

Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental psychology*, *28*(5), 759.

Documents

Four faculty members had these documents listed on their syllabi:

Minnesota Indicators of Progress (0-3 year old).

https://www.eagertolearn.org/Content/Documents/1568_1499_ECIPS%20birth%20-%203.pdf

2010 Infant-Toddler Companion Guide to the MN Core Competencies

Found online at http://mncpd.org/Mnccc_page/MN_Core_Comp_Infant_Toddler_Companion.pdf

Alignment of Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development & Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten with the Minnesota Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to Three.

Found online at http://www.teachingstrategies.com/content/pageDocs/MN-GOLD-Alignment-IT2-2010.pdf

Websites:

CASTL – The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning
http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl

Head Start Modules
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/pd/itech

Harvard Center on the Developing Child
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/

National Association for the Education of Young Children
https://www.naeyc.org/

Ted Talks
https://www.ted.com/talks

The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)
https://www.pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/institutes.html

md.com

Other documents:

What Children Can and Cannot Do – appeared to be an unpublished handout perhaps created by the staff. Themes were Children Cannot Share; Children cannot take turns; Children cannot colleted information, children cannot empathize ect... (no source cited in the document or references given).

Use Positive Words – reproduced from Creating Teaching Tools for Young Children (no further citation information included) Intent to help students use words to explain to children what to do rather than what not to do.

Ten Principals of Infant and Toddler Care-giving adapted from:

Gonzalez-Mena, J., & Eyer, D. W. (1989). *Infants, toddlers, and caregivers*. Mayfield Pub. Co..

Kohn, A. (2001). Five reasons to stop saying" good job". *Young Children*, *56*(5), 24-30.