RACE, CLASS, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A COMPARISON OF TWO DIFFERENCE CHICAGO PRESCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Race, Class, and Early Childhood Education: A Comparison of Two Different Chicago Preschools

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Dissertation Director:
Alan Sadovnik

While it is becoming increasingly recognized that early childhood education is a valuable part of the educational process, the methods used to teach young children are often ignored by government agencies and researchers touting the value of pre-kindergarten programs. Although reforms may dictate that early childhood programs be more available to all children, the programs created to address low-income communities are often different than those in more affluent communities. Just as pedagogy differs between affluent and low-income elementary and secondary schools, the pedagogy in low-income and affluent preschools is dissimilar. However, the work of some educational scholars suggests that low-income children—especially low-income minority children—require a more structured and directed pedagogy than their more affluent white peers.

This is a duel case study of two schools using differing pedagogical approaches for low-income minority children, one progressive (Malaguzzi) and one traditional (Woodlawn). Using a Bernsteinian theoretical framework, this study compares of two Head Start centers in high-minority Chicago neighborhoods to examine the effects of different pedagogic practices on the development of cognitive and non-cognitive skills of young children. The study was conducted over a five month period in included observation of two classrooms (four classrooms) at each site, teacher and parent interviews, photo documentation, and pre and post testing of children.

Pre and post testing showed that students at Malaguzzi had twice the level of academic growth as students at Woodlawn. Observational data showed more consistent academic growth at Malaguzzi than Woodlawn across more developmental areas. Children at both sites showed growth in pre-literacy and social/emotional skills, but the children at Malaguzzi also showed growth in problem solving and imagination—skills that aid in abstract thought. Additionally, children at Malaguzzi were better behaved, having better internalized classrooms rules and expectations.

While further study is needed on a broader scale, results from this study suggest that progressive early education programs have the potential to better prepare children for elementary school. Improved kindergarten preparation among low-income minority children is an important step in closing the educational achievement gap. Child-directed progressive programs may better close the gap than teacher-directed traditional programs.
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I have a long history with the educational system. As a child of two teachers, I have long been aware of how teachers perceive curriculum and pedagogy. I know the work required of a good and dedicated teacher. Both of my parents are gifted educators who first gave me an inside look at schooling.

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CHAPTER ONE: 
INTRODUCTION

While it is becoming increasingly recognized that early childhood education is a valuable part of the educational process, the methods used to teach young children are often dismissed or ignored by government agencies and researchers touting the value of pre-kindergarten programs. Although reforms may dictate that early childhood programs be more available to all children, the programs created to address low-income communities are often different than those in more affluent communities. Just as pedagogy differs between affluent and low-income elementary and secondary schools, the pedagogy in low-income and affluent preschools is dissimilar.

Many private preschool administrators look to progressive models when creating their pedagogy. Progressive programs encourage children to direct their own learning. Children are allowed to explore classroom materials with a great deal of freedom and are typically permitted to self-manage their time during the day (Dewey, 2001; Hinitz, 2002; Edwards et al, 1996; Lubeck, 1985; Meier, 2002). Project-based models, such as Reggio Emilia and Project Approach, have become increasingly popular among early childhood programs for the affluent.

Meanwhile, programs for low-income children, such as Head Start and state pre-kindergarten are often more regimented. While these programs allow for some elements
of progressivism, the days of the children are much more structured. Programs for low-income children tend to be more explicit in their teaching. Children have some autonomy at some points during the day. However, they rarely have the freedom of their peers in progressive programs. The day is more structured and the teacher less of a guide and more of a director (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966; Dewey, 2001; Macron, 2000; Schweinhart, 2003). This is not to say that all schools for affluent children are highly progressive and all schools for low-income children are structured and teacher-directed, but this is a norm.

This raises the question: why, given that the norm is progressivism for the affluent and teacher-directed pedagogy for the working-class and poor, why are each of these the pedagogy of choice for these groups of children? Why is it that affluent and poor children are educated differently?

There is a bigger difference in pedagogy usage when considering race as well as class. The most progressive, most innovative, and most expensive programs are those attended by affluent whites. The most directed and most structured programs are those attended by low-income minority populations, such as blacks and Hispanics. These are also the programs with the highest poverty rates. Given the achievement gap between these groups that is blatantly apparent throughout elementary and secondary education, would it not be appropriate to educate poor black children in the same way that affluent whites are educated? Would teaching preschool children in the same manner as affluent children not bring the two groups closer together at the start of kindergarten, thus beginning to close the achievement gap at the ground floor?
Lisa Delpit says no. She finds progressive practice for poor black children to be inappropriate. According to her argument, affluent whites will be exposed to basic skills by parents regardless of what is taught in school. Poor and working-class blacks are more reliant on schools. If teachers do not teach them skills explicitly, they may not learn them (Delpit, 2002). Basil Bernstein (1975) suggests that progressive education (what he calls invisible pedagogy) presupposes a long academic life—one that poor children may not have. He found that invisible pedagogy legitimized the culture of the home more than visible (directed) pedagogy did. He also noted that the strong pacing indicative of visible pedagogy reproduces class inequalities within schools (Sadovnik, 1991). Several reformers and researchers have found progressive pedagogy to be successful with low-income children. However, Delpit’s assessment of progressivism is troubling.

This study examines the effects of differing pedagogies on low-income minority children. It is the purpose of this study to explore divergence in curriculum implementation and child growth in schools with dissimilar teaching methods, but similar populations. The first school in the study was highly progressive, using a philosophy of early childhood education more common in schools serving more affluent populations. The second school was teacher-directed with few progressive elements. The philosophy of this school was more closely aligned with other schools serving low-income populations. Both schools serve low-income, high-risk minority populations. As is referenced by the title, this study concerns how these pedagogical models are implemented with children that are both of a low socioeconomic class and who are part of a racial group that has been traditionally at-risk for long-term academic failure. By
controlling for socio-economic and minority status, and therefore the structural barriers associated with both of these, this study shows the control that teachers and classroom environments have over student outcomes, even when students come from socially and economically depressed neighborhoods. While this study uses very specific and very small populations of children and teachers, results from the study contribute to the existing research in early childhood education by challenging accepted norms of appropriate pedagogy for low-income children and putting forth hypotheses for further research in the field.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Early Childhood Education

The modern notion of early childhood as both a distinct stage of life and a specific period of childhood began to appear in the mid-seventeenth century. Czech teacher Johan Amos Comenius outlined a plan for universal education in *Great Didactic*, but expressed concern regarding the education of children under the age of six (Beatty, 1995). English philosopher John Locke was opposed to the schooling of young children outside of the home, but suggested teaching children to read as soon as they could talk (Beatty, 1995). In the eighteenth century, Rousseau encouraged adults to treat children as children rather than as potential adults. However, Rousseau believed that children would best be educated by tutors, away from their parents, as outlined in his book, *Emile* (Beatty, 1995).

In the early nineteenth century, Swiss education reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi stressed the importance of nature in the education of young children. Moreover, he proposed that schools for young children ought to be home-like, as the mother (especially the peasant mother) was the best possible teacher. Pestalozzi’s
schools also used “object-teaching,” that is, early manipulatives. These schools were designed for the poor, but became popular with the wealthy (Beatty, 1995).

Pestalozzi’s contemporary, British social reformer Robert Owen, changed the age minimum for workers at his factories from six to ten (Spodek, 1988). Owen also founded the first infant schools in London. Owen’s schools followed a factory model, but differed pedagogically from schools for older children. Infant schools stressed teaching young children using tangible objects rather than abstract concepts (Beatty, 1995).

Prior to the nineteenth century, young children in the United States were largely educated at home. Only the children of the indigent were encouraged by reformers to be educated in a non-familial setting (Beatty, 1995). Americans “discovered” childhood and “infants” (the term then used for children from birth to six years) later than Europeans. Changes in treatment and pedagogy began in the early nineteenth century. Prior to this, children were educated early. Historical accounts reference parents beginning reading instruction as with children as young as ten months of age (Beatty, 1995). However, children did not begin formal schooling until age seven.

In 1806, the first Pestalozzian school opened in Philadelphia. Owen also encouraged the growth of schools in the United States in the early 1820s, visiting in 1825 to promote his infant school (Beatty, 1995). The infant school model became most popular in Massachusetts. In addition to being one of the first early childhood programs in the United States, infant schools were also an early instrument of social reform (Winterer, 1992). Mothers and older children were free to work in factories without worrying about neglecting younger children at home.
The first infant school opened in Massachusetts in 1826, as puritanical views of childhood were changing (Kaestke and Vinovskis, 1978). Previously, adults (particularly New England Puritans) saw children as inherently evil. Children were disciplined harshly, as that was considered the best method of teaching accepted morality. However, in the early nineteenth century, the view of childhood shifted. Children were viewed as inherently innocent. This, in addition to the hope of social reform through early childhood, led to the popularity of infant schools throughout Massachusetts (Kaestke and Vinovskis, 1978).

Reform remained a primary function of infant schools in England, as Owen had intended. In the United States, reform was secondary to education. Children admitted to infant schools (eighteen months old to school age) were expected to focus on academics (Kaestke and Vinovskis, 1978). Children were taught to read early. Play was an “interval of healthful relaxation,” but not the focus of the day (Winterer, 1992).

The infant schools folded fairly shortly after their founding. While the English infant schools combined Owen’s model with Pestalozzi’s method, American schools focused nearly entirely on intellectual development (Winterer, 1992). In 1833, Armariah Brighman released his book entitled *Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health*. In it, he cautioned that educating children younger than six or seven as “too early cultivating the mind and exciting the feelings of young children” at it could lead to permanent injury or even insanity (Winterer, 1992; Kaestke and Vinovskis, 1978). Samuel Woodword agreed with these concerns, stating that an intensive program of early childhood education could lead to “epilepsy, insanity, or
imbecility” (Kaestke and Vinvsksis, 1978). By 1840, parents were strongly encouraged to withhold reading instruction until age six (Beatty, 1995).

In light of these concerns, the affluent reformers who had been financing infant schools withdrew their support. However, in 1840, 40% of three-year-olds in Massachusetts were still attending infant schools. Poor and working-class mothers still needed the childcare and were less concerned with long-term damage than with short-term necessity. However, schools were closed by the early 1850s (Winterer, 1992; Kaestke and Vinvsksis, 1978).

While infant schools were flagging in the United States, the first kindergartens were being created in Germany. In 1839, Friedrich Froebel, a German naturalist, created the first kindergarten in a small rural village. Froebel’s pedagogical beliefs drew on both Pestalozzi and German philosopher Johann Fichte. Pestalozzi focused on assigning tasks to mothers. He conceived of maternal education in the home. Fichte, however, was highly critical of the family. He suggested the removal of children from the home for the purposes of education, and viewed the home as a corrupting influence. Froebel stressed both the public and private lives of the child. In his view, the school should supplement rather than supplant the family (Allen, 1988).

The first rural kindergartens were heavily focused on nature. The beauty of the environment was considered very important to the education of children (Hill, 1909). This changed as kindergartens moved to cities. But the programs now reached the children in the most need. Malnourished and dirty children were taken in. Kindergarten reformers believed that whatever affected a child’s welfare affected his growth and education.
The first American kindergarten was founded by Margarethe Schurz in Watertown, Wisconsin. Schurz was a German immigrant and founded her school as a German-speaking kindergarten. The school attracted the attention of Elizabeth Peabody (sister-in-law of Horace Mann), who visited the school and then traveled to Germany to see Froebel’s work in 1867 (Allen, 1988). Upon her return to Boston, she founded the first English-speaking kindergarten (Cavallo, 1976).

The first American kindergartens catered to the affluent. Practitioners were “cultured” women (Lazerson, 1971). However, like the infant schools, kindergartens were soon seen as a possible instrument for social reform. In the 1880s and 1890s, there was a growing concern for the slums in American cities. It was believed that healthy family life could not occur in the slums.

In addition, kindergartens were viewed as a potential assimilation tool. It was the first opportunity to “catch the little Russian, the little Italian, the little German, Pole, Syrian, and the rest and begin to make good American citizens of them” (Lazerson, 1971). As the programs became more popular across the country, settlement houses such as Hull House and University Center opened kindergartens (Cavallo, 1976).

The popularity of kindergartens, after the failure of the infant schools, was based primarily on Frobel’s play-centered pedagogy.¹ Play was considered the highest and purest form of activity for young children. Kindergartens used what Frobel called “gifts” and “occupations.” Gifts included soft cloth balls, blocks, cubes, rings, triangles, spheres, and cylinders. These manipulatives were intended to introduce children to geometrical forms. Occupations included paper, scissors, clay, pencils, and paint for building creativity and manual dexterity (Lazerson, 1971).

¹ Kindergartens also served older children. Enrolled children were 3.5 years to school age.
Another important component of the kindergarten was the view of the child. Froebel saw the child as divine; the child was of “nature, God, and man” (Mills, 1904). It was the intention of the kindergarten to make the divine life conscious in the individual. Moral perfection was possible if the children were taught to look toward the “spirit within themselves” (Cavallo, 1976). Focus on the individual was intensive.

Kindergartens, unlike earlier American models of early childhood instruction, strove to supplement rather than supplant the family. Additionally, the kindergarten was clearly an environment for children that was not a school. The physical environment in American kindergartens featured separate classrooms for noisy and quiet play, movable furniture, and a grassy outdoor area (Beatty, 1995). In the city, the kindergarten was the “next best thing” to sending children to the country to be educated.

In the early twentieth century, kindergartens became more widespread. First grade teachers were pleased with kindergarten graduates who were entering school with an understanding of school culture (Lazerson, 1971). However, reformers had difficulty expanding due to cost. Unlike infant school instructors, kindergarten teachers required training. Kindergartens themselves required specific supplies. In many cities, kindergarten programs began to move into unused rooms in public Woodlawnbuildings to save costs (Hill, 1909).

Progressives, including John Dewey, were concerned about too strong a focus on the individual in the kindergarten. Dewey stressed the importance of community and creating a mini-democracy within the kindergarten (Allen, 1988; Cavallo, 1978). As the progressive movement took hold in the early twentieth century, more “modern”
progressive ideals began to replace Froebel’s individualistic curriculum (Mills, 1904; Cavallo, 1978).

Unlike Froebelian kindergartens, which were specific in their theories and pedagogy, newer nursery schools were less regimented and allowed for more flexibility. Progressives, like Caroline Pratt, who found Froebel’s methods to be too rigid, were able to experiment with newer instructional models (Beatty, 1995). Other nursery school founders, such as Maragaret Naumberg, could follow Froebel’s underlying principles while adding their own spin.

Italian early childhood education reformer Maria Montessori found Froebel to be too focused on the universe and not enough on the child. She believed that rather than teachers leading the children, the teachers should simply remove obstacles and let the children lead (Sevens, 1912). First exercises should be practical and usually focused on cleanliness and order. Montessori schools stressed teacher demonstration of proper use of learning apparatuses, followed by “auto-education” of children, a method that revisionist Froebelians and progressives found to be “apparatus ridden” (Brehony, 1994; Burnett, 1962).

While kindergartens and infant schools were both intended to address the needs of all children, their philosophies became the approved pedagogical method for the upper classes. The City and Country School, founded by Caroline Pratt in 1914 in Greenwich Village, followed the teachings of Dewey (Semel, 1999). Pratt wished to develop a school for working-class children in Greenwich Village. The school started with a focus on early childhood and then grew to include classes for elementary-aged children. The
curriculum for younger children focused on block play, while older children were given practical jobs for the good of the school (Hauser, 2002).

Pratt created a school in which the urban environment played just as significant a role as the rural environment in early Froebelian schools. Block play in younger classrooms focused largely on the recreation of the city. Children ventured into the neighborhood to explore and to talk to various residents before returning to recreate the city within the classroom (Pratt, 1948). Jobs given to children served as further recreation of the city. Among younger children, who had classroom community jobs, this created a small classroom society. For older children, who had such operations as a school store and a printing press, this created a larger school society. The oldest children were given responsibly over the younger ones (Pratt, 1948). Children learned not only how the city worked, but also how to interact with others, including outsiders, and how to find their own solutions to problems. Academic skills, such as reading and math, were learned largely through other activities (Pratt, 1948).

However, this was not entirely well-received by the working-class community. Parents worried that children would not be ready for public school after attending a program so heavily child-directed (Semel, 1999). However, the artists and writers in the neighborhood embraced the school’s unconventional methods and chose to send their children to Pratt’s school. As a result, after a few years, Pratt was educating the “Village Intelligentsia” rather than the working-class children that she had hoped to reach (Semel, 1999).

The Walden School (formally the Children’s School), founded by Margaret Naumberg, saw a similar change. The school drew heavily from Froebelian philosophies
of the unconscious and stressed a balance of physical, emotional, and intellectual powers in children (Hinitz, 2002). The interests of the children drove the curriculum entirely; the only classroom schedule was for health needs.

Like the City and Country School, the Walden School was not able to maintain a working-class population, but for different reasons. The school was unable to raise money for operating costs without charging tuition. While the school offered some scholarships, it was necessary for most students to pay tuition for the school to remain open (Hintiz, 2002).

The Walden School and the City and Country School are just two examples of the transitioning of Deweyian and Froebelian ideals in early childhood education from the poor and working-class to more the affluent. The affluent were both better able to support the school financially (negating the necessity for philanthropic donations) and more accepting of unconventional play-based curriculum. These acceptance of pedagogical beliefs helped to enforce the notion that progressive education was for the affluent and not the working class and poor. While Froebel and Dewey (as well as many other educational theorists and reformers) developed pedagogical models for all children, these models became the pedagogy of the upper-middle classes, or what Semel termed “democratic education for the elite” (Semel, 1992; Semel and Sadovnik, 1999).

However, school reformers as early as the 1920s were stressing the importance of a universal program—or at least a program that would serve poor children at no cost. This became a reality, at least temporarily, during the Great Depression (Beatty, 1995). The New Deal called for the creation of WPA Nursery Schools, which provided employment to out-of-work teachers while also providing childcare for families seeking
employment (Hinitz, 1983). These were followed by Landham Child Care Centers during the Second World War, founded to provide childcare for woman entering the workforce (Hinitz, 1983).

These were both temporary solutions from their inception. Little care was given to the creation of program goals or teacher training. Many teachers were unaccustomed to young children and were often overly harsh or demonstrated unreasonable expectations (Beatty, 1995). In 1965, a more long-term program was developed in the form of Project Head Start.

**Project Head Start**

Poverty was “discovered” once again in the 1960s. Children were identified as the targets of reform. Intelligence was believed to be the result of environmental factors; as a result, it was thought that children with low intelligence were being raised poorly. A 1963 report labeled one half of all drafted men unfit to serve. This, along with the recent launch of Sputnik, lead to great concern about the education of young children (Kagan, 2002).

As part of President Johnson’s “War on Poverty,” antipoverty czar Sargent Shriver conceived of a program to reach children while they were still young (Kagan, 2002). Using funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity, Head Start was opened as an eight-week program beginning in June of 1965. The program was intended to provide intensive compensatory education to poor children the summer before they entered kindergarten at age five. At this time, sixteen states had statewide kindergarten (Greensberg, 2004). Head Start was expected to “strike at the basic cause of poverty”: to
alleviate the deficiencies of poverty that accounted for the existence of an underprivileged class (Ross, 1979).

The original core concepts of Head Start were to enlist all willing citizens and existing organizations in an effort to fight against poverty. This included working with the poor to plan and implement efforts to help, thereby launching a war on child poverty (Greensberg, 2004). In addition to providing compensatory education for children, the program was to work with families and communities. Parent involvement in children’s education was viewed as a crucial factor in program success; therefore, policymakers wanted to involve as many parents as possible. By the mid 1970s, 17% of Head Start staff had children in the program, while 15% of staff were the parents of Head Start graduates (Kagan, 2002).

While cognitive development was never the primary goal of Head Start, Shriver was convinced that the program would raise IQ (Kagan, 2002). In fact, the program did lead to immediate IQ gains.³ However, the original goals were more comprehensive. They were:

1) Improving the child’s physical health and physical abilities.
2) Helping the emotional and social development of the child by encouraging self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity and self-discipline.
3) Improving the child’s mental processes and skills, with particular attention to conceptual and verbal skills.
4) Establishing patterns and expectations of success for the child that would create a climate of confidence for future learning efforts.
Despite these overarching goals, there has never been an official Head Start curriculum model to achieve them (Miller, 1979). Teachers and centers have only had a general philosophy of incorporating Head Start goals. As a result, there has always been a variance in pedagogical styles in Head Start. From the beginning, there have been centers described as “school-like” that focus on Woodlawn behaviors (e.g. sitting still) and skills (letters and numbers). There have also been centers described as “child centered” that focus on learning through play (Stone, 1979; Miller, 1979).

Head Start has expanded greatly since its creation in 1965. The program now serves 900,000 children nationwide (Zigler et al., 2006). Since 1965, it has served over 22 million children (Zigler et al, 2006). However, the program is only serving half of all American children below the poverty line, as there are not enough centers for all eligible children (Merrow, 2004). Given the size of the program, many researchers have studied Head Start in the hope of discovering if this enormous federal program is having any impact on the nation’s poor.
Many studies have found that there is an immediate IQ increase associated with Head Start attendance (AERA, 1994; Barnett, 2004; Spocek and Saracho, 2003; Zigler, 2004). However, there is a large perception of Head Start failure because these gains are not maintained through the elementary school years (AERA, 1994; Barnett, 2004; Marcon, 2000; Spocek and Saracho, 2003; Zigler, 2004). This may be considered a sign of a failing program, a sign that testing is not focusing on the real outcomes, or evidence that processes in elementary schools may negate the positive effects of Head Start.

Cognitive development is only one goal of Head Start. However, cognitive skills are the most easily measured and, therefore, have become the primary assessment of the effectiveness of the program. But this does not mean that the rise and fall of IQ scores is a valid measure of program success or failure.

Zigler (2004) suggested that IQ gains in Head Start were not the result of increased intelligence. IQ tests measure formal cognitive ability, including achievements and motivational and emotional systems. Zigler (2004) attributed IQ increases to changes in the child’s motivational system through program pedagogy. According to this view, children are not more intelligent as a result of Head Start; rather, they are better able to access their intelligence.

Barnett (2004) suggested that the inability of Head Start graduates to maintain cognitive growth over time was not a failure of Head Start. It was a failure of the public school system. The initial IQ gains of children in the program (4-10 points) were sustained through school entry. However, most children who attended Head Start went on to poor quality elementary and secondary schools (Barnett, 2004). Children were unable to maintain their gains in such environments.
Other measures show some program success. Marcon (2000) found that Head Start graduates were better able to transition to fourth grade than non-graduates. Zigler et al. (2006) found that Head Start was fulfilling its compensatory mission. The adverse effects of poverty are apparent by eighteen months of age. Fewer than one half of low-income preschoolers are read to on a daily basis. Head Start supports language and literacy development and the acquisition of skills required for reading. Additionally, it provides social skills necessary for kindergarten, including the ability to get along with peers and teachers, to delay gratification, to control impulses, to work independently, and to follow directions. Compared with other children from similar socio-economic backgrounds, Head Start graduates show greater curiosity and are more likely than these other children to choose challenging tasks and to work independently and persistently (Zigler et al. 2006).

Care is suggested when studying early childhood programs such as Head Start. Many examples of highly successful programs (e.g. the Perry Preschool Program, the Abecedarian Program) cannot be replicated on a large scale (Frede, 1998). These programs have funding levels and teacher-child ratios that are rarely found in other programs. Also, teachers participating in these programs have more training than teachers in most Head Start programs (Frede, 1998). Additionally, the programs themselves are not created equal. Because there is not a national curriculum for Head Start, programs employ different curriculums and pedagogic methods (Richmond et al, 1979). Evaluations which focus on large-scale outcomes do not take this into account.
**Cultural Deprivation**

The theory of cultural deprivation became popular among social scientists in the 1960s and 1970s. The theory stemmed from Oscar Lewis’s suggestion of a “culture of poverty” among poor populations. Lewis first used the term in his 1959 book *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. Lewis’s ethnography described the lives of these families without any indication that the culture described was less acceptable than any other (Lewis, 1959). However, the term “culture of poverty” came to refer to a deficient culture of the poor. The theory of cultural deprivation strongly influenced much of the poverty policy in the 1960s, including the War on Poverty and the Moynihan Report.

The government-issued Moynihan Report was authored by Harvard sociologist and future U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The report, officially entitled “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” was released in 1965 and outlined government concerns with regard to black integration following the civil rights movement. The Moynihan Report stated that blacks would never be equal to whites unless certain social issues were addressed. Among these were racism and the “deterioration of the family.”

The report highlighted the prevalence of single mothers in the poor black community as evidence of this deterioration. At the time, among this population, ¼ of births were illegitimate and ¼ of families were headed by woman. Most black children received Aid for Families with Dependant Children (AFDC) at some point in their lives.

The report went on to note that the IQs of black children in the United States were lower than those of white children and those of black children in other countries.
Furthermore, children were observed to have lower IQs when they grew up in households without a father present. Therefore, black children growing up in homes without fathers were at a great disadvantage.

Cultural deprivation theory concerned that the lives of poor children, particularly poor black children, limited their experience with the dominant culture. This deprivation would ultimately negatively impact their achievement potential. Gretzels suggested that cultural deprivation would lead to aggression. The child would not understand the codes of the school. “He enters school unprepared, is frustrated, but is unable to leave” (Gretzels, 1966). Similarly, Piuck (1975) cited a 1956 New York City Youth Board Study which found that 40% of children in the lowest socioeconomic class showed “serious behavior problems.” Piuck suggested that these behavior problems in childhood would lead to youth delinquency and adult criminality. In addition to displaying behavior problems, culturally deprived children were thought to be unmotivated, to have negative self-esteem, and to have low achievement as a direct result of cultural factors (Clift, 1965). Within their own culture, culturally deprived children did not understand the benefits of education (Johnson, 1966).

Slavery was considered the root cause of cultural deprivation (Johnson, 1966; Piuch, 1975; Elam, 1969; Clift, 1965). This was affirmed in the Moynihan report, which suggested that the toll of slavery and oppression continued to negatively affect African Americans. Slavery prevented a way of life that could be fused with the dominant culture upon emancipation (Johnson, 1966). Most importantly, the institution of slavery was incompatible with education (Clift, 1965). The forced alienation of slavery remained part
of the heritage of African Americans and influenced the life of the black child (Elam, 1969).

It was further understood that the practices of slavery influenced child-rearing practices among post-slavery poor blacks. Harsh parenting techniques and punishments taught children the absolute authority of the parents (Piuck, 1975). Children were taught to be “seen and not heard,” a policy which affected their linguistic and intellectual development. They learned to be submissive in a hostile world. Piuck (1975) suggested that these were child-rearing practices designed for producing slaves. During the era of slavery, many families were forced into a matriarchal structure. This was held to be the foundation of the matriarchal structure presently existing in black families (Johnson, 1966).

There is a cultural effect to intellectual development that was believed to be detrimental in poor black families. Children picked up the non-standard speech patterns of their families. Underdeveloped language was considered a hallmark of the culturally deprived child (Persell, 1981). Peretti and Austin (1980) blamed the family structure. The homes of poor black children were too overcrowded to allow the feedback required for proper language development (Peretti and Austin, 1980).

According to cultural deprivation theorists, the goal of the Woodlawnecame compensatory with regard to culture as well as academic skills. Children must learn to cope with the demands of school situations, but their behaviors upon entering school would be inappropriate (Bostelmann, 1967). Behaviors learned prior to school had no value outside of the home. Children must be able to learn the values of the dominant culture so that they might participate in it fully (Johnson, 1966; Price, 1967).
In 1968, Bereiter and Engelmann released a pedagogic plan for compensatory education in early childhood, entitled *Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool*. Bereiter and Engelmann focused the importance of the term “culturally disadvantaged” in describing poor children. They stressed that lower-class knowledge and skills should not be fostered in school (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1968). Doing so would deprive poor people of a chance to improve their status. Therefore, the culture that the children had upon entering school was considered useless.

Much of the pedagogic process described in the book was based on Bereiter and Engelmann’s (1968) assertion that the language used by poor children severely restricted their cognitive development. While they cited Bernstein’s early work on restricted and elaborated codes, this was more than a code issue. The declaration was not that the children had a different language code than their teachers or than the middle class. It was that the children were lacking a true language code entirely. Bereiter and Engelmann compared the perceived lack of language development to the language and cognitive development of deaf children. The (minimal) language that black children were learning was not the elaborated language of the middle class or even the clear and concise language of the working class. The children’s speech, according to Bereiter and Engelmann, did not consist of distinct words and sentences. Instead, words and phrases were blended together to create “giant words” that could not be taken apart and recombined. Therefore, children did not understand the meaning of separate words. They were often not able to repeat sentences because they did not understand them. They also had difficulty understanding directions when the inflection changed.
The program developed by Bereiter and Engelmann was based on their theory that similar educational experiences for middle-class and “deprived” children would be inappropriate. “Deprived” children would need to learn more, and in less time, to catch up. Schools should abandon any focus on the “whole child.” Poor children learned motor and socialization skills outside of school. Therefore, it was unnecessary for the school to focus on these skills. Rather, the school should focus on those academic skills that children would not learn elsewhere. Additionally, the teachers should limit themselves to teaching, as any deviation from this, such as addressing a child’s emotional problems, would be extending beyond their competence (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1968).

In creating a working program, Bereiter and Engelmann used much stronger classification and framing than a typical early childhood program. It called for periods of intensive directed instruction. The classroom would have fifteen children and three teachers (or a teacher and two assistants). The children would be divided into three groups and would attend twenty-minute drill sessions in Language, Arithmetic, and Reading. Language instruction emphasized language structure. Reading instruction was taught through phonics. Arithmetic focused on counting skills. The children worked in workbooks while the teachers used a chalkboard (Miller et al., 1975). In addition to these drill sessions, the children had ten minutes of unstructured activity time, twenty minutes of semi-structured activity time, and thirty minutes for snack, toileting, and music.

The program was as demanding in its discipline practices as in its pedagogic practice (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966). Children were to adhere to the schedule. They were not even permitted to use the restroom if it was not the specified time. Teachers
were encouraged to withhold food from difficult children, while rewarding compliant children with an additional cookie. For children who were unruly, Bereiter and Engelmann recommended a “slap or good shake” (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966). Alternatively, a child could be sent to an “isolation room”; a poorly lit closet with a single chair was recommended (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966). The hierarchy was explicit and the relationship between teacher and student clear.

Two years after the release of *Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool*, Engelmann and Becker were commissioned to create a curriculum program for Project Follow Through, a program developed to take Head Start graduates through the third grade (Meyer, 1984). It may be assumed, therefore, that the program outlined in *Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool* was considered not only acceptable, but highly appropriate for “deprived” children. The pedagogy developed for Follow Through used many of the same highly directed teaching styles.

Project Follow Through seemed to be fairly successful. A study of graduates by Gerstein and Keating (1987) found that children performed near the national norm in fourth grade. Reading and math scores in high school were higher than those of students who did not attend the program. However, students did lose ground in grades four through twelve (Grestein and Keating).

A 1999 article by Engelmann argued that direct instruction was still the most effective form of pedagogy for (what he then called) at-risk students. Engelmann (1999) maintained that it should be the goal of an early childhood program for low-income children for the children in the program to leave ahead more skilled than affluent children. Reading and math should be at a second grade level in kindergarten.
Much of the work of Hart and Risley had its foundation in cultural deficit or deprivation theory. Hart and Risley (1968) were concerned with success in language development for the culturally deprived child. In a study of a low-income preschool in the late 1960s, they suggested drilling descriptive adjectives to mastery. In this study, the children were required to use color descriptors when requesting toys or food. When a child did not use the appropriate descriptor, the toys or food were withheld. The children did begin to use these words when required.

Hart and Risely’s (1995) seminal work, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences in Young American Children*, studied and compared the language development of poor (called “welfare”), working-class, and middle-class children. The study was longitudinal and was comprised of observations of children from six weeks to three years of age. Hart and Risely’s findings demonstrated that children in middle-class families had the most language exposure, followed by working-class children, and then poor children. The difference between the three was large. Assuming a fourteen hour day, middle-class children were exposed to 215,000 words over the course of a year. Working-class children were exposed to 125,000 words, and poor children were exposed to 62,000 words (Hart and Risely, 1995).

This study was the foundation of a curriculum program designed in Chicago for poor minority children nearly ten years later. The curriculum, called Leap Learning Systems, was designed to deliver a large amount of language to language-deprived children to compensate for the lack of language stimulation they received at home. Leap

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4 The methodology in this study was problematic. I will elaborate in a later section.
has recently published this curriculum and is circulating it nationwide as a contemporary form of compensatory education for culturally deprived children.

**Cultural Difference**

Cultural deprivation theory was attacked as racist and has largely been discounted. Some social scientists began to disregard these theories in the late 1960s and 1970s. While it is not disputed that there has been a legacy of slavery among African Americans, the culture that has evolved as a result can be considered one of cultural difference rather than deficit.

Opponents of cultural deficit theory have suggested that this theory discounts the culture of the home entirely. Positive and negative effects of home culture were not considered. Rather, the lack of dominant culture was considered a complete lack of culture. This was apparent in the founding of Head Start in 1965. In a brochure introducing the program, Lady Bird Johnson stated that children served were “lost in a gray world of poverty and neglect [and programs would attempt to lead them] to the human family. Circumstance had stranded them in an island of nothingness” (quoted in Persell, 1981).

Cultural difference theories are more apt than cultural deficit theories in considering the importance of the home culture and its effect on the child’s ability to navigate the culture of the school. Poor children and minority children are likely to have different cultural capital and different language codes than middle-class children (Boyd, 1991; Bernstein, 1975; Mitchell-Kernan, 1972).

The educational achievement gap in the United States can be defined as a difference in achievement both between students of different races and between students
of different socioeconomic classes. Controlling for income, black students do not perform as well as white students. Controlling for race, affluent students outperform low-income students. Something is standing between both minority students and poor students and achievement. Poor minority students are at a particular disadvantage.

Low-income students are a group that might be considered “at-risk.” Poverty especially is linked to poor school achievement, likely due to home stress, low parental educational achievement, neighborhood stress, poor health, and other factors associated with poverty. But there may also be a cultural difference between the affluent and the poor. This is not to say that there is a “culture of poverty” that creates behaviors that hold families in poverty for generations. It is rather an observation of a difference in lifestyle and parenting methods due to available finances, goals, and beliefs about childhood.

This culture difference was apparent in Lareau’s (2003) study of families of differing socioeconomic classes. Lareau observed children (fourth grade) and families who were middle-class\(^5\), working-class\(^6\), and poor.\(^7\) She found that middle-class children received what she called “concerted cultivation,” while working-class and poor children experienced a more “natural” childhood. The middle-class children in the study were each involved in a variety of activities in the hope of enriching their experiences and gaining additional skills. Their parents were quick to intervene in school and outside activities to ensure the most benefit for their child. The children learned to navigate and

\(^{5}\) At least one parent in a professional career.
\(^{6}\) Parents employed in blue collar positions.
\(^{7}\) Family’s income came from public assistance.
control social situations with other children and adults—and that they had the right to do so. They learned to use complex language and wordplay with parents (Lareau, 2003).

The working-class children were less likely to be involved in activities. A child might be involved in only one activity. However, unlike the middle-class children, whose lives seemed to revolve around activities, these children tended to see activities as an intrusion on their day. They were more likely to spend their time outside of school playing with other children—in a world of children, rather than the regimented world of adults. Parents and children were observed to be subdued with people in authority. Rather than intervening in school, parents assumed that the school “experts” knew best. Parents used short, clear directives when speaking to their children (Lareau, 2003).

The lives of poor children were similar to those of the working-class children. There were few to no activities outside of school (one child was in a church children’s choir, an activity that joined without parental help). Parents had little interest in children’s activities. Asking a parent for help was not a guarantee that the child would receive help. Parents were stressed by outside factors (money, living situations, health) and were unable to focus as fully on their children as parents in the other two groups (Lareau, 2003).

In this study, the focus was exclusively on social class. Each class group included children that were black, white, or biracial. The middle-class black children had a very similar childhood to the middle-class white children in the study. Similarly, poor white children had the same concerns as poor black children. The larger focus was on the ways in which middle-class families were able to use forms of capital to strengthen the

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8 This refers to economic, social, and cultural capital as defined by Pierre Bourdieu.
cultural capital of their children. While the working-class and poor children had more freedom in childhood, the middle-class children gained skills that would advantage them in the future.

Hess and Shipman also studied class while controlling for race. Their study was of 163 black mothers and their four-year-old children. They found that the middle class mothers used more language and more opportunities for labeling when speaking to their children than working-class and poor mothers. Hess and Shipman referred to the dynamic created by these mothers as a “person-oriented family”: one in which the child was allowed to achieve behavior rules through context. Working-class and poor families in the study were described as “status-oriented families.” Compliance was the only option (Hess and Shipman, 1965).

In *Ways with Words*, Heath (1983) studied the language development of two low-income communities, one white and one black. Comparisons between the two communities focused largely on race. However, these two communities were also compared to middle-class residences in a neighboring community. While there were differences between the two groups, neither group met the social expectations of the shared local school. The black children were more accustomed to freedom than white children and had difficulty adapting to the school’s schedule. The white children had difficulty with storytelling and pretend play. They had been taught to be completely truthful and saw both activities as telling lies (Heath, 1983).

In Heath’s study, there was little segregation in the school system. Low-income and middle-class children attended school together. However, when schools have only low-income children, the pedagogy tends to change. Haberman (n.d.) called this a
distinct “urban style.” Teachers give information, ask questions, and give directions. This appeals to parents who believe that their children should be forced to learn. The rules and class procedures are very strict with the expectation that it is the best way to maintain order with poor students (Haberman, n.d.).

Heath considered race as well as class in her study. Though she studied poor communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, she separated these communities by race. While neither group’s children were socialized in the home with the codes of the middle-class school, they were also not socialized or educated by their families in the same way.

In the black community of “Trackton,” babies received little verbal interaction. While babies were held nearly constantly by various family members and friends, adults talked around babies and young children rather than to them. The family was in no hurry for their children to begin to speak. But when they did speak, young children typically repeated parts of adult conversation rather than participating individually. Very young boys were bated and tested by adults. Adults would take away toys or bottles and wait for the child to assert himself and demand it. Girls were not challenged, but were expected to take on the mannerisms of adult women. They were permitted to argue and “fuss” with each other and with adults (Heath, 1983).

Adults did not read to children, but they did tell stories. Adults would retell the story of a true event with highly fictionalized and exaggerated details. Children learned to speak to each other using rhymes and playful insults (“talking junk”). Adults seldom read on their own for pleasure. Reading was a social activity (e.g. reading the newspaper or sharing a letter) (Heath, 1983).
Children seldom had many toys or a space of their own in their house. Children would gather pieces of toys or other materials from around the house or neighborhood. These materials remained out when the child stopped playing. Children played with other children in the community, regardless of age or sex (Heath, 1983).

In the white community of “Roadville” children had their own rooms with toys and books. Their belongings were to be kept separate from the rest of the house and “put away” when play stopped. Young children were expected to play alone. They were typically home with a single caregiver during the day (usually the mother). Adults conversed with babies and young children, even if the child could not yet respond. Children were segregated by sex in their play, and toys were gender specific (Heath, 1983).

Children were read to by adults and reading was highly valued. However, few adults read on their own. Most writing was purposeful (e.g. writing a letter or making lists). Stories told to children (and among adults) were always true events, told without embellishment, and often had a moral that showed the faults of the teller. Children’s stories were to follow this model. Prior to beginning school, children had no exposure to fictional or fanciful stories created by parents and told orally (Heath, 1983).

Once the children from both communities began school, they had difficulty with the middle-class codes, but they reacted differently. The Trackton children did not understand the rigid schedule of the school day. They had problems keeping toys separated and cleaning up. They were considered overly noisy. Roadville children were considered overly quiet. They understood the structure of the classroom and the schedule, but had difficulty with stories and storytelling (Heath, 1983).
Cultural differences are apparent in how children are taught language and socialized in the home, but such differences also change their experience in schools. In her book *Sandbox Society*, Lubeck (1985) observed a private, white preschool and a low-income, black Head Start. In both of these centers, the teachers reflected the cultural norms of the community that they were teaching. As a result, the culture and pedagogy of the classrooms differed.

In the private preschool, the children had more freedom of both time and movement. The schedule had little structure, and the children were permitted to play wherever they wished, for as long as they wished, throughout the day. The theme and classroom materials changed throughout the year. At the Head Start center, the children followed a strict schedule. They were permitted to choose an area to play for only a brief portion of the day—and then they were required to stay in that area until “choice time” was over. The classroom materials did not change, and the children did much the same thing every day over the course of the school year (Lubeck, 1985).

The white teachers in the private preschool interacted primarily with the children. They generally disciplined through reasoning and rarely used more explicit forms of discipline. At the Head Start center, the adults interacted primarily with each other. Rules and instruction were explicit. Obedience was expected (Lubeck, 1985).

Lubeck made the argument that both the interaction between teachers and children and between the teachers and each other was culturally reflective. White mothers tended to be at home alone with their children during the day, while black mothers more often raised their children in the community (Lubeck, 1985). This observation was similar to Heath’s observations of white and black mothers. In her
study, the white mothers were home alone and interacting with their children (even before children could respond), while black mothers spent most of their days around other people, talking around their children rather than to them (Heath, 1983). This seemed to be related to race rather than socioeconomic status.

However, methods of discipline appeared to be related to socioeconomic status rather than race. In Lareau’s (2003) study, middle-class parents, regardless of race, were more apt to reason with children and teach rules and expectations implicitly. Working-class and poor parents were more likely to give commands, require obedience, and teach rules and expectations explicitly (Lareau, 2003).

Implicit and explicit direction was also apparent with regard to instruction and play. The children at the Head Start center received explicit whole-group instruction for most of the day. Their “free play” time was highly regulated by teachers. The children at the private preschool were guided more implicitly. Teachers questioned rather than told, and they usually did so in small groups or one-on-one. Free play was largely free from adult instruction.

It is clear that the pedagogy that Lubeck observed was different for the affluent white children and low-income black children, through a combination of racial and socioeconomic cultural differences. This is indicative of the pedagogical difference between most affluent white schools and low-income black schools (Boyd, 1991; Haberman, nd: Sadovnik 2007). Poor children, particularly poor black children, are taught differently than affluent white children.

Delpit (2006) believed that this was a necessity. She suggested that the explicit pedagogy in low-income black schools was not the result of cultural or discipline
practices. It was necessary to ensure that black children received the same basic foundation as white children. Affluent children (as demonstrated by Lareau) received additional resources at home. White children, regardless of class (as demonstrated by Heath) were also more likely to receive some sort of early learning at home (though this seemed to end when children entered school). Explicit teaching of skills that affluent and white children had upon entering school was necessary for survival (Delpit, 2006).

**Language: Use of Black English**

Among African Americans, some cultural differences can be linked to an attempt to remain separate from whites. Mitchell-Kernan (1972) suggested that the use of “Black English” was separatist and promoted solidarity among blacks. Ogbu (1990) stated that for many blacks, learning the codes of the dominant culture might be considered detrimental to the existing culture of blacks. There was a general distrust of schools.

The use of non-standard English was considered by many cultural deprivation theories to be a sign of “lack” of culture. It was assumed that the language difference was a deficit, as was demonstrated by research by Hart and Risley. Extensive research by William Labov contested this notion. Labov researched speech patterns in large northern cities such as Philadelphia and New York. He found that Black English was as complex a dialect as standard English. It had its own history (stemming largely from Southern roots), syntax, and morphology (Labov, 1972). There was also a difference in word use, endings, articulation, and pronunciation (Labov, 1967). These were as regular as in standard English.

Labov found this to be an issue in educational settings in which teachers were not knowledgeable of forms of non-standard English. Teachers and principals, especially in
the 1960s during the age of cultural deprivation theory, denied the existence of a black dialect (Labov, 1966). Teachers “corrected” the students’ “errors,” but students were resistant. Their language was correct based on their cultural background. Also, while the language rules of Black English affected pronunciation, they did not affect understanding (Labov, 1966). While students may speak differently than their teachers, they are not at a linguistic disadvantage with regard to achievement.

While Labov’s work demonstrated that not all cultural differences were academic hindrances, the work of Basil Bernstein showed that, on the whole, students whose culture differed from that of the school were at a disadvantage. This included differences in language usage. Bernstein used the term “code” as a controlling principle that underlined message systems, such as curriculum and pedagogy (Sadovnik, 1991). The communication codes of working-class and middle-class children differ. Working-class children typically use restricted codes. Their language is succinct with little embellishment. Middle-class children typically use elaborated codes. Their language is more complex (Sadovnik, 1991). If the school places more value on elaborated codes (as most middle-class schools do), students using restricted codes are at a disadvantage.

This assertion of Bernstein’s was called cultural deprivation by some researchers in the 1960s and 1970s. An article by Labov published in the late 1960s refuted Bernstein’s work. Bernstein was quoted in the article as stating that “much of the lower-class language consists of a kind of incidental ‘emotional accompaniment’ to action that is here and now” (Labov, 1969). Labov considered this, as well as Bernstein’s definition of codes, to disregard the value of working-class codes. Labov asserted that working-class codes were more effective than middle-class codes, though Bernstein, according to
Labov, considered middle-class speech to be superior. Labov (1969) expressed concern that children entering school using restricted codes would be considered to have no language at all.

Labov misinterpreted Bernstein. More plainly, he took his information from work that misinterpreted Bernstein. Labov never quoted Bernstein’s work itself; he only referenced the work of other researchers who discussed it. In fact, Bernstein agreed that fluidity was a characteristic of restricted codes (Atkinson, 1995). Elaborated codes are hampered by complexity. Bernstein did not hold one as superior over the other (Sadovnik, 1991; Danzig, 1995).

Children of all races and different socioeconomic groups learn to use language the way that it is used in their home. Heath demonstrated this in *Ways With Words*. The low-income children in both the black and white communities entered school with language patterns that were different from the middle-class community and, therefore, from the school (Heath, 1983).

The work of Hart and Risley demonstrated that the difference in language acquisition between affluent and low-income was children foundational. Low-income children had fewer words upon entering school (Hart and Risley, 1995). They used fewer descriptive words than affluent children (Hart and Risley, 1968). Hart and Risley considered these language deficiencies to be very troubling and suggested (and have attempted) explicit instruction to prompt children to use more varied vocabularies.

In a longitudinal study of children from birth to age three, Hart and Risley found that affluent children performed much better on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test at age three than working-class and poor children. Observations of the families
demonstrated that professional parents spoke to their children more often and used more varied language. Hart and Risley suggested, given their observations, that professional children had a language experience of 215,000 words per year, working-class children had experience with 125,000 words per year, and “welfare” children had experience with 62,000 words per year (Hart and Risley, 1995).

However, given what Heath observed in her study, Hart and Risley’s methodology was problematic. They observed interactions between family members and the observed child, but they specifically did not observe other interactions around the child. They reasoned that only interactions with the child mattered. However, Heath suggested that the speech taking place around children taught language and interaction. The low-income black children in Heath’s study were observed repeating and modeling adult conversation before becoming active members of the conversation. That Hart and Risley (and their research team) did not record these interactions meant they did not compile a true representation of how much language children were being exposed to.

Steinberg and Cazden (2001) found a phenomenon similar to Heath’s study in their study of a low-income classroom. The classroom used a “teaching-chain”: the teacher taught a skill to a few children and allowed them to teach small groups of other children. The child “teachers” were observed to model teacher-like gestures and vocabulary when teaching other children (Steinberg and Cazden, 2001).

Labov suggested that language differences were not deficiencies. However, many teachers have no knowledge of non-standard forms of English and consider language differences to be errors. Teachers must, when teaching literacy and correcting language, make distinctions between correcting mistakes and altering dialect (Labov, 1966).
More recent work by Stockmann (2010) suggested that the concern for the language of African American children stemmed from the tendency to hold white middle-class children as a prototypical normative in child development. Any deviation from this norm is viewed as a problem that needs to be fixed. However, Stockman argued that nearly all children (including low-income black children) developed oral language by age six without formal instruction or intervention. Furthermore, these children develop language in the same stages as other English speakers. When Bereiter and Engelmann developed a language program that assumed that children had no prior language experience, they failed to recognize that the “deprived” children had developed language skills, and had likely done so within developmental norms (Stockman, 2010).

**Language: English Language Learners**

The influx of immigrants into the United States since 1965 has led to the creation of a very culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse population. Immigrant children, both those born in the United States to immigrant parents and those born abroad, are the fastest growing segment of the population (Center for Law and Policy, 2006). Parents enroll these children into American schools with the hope that education will lead to a more financially secure future (Mueller et al., 1996, Kermani & James, 1999). However, immigrant children, including those born in the United States, do not perform as well in school as do their native counterparts (Labaie, 1996).

Once children reach school age, their lack of English language proficiency can be a great impediment to their academic success. The achievement gap between native and immigrant children had been largely linked to English proficiency (Bleakly & Chin). Children may be placed in English Language Learning programs in elementary school.
However, the separation from classmates and the difficulty of learning a language while also attempting to keep up with academic work often leaves immigrant children behind (Bleakly & Chin).

9.9 million children in the United States live in non-English speaking households (Lee and Dallman, 2008). For young children, this helps to create a perception of school that is completely alien: unknown people in an unknown place speaking an unknown language. It is already apparent from entrance testing in Head Start that most children, regardless of English language skill, are uncomfortable and hesitant upon entering school (Zigler, 2004). A new language adds another dimension to what is already a somewhat frightening situation for children.

While it is hoped that enrollment in an early childhood program will help children with language acquisition, many teachers and schools are ill-prepared for the challenges of working with early childhood English language learners. Teachers who are unfamiliar with language development or the culture of the children may mistake true developmental delays as problems with language acquisition (Children Now, 2004).

As children gain competence in English, they begin to create an internal separation between home and school. Home is for home language, school is for English. This becomes very evident when children, who speak English at school all day, speak in their home language with their mother or conversely, when children who speak in a different language at home refuse to use it at school (Mushi, 2001). Parents may become concerned that a child, even a very young child, is learning to distance themselves from the family (Pacini-Ketchaow and de Almeida, 2006). Outside influences such as school, friends, and television all use English. Increased proficiency in English draws the child
away from the family and closer to the outside world (Pacini-Ketchaow and de Almeida, 2006).

While there is a belief among some parents and teachers that the maintenance of a home language is an impediment to success in learning English (Pacini-Ketchaow & de Almeida, 2006), research has shown that proficiency in a first language may influence proficiency in a second (Denny et al., 2001). Castilla et al. extensively studied English language acquisition among Spanish-speaking preschool children (2009). They noted that children learned languages, particularly second languages, in pieces. Lexical separation came first, followed by syntactic separation. Therefore, as children gained competence in English, they used some English words, but maintained the Spanish language structure. However, the stronger the children’s use of Spanish was, the easier it was for them to learn English, as they were better able to create a linguistic foundation. Teachers supported the children’s development of Spanish in the program and found that the children’s English had also greatly improved over the eight month study (Castilla et al.).

**Defining At-Risk**

Head Start provides compensatory education for young children who are “at-risk.” The concept of compensatory education implies that these children are deficient. Similarly, Preschool for All in Illinois, in corporation with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), provides services for children who are at-risk in Chicago. In Head Start this is defined by parent income. There is a maximum income for child enrollment, with 10% of slots available for children who are “over-income.” For CPS, the definition of at-risk takes into account
income, health factors (prenatal, infant, and child health concerns), and the child’s performance on the Early Childhood Screening Inventory (ESI-R).

This term at-risk is used often, particularly in conjunction with programs for poor or minority children. Though Head Start and CPS define how to identify an at-risk child, it is still unclear what an at-risk child is. What is this child at risk of? What factors contribute to the risk?

At-risk children are generally those considered in danger of not achieving in school (May and Kundert, 1997). Socioeconomic status (SES) is widely viewed as a key factor in low achievement. However, socioeconomic status is not only a reflection of family income. Thus, income and social class are not synonymous. Family income has been demonstrated to be volatile (Duncan et al., 1998), while social class is based on more stable factors such as property and assets, or what is termed wealth. Hanson et al. (1997) made a distinction between sustained and immediate poverty. They considered immediate poverty to be more detrimental for young children, as it led to higher stress levels and harsh punishments. Long-term poverty allowed for some family adjustment and less severe parenting (Hanson et al. 1997).

Poverty is a risk factor for a number of outcomes. Children who are born into poverty are 1.7 times more likely than non-poor children to be of a low birth weight. Children are 3.5 times as likely to have lead poisoning and 2 times more likely to have a short stay hospital episode in early childhood. In school, poor children are 2 times more likely than other children to repeat a grade and 1.4 times more likely to have a learning disability. Additionally, poor children are 6.8 times more likely be abused and/or
neglected. They are 2.2 times more likely to experience a violent crime and 1.7 times more likely to die in childhood (Duncan et al., 2000).

Many at-risk definitions consider the effect of family relationships on child development. Family relationships can be closely related to socioeconomic status, as a low SES can have an effect on family dynamics and parenting practices. Risk factors that negatively influence child development (in addition to low SES) include mothers with less than a high school education, mothers who are non-English dominant, mothers who are unmarried at the time of the birth of their first child, and single parent families. One half of all preschoolers are affected by one of these risk factors. 15% are affected by three or more (Kagan and Neuman, 1997).

Parents who are poor are more likely to be unhealthy, both emotionally and physically (Duncan et al., 2000). Poor children were found to often have limited cognitive support from their families (Havighurst, 1969). As referenced previously, low-income pressures lead to financial conflicts between parents and the harshness of parenting (Duncan et al., 1998).

Neighborhood characteristics can also play a role in the future academic success of children. The presence of affluent neighbors had the potential to increase achievement and lessen behavior problems in low-income children (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1993). Safe neighborhoods allow for children to play outdoors and build motor skills. Unsafe neighborhoods limit large motor play and create a high-stress situation for parents and children.

Many children defined as at-risk were born to young mothers. Early childbearing is a prominent feature of many low-income minority communities. Neighborhood
socioeconomic disadvantage is associated with early sexual debut and related outcomes when controlling for background and family characteristics. In a 2004 study, African Americans were found to be 2.8 times more likely than whites to experience sexual onset in early adolescence (ages 11-16) (Browning et al., 2004). Early sexual onset was also negatively associated with living with both parents and with small family size (Browning et al., 2004). While Mexican-born teens had later sexual onset, they were more likely to become parents. When compared to African Americans and whites in an earlier study, Mexican-born girls had the highest rate of early pregnancy and were least likely to terminate if they became pregnant (Remez, 1991).

Early childbearing becomes part of a circle of poverty. Girls who are poor are more likely to become pregnant, and young mothers are more likely to be poor. Early childbearing interferes with schools and human capital development (Hofferth and Reid, 2002). But this is not the only difficulty that the child of a young mother faces. Young mothers are less than women who delayed childbearing to be able to promote cognitive development in their children and, due to emotional immaturity, tend to be inconsistent with regard to discipline (Hofferth and Reid, 2002). Children of high school dropouts have been found to have lower cognitive attainment (Moore and Snyder, 1991).

It is the goal of compensatory programs, such as Head Start and State Prekindergarten, to help at-risk children to overcome these obstacles, leading to better long-term school achievement.

**Immigration**

Many immigrant parents are reluctant to enroll children in early childhood programs. The Center for Law and Policy identified three primary family characteristics that
prevented participation in programs: maternal employment, marital status of parents, and income (Center for Law and Policy, 2006). Very simply, if the mother is not working, the child will most likely be in parental care. Similarly, if the parents were married, there was a possibility of adjusting work schedules so that the child remained in the care of one parent throughout the day (Center for Law and Policy, 2006).

Income is a more complex issue. Families from wealthier countries (Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, Europe, etc.) are more likely to send their children to early childhood programs, while families from poorer countries (Mexico, Central America, the Pacific Islands, etc.) are more likely to keep their children in parental care or in the care of another relative or a sitter (Center for Law and Policy, 2006). It is unclear from the literature exactly why this is or how it might apply individually, e.g. to a wealthy family from a poor country or vice versa. However, it is possible to make some assumptions.

Immigrants from poor countries are more likely to have been through a poor school system in their home country. They are also less likely to have achieved higher levels of education (Bleakly & Chin, 2008). Lack of education may lead parents to be uncertain how to approach their children’s education. It may also create discomfort with schooling in general (Urban Institute, 2007).

Both of these issues assume that coming from a poor country may create impediments to involvement in an early childhood program. However, these issues are also both related to personal wealth. Non-English speaking immigrants are more likely to be poor (Bleakly & Chin, 2008). Also, lower levels of academic achievement tend to lead to poverty (Bleakly & Chin, 2008).
Poverty is a major barrier for immigrant children. While not all immigrant children are poor, they disproportionately live in poverty as compared with native children (Children Now, 2007, Center for Law and Policy, 2006, Kermani & James, 1999). The average income of an immigrant family is $10,000 less that the average income of a native family (Lahaire, 2008). Immigrant families are more likely to receive food stamps (Children Now, 2007), and they have poorer health outcomes than natives (Urban Institute, 2007).

Attributes, other than personal wealth, of being an immigrant from a poor country may influence the decision to enroll a child into an early childhood program. Immigrants from poor countries are less likely to arrive speaking English (Bleakly & Chin, 2008). Families may be reluctant to become involved with a system that they cannot easily navigate due to language barriers (Lee & Dallman). Language barriers may also prevent families from learning about programs in the first place (Center for Law and Policy, 2006).

Many programs are not sensitive to cultural differences (ERIC, 1994). Teachers may, unknowingly, make children uncomfortable in the program (Botsolgou & Kakana, 2003). Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds come to school with different expectations and behaviors, but schools have one standard to follow (Zu & Drame). Often, home cultures are not part of activity planning or assessment procedures. Cultural diversity can make assessment difficult because developmental milestones may vary from culture to culture due to differences in parenting practices (ERIC, 1994).

An example of home culture affecting learning is a study by Kermani and James (1999) of Mexican mothers and their preschool-aged children. The researchers were
considering the effects of culture on maternal scaffolding. They noted that most studies of maternal scaffolding had been conducted with white, middle-class mothers as an assumed norm. Kermani and James argued that these studies could not be used to make broad generalizations across groups (1994).

The Kermani and James study, the researchers observed Mexican mothers teaching skills to their children. Mothers were given a “school-like” skill (reading a book together) and a “home-like” skill (working with dough) to teach. The researchers found that both the mothers and the children were more engaged in the “home-like” activity, suggesting that the mothers were uncomfortable working with their children in academic skills (Kermani & James, 1994).

Kermani and James also questioned the mothers about their perceived responsibilities to their children. All of the mothers included in the study discussed providing food and clothing, love, security, and discipline. None of the mothers included education as a maternal responsibility. The researchers noted that in some cultures, such as Anglo American and Chinese, mothers typically see themselves as teachers. Mexican mothers preferred to focus on life skills and let schools do the teaching (Kermani & James, 1994).

The home lives of the children were also discussed in the study. For the most part, the children had few toys and books at home. Rather than reading, the parents preferred to tell stories. This was true regardless of the parents’ educational level (Kermani & James, 1994).

Studies of Hmong families have also demonstrated a strong oral tradition. The written language for the Hmong is relatively new; it is only about 50 years old.
Therefore, Hmong immigrants in the United States tend to have very low literacy levels. Few have any formal education. Like the Mexican families in Kermani and James’s study, Hmong parents told stories to their children rather than reading to them (Mueller et al., 1996).

According to a study by Simmons and Johnston, Indian families place a high value on interdependence—much more so than European or white American families (2007). Because of this, Indian children were far more likely to be in home care rather than in daycare or preschool. The child was at the center of the family and often had needs (and wants) met before they could be vocalized. All learning in the home was adult-driven. As a result of this, those children who did attend preschool (or children who attended kindergarten) appeared to be unwilling to vocalize needs or to make choices in classroom activities. They also had difficulty socializing and learning from other children (Simmons and Johnston, 2007).

Institutional barriers can make participation even more difficult for immigrant families. Schools may be unable to communicate with parents in their own language. They may schedule parent activities without consideration of family schedules or work commitments. Schools may lack personnel to work with families and support engagement (Children Now, 2004). Many barriers to involvement are logistical. Parents have time and work commitments. They may not be able to secure care for a younger child. There may also be transportation issues.9

More important still may be family attitudes. Parents could be uncertain about the role that they play in their child’s education. They might be impacted by their own

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9 This is an issue with many programs serving poor and working class families, not just those serving immigrant populations.
negative experiences in education or prejudiced against American schools (Children Now, 2004). Lack of understanding of the American school system can greatly affect parents’ understanding of schooling and their expected role in their child’s education. Some groups, such as Hispanics, may believe that the school is responsible for initiation efforts for parent involvement (Wong and Huges, 2006). As stated previously, many Mexican mothers do not see themselves as teachers (Kermani and James, 1999). Educating children is seen as the job of the school. Additionally, many Hispanic families believe in the absolute authority of the teacher and consider it inappropriate to interfere (Dever and Burts, 2002).

Many families lack the resources to help their children in school, even in early childhood programs. Children from immigrant families typically have fewer books than native children (Lahaie, 2008). Few children in the Kermani and James study had toys; fewer had books. Many parents have low levels of educational attainment, and some are illiterate and unable to read to their children (Bleakly and Chin, 2008, Mueller et al., 1996). Though many parents are uncomfortable with their own role in their child’s early childhood program, education itself is still highly valued (Mueller et al., 1996, Denny et al., 2001). English acquisition is considered very important among most immigrant groups. English is considered a tool for upward mobility, so it is believed by immigrant parents to be best learned early (Mushi, 2001).

Due to differences in culture between immigrant families and early childhood programs immigrant parents are limited not only by lack of English, but also by lack of knowledge of cultural codes. Parents often do not understand that American schools expect parent participation, especially in early childhood. They do not understand that
they must be proactive in their dealings with schools and teachers and that comments and advice are acceptable. In addition, language barriers and code barriers prevent parents as well as children from keeping up with the pacing of the American school system.

However, children are better able to navigate elementary schools after attending preschool, and those who have attended preschool are better prepared cognitively, verbally, and socially for kindergarten than are their peers. Parents who have been part of a strong and inviting program are better able to support their child’s education through elementary and secondary school and to understand their role in their child’s schooling.

**Pedagogy**

In *The School in Society*, John Dewey (2001) stated that what the wisest parent wants for his child is what the community must want for all children. Dewey proposed a pedagogy in which children would be given the freedom to learn through experience. Dewey’s school would create a democracy within the classroom, in which students would learn to function as a community. The social order from the playground would be invited into the classroom. Children would learn from experience—actively, rather than with the passive approach of earlier pedagogic methods. Work would be project-focused and built on children’s prior knowledge. A project would cover all parts of the curriculum. Most importantly, Dewey’s school would be open to all children in the community, regardless of socioeconomic status. It would give to all the children of the community what the wisest and wealthiest would provide for their own children. As a result, the school would be the foundation of democracy and social justice for the student (Dewey, 2001).

While Dewey’s school did not become the panacea that he proposed, his school at the University of Chicago did demonstrate that his theories, when put into practice, were
successful.. Dewey’s work and theories attracted many followers, both in early childhood and in schooling for older children. Much progressive pedagogic practice in early childhood is based on Dewey’s principles of progressivism.

However, progressive education did not become the pedagogy of the masses. Instead, it became the pedagogy of the new middle class (Semel & Sadovnik, 2008). Schools had difficulty adapting the pedagogy their philosophies to Dewey’s ideals. Later, in light of the launch of Sputnik, public school administrators thought it best to focus on drilling skills rather than to try to break with traditional educational norms. Meanwhile, the new middle class was attracted by progressivism (Semel & Sadovnik, 2008). Small tuition-based progressive schools opened that served primarily affluent populations.

Compensatory programs were developed with the advent of Head Start in 1965. At the time, many educators, psychologists, and sociologists based much work on and with the poor on the theory of cultural deprivation. This became the model for many early Head Start centers (Meier, 2002). Most programs focused on drilling material with the belief that it was the best method of catching poor children up to the affluent.

In the 1970s, progressive programs for poor urban children began to emerge. Central Park East, opened by Deborah Meier in 1974, created a project-based pedagogy for children in Harlem (Meier, 1995). Central Park East Secondary School and Urban Academy both followed. All of these programs were very successful with the population, suggesting that progressive education can provide a strong compensatory program for children in high-poverty areas.
In early childhood programs, as in elementary and secondary schools, progressive education has become the pedagogy of the middle class. However, many progressive pedagogic models, like Dewey’s model, were originally designed to educate children of all socioeconomic levels.

An example of this is the Reggio Emilia Approach, named for the city of its founding in Northern Italy. The first Reggio school was built after World War II with proceeds from the sale of tanks, trucks, and horses. The school, under the direction of Loris Malaguzzi, welcomed children of all socioeconomic levels (Gandini, 1993). While the program was (and is) Italian, its foundations were in American progressivism, primarily the work of Dewey (Edwards et al., 1996). The pedagogy also draws on the work of Piaget and Vygotsky (Gandini, 1993). Jean Piaget was a French psychologist and philosopher who argued that children develop best when allowed to control and reflect upon their own actions. Lev Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist who suggested that play develops as children apply abstract meaning to objects. Vygotsky believed that this was a critical feature in higher mental functions.

Reggio Emilia is based on twelve fundamentals. These are:

1) The image of the child. All children are believed to have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and an interest in the construction of learning.

2) Children’s relationships and interactions. The child should be considered in relation to other children, family, teachers, the environment of the school, and society.

3) Role of parents. Parents should be involved in day-to-day interaction, discussion of educational issues, and special events.
4) Amenable school. The layout of the space should encourage choices, problem solving, and discoveries.

5) Time not set by the clock. Children’s own sense of time and personal rhythm are considered.

6) Teachers as partners. Teachers observe and listen to children closely. Teachers are a resource for children.

7) Cooperation as a foundation. Teachers work in pairs as equals. Teachers are researchers.

8) Interdependence of cooperation and organization between teachers and parents.

9) Emergent curriculum. Teachers express a general goal or make a hypotheses, but the direction of the curriculum comes from the interests of the children.

10) Projects. Projects should be short and long term. They should originate in the continuum of experience of children and teachers.

11) *Atelierista* and *ataler* (art teacher and art studio). The school should have a teacher trained in the visual arts and a workshop set aside for this.

12) The power of documentation. This includes transcripts of remarks and discussions, photographs, and representations. Documentation helps parents to be aware of classroom activities and maintain their involvement. It also allows teachers to evaluate their own work and
shows children that their work has value.

(Gandini, 1993)

In the United States, Reggio is typically implemented in private programs, such as a program studied by Geiger (1997) in Troy, Ohio. Program administrators chose to begin incorporating Reggio fundamentals into the pedagogy. There were some problems in the beginning finding the balance between teacher and child input, implementation turned out to be successful.

Geiger’s (1997) study demonstrated the advantages of implementing a project-based pedagogy with affluent children. The children developed an interest in castles. They used books to expand on their knowledge. Teachers began to incorporate castle pieces into the light table and brought in materials for dramatic play. The program had miscellaneous materials on-hand so that students could create a drawbridge and horse. The children then had a feast with parent-provided costumes. The study of castles led to a study of dragons. The children created a dragon from plaster. The supplies were donated by a parent who was a doctor (Greiger, 1997).

While the Reggio pedagogy itself is not limited to poor or wealthy children, the ready availability of parents and supplies create a distinct advantage for affluent schools. However, Reggio is sometimes used with children in high-poverty areas, most notably in Chicago Commons.

Chicago Commons serves mostly poor African American and Hispanic populations in high-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago. The program began its “Reggio Project” after the director’s visit to Italy. The staff attended seminars on Reggio in preparation for incorporating the fundamentals into the program. A new center (Nia) was
built at the beginning of the project, allowing Chicago Commons to work with the architect to create a center based on Reggio fundamentals. The new center had a common area and glass block windows, allowing for significant natural light\textsuperscript{10} (Haigh, 1997).

Teachers were overwhelmed by the number of fundamentals of Reggio, and chose to focus on only one element the first year, adding others later. The first year, teachers focused on the image of the child. Eventually, the program was able to acquire new audio-visual equipment for documentation and to hire an \textit{atelierista} (Haigh, 1997).

While parents at Chicago Commons were not able to donate supplies at the level that parents at Geiger’s school did, parents were involved in the program. As the Reggio Project progressed, Commons parents became increasingly knowledgeable about and supportive of Reggio (Haigh, 1997).

Reggio is not the only progressive model used in early childhood education. Other models have also found success in low-income communities. Hertzog (2005; 2007) studied the implementation of Project Approach\textsuperscript{11} in a predominantly African American school. The version of Project Approach used by the school was developed by Lillian Katz and Sylvia Chard. It incorporates many of the same elements of Reggio Emilia with a stronger focus on project topics that children would naturally encounter (e.g. trains but not dinosaurs). Project Approach also does not use an \textit{atelierista} and \textit{ataler}.

\textsuperscript{10} The center was unable to use the floor-to-ceiling windows typical of Italian Reggio schools due to violence in the neighborhood.

\textsuperscript{11} The term “Project Approach” has been used for several pedagogical models based on Dewey’s principles of project-based learning.
The school in Hertzog’s study used Project Approach in an attempt to lure white/middle-class children to the school and increase the overall achievement (Hertzog, 2005). Overall the method changed the teachers’ thinking and approach to teaching. Teachers were more apt to view the children as active participants in their own learning. Also, it changed the climate of the school. Parent participation increased, and teachers were more willing to collaborate with each other (Hertzog, 2005).

However, the transition was not entirely smooth. Teachers viewed child-centered instruction as a privilege and a reward. Children were punished with worksheets and other busy work. Also, the teachers had difficulty understanding how to incorporate the “basics” into project work. They felt the need to teach skills outside of the project (Hertzog, 2007).

Other studies have compared progressive education of young children to other pedagogies. Burts et al. (1992), in a study that referred to progressive pedagogy as “developmentally appropriate,”¹² found that children in these programs had more positive attitudes toward schooling than their counterparts in other programs. This was found to be true across socioeconomic levels. Research by Stipek et al. (1995) found that children were more apt to select challenging tasks in progressive programs where they had the freedom to have the wrong answer. A longitudinal study by Macron (2002) found that children from progressive early childhood programs were less likely to be retained prior to third grade and showed less of a decline in performance after third grade. She reasoned that learning past third grade became more self-initiated and required more independent thought, skills that were the focus of progressive programs (Macron, 2002).

¹² This distinction comes from the guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Most DAP guidelines favor progressive methods.
Directed pedagogy does not have as clear an origin as progressive pedagogy. In *School and Society*, Dewey (2001) proposed his model in opposition to the existing directed model, suggesting that “older forms” of education “massed children together” and required a “passive attitude.” Bowles and Gintis (1976) suggested that progressive education never surpassed existing pedagogy in popularity as it was not considered as ordered or efficient.

Education reformers in the United States began to move away from progressivism prior to World War II. There was concern that students were lacking training and interest in the sciences. Efforts were slowly made to reform science curriculum. During World War II the belief grew among many educational reformers, politicians, and the general public that a stronger foundation in math and science for all students would be advantageous for the country at large. Curriculums were written, and the movement toward a rigid and directed math and science-based model accelerated. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first satellite into space, beating the United States in the first leg of the space race. Educational reformers took the opportunity to promote the rigid curriculum model that they had been working on for years (Kaestle & Smith, 1982; Kliebard, 1988; Donahue, 1993). What followed was the creation of ever more rigid curriculum practices in all subjects, such as DISTAR for reading instruction in 1978.

In the field of early childhood education, the work of Hart and Risley (among others) pushed for a teacher-directed compensatory program for children in high-poverty communities. In 1968, Hart and Risley released a study of language development in a program for poor African American children which required that children were drilled continuously in language to expand the children’s use of descriptive adjectives. Hart and
Risley claimed that what they called “traditional instruction” was ineffective in modifying children’s speech, assuming children would only use pre-learned speech. However, spontaneous language does not always allow for language skills that need to be taught (Hart and Risley, 1968). Directed pedagogy continued to be incorporated into programs for poor and working-class children with the belief that it would more effectively teach compensatory skills. Across all grade levels, many successful urban schools have explicit goals, frequent testing, and explicit teaching (Tough, 2006).

Some directed instruction programs have shown success with poor and working-class children. In an evaluation of “Success for All”, a teacher directed reading program, in primary grades in a high-poverty school, students were found to have higher scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test in kindergarten and prekindergarten as well as higher scores on the Woodcock Johnson in grades one through three than children that had not used the program (Slavin et al., 1989). Another study found that children in directed programs were strong in letter recognition in kindergarten (Stipek et al., 1995).

However, there are concerns about directed instruction in early childhood, regardless of socioeconomic status. A study by Burns et al. (1992) found that children in directed programs, while they had higher scores on letter and number recognition, also had more negative attitudes about school. Additionally, they did not maintain their gains. Another study, by Macron (1999), found that children who had attended directed programs did not have a better mastery of basic skills. In addition, as teens, directed program graduates had higher levels of delinquency, fewer extra-curricular activities, and lower post-secondary aspirations (Macron, 2001). Schweinhart and Weikart had similar findings; they observed that directed program graduates had 2.5 times as many acts of
misconduct at age fifteen as graduates of more progressive or of blended programs (1997).

While several studies found that children in directed programs had better knowledge of some cognitive indicators of kindergarten readiness (letters, numbers, colors, shapes), none found that these advantages were maintained. More often, the children found themselves behind peers from progressive and mixed approach programs, who were better able to problem solve and were more confident (Marcon, 2002; Stipek et al., 1995).

Some researchers have found that using a mixed approach, rather than use an entirely directed or progressive approach, is beneficial. Children have the freedom of progressive pedagogy and have the opportunity to learn to explore and problem solve independently. At the same time, teachers are able to teach some skills explicitly.

A study of science instruction by Klahr and Nigram (2004) demonstrated the benefits of shifting between implicit progressive pedagogy and explicit directed pedagogy. For young children, directed pedagogy was preferred for activities that required multi-step directions, while progressive pedagogy was better for exploration of science concepts (Klahr and Nigram, 2004).

High/Scope, a curriculum model commonly used in Head Start, is considered to be “child-centered and teacher-directed” (Schwienhart and Weikart, 1998). The curriculum calls for twenty-minute question and answer lessons (Schwienhart and Weikart, 1997). Teacher’s guides and workbooks for these sessions are provided. However, much of the children’s day is spent in “free-play”. Schwienhart and Weikart (1998) suggested that the outcomes for High/Scope were similar to those from a more
progressive program, but High/Scope was recommended because the directed portion made assessment easier.

Stipek et al. (1991) found that most programs, like High/Scope, fell on a continuum between directed and progressive. Very few were at either extreme. Tzuo (2007) suggested that this was for the best. While child-centered pedagogy was beneficial, it did not have to exist in opposition to teacher direction (Tzuo, 2007).

**Involving Parents**

To be effective, parent participation needs to be welcomed and facilitated by the school. Parent participation is a vital component in the success of early childhood programs. It demonstrates to children that their parents value education (Children Now, 2004). Perceived parent attitudes can make a big difference in student outcomes, from early childhood on.

Lahaire (2008) suggested that multiple forms of participation should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of parent involvement. In addition to participation in school activities or service as a classroom volunteer, parent participation includes home activities such as reading to the child, playing games, or telling stories.

Parent participation allows both children and families to learn the codes of the school system. Through parent involvement, both parents and children can learn to be better equipped for their future in the school system. Because pacing acts selectively on those children and families who can acquire the school’s dominant pedagogic code (Bernstein, 2007), parent involvement should help children to be better able to keep up with pacing in elementary and secondary schools.
Involving parents in the program is not always an easy process. While Reggio Emilia, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and Head Start all require family involvement, programs and teachers may still have difficulty contacting and utilizing parents. In an early childhood program using the Reggio Emilia approach, McClow and Gillespie (1998) found that one of the greatest difficulties that the program had in implementation of the curriculum was dealing with the concerns of the parents. The program failed to involve parents in the shift from the previous curriculum to Reggio Emilia and, as a result, the parents were unclear about how the curriculum would teach skills that they felt their children needed for kindergarten. They believed that children were fully dictating classroom activities, limiting the teachers’ ability to teach necessary pre-literacy and math skills. The program was very different from their own experiences in school. More communication from the school was necessary and eventually given to alleviate concerns (McClow and Gillespie, 1998).

Another program using Reggio Emilia (Chicago Commons) took a more active approach in involving parents in the curriculum shift from the previous model to Reggio. Parents were involved and informed in every step of the process, including in the hiring of new program staff. Parents, not administrators, questioned potential staff on their knowledge of Reggio, stressing the importance of the curriculum (Haigh, 1997).

Even when teachers successfully reach parents, they are often unsure of what to do with them. Some remaining vestiges of cultural deprivation theory in compensatory programs have left many teachers with the belief that parents of a low-socioeconomic status are a disadvantage to the children (McCaslin and Infanti, 1998). There are some concerns about allowing these parents to work in the classroom. When parents are
brought in to the program, teachers tend to see them more as volunteers than collaborators (McCaslin and Infanti, 1998). Any information and experience that the parent brings in may considered inappropriate for the classroom. This is disappointing, especially when the cultural and socioeconomic background of the teacher differs from that of the students. One of the most effective ways to include home culture in the classroom is to actively include parents. It is not only the children that need to feel welcomed and valued by the program.

Head Start has been somewhat successful in the aggregate in involving families. Head Start families, on average, are more involved in their child’s preschool program than families of children in state prekindergarten programs (Marcon, 1999). Also, programs that are child-centered have more involved parents than those using a teacher-directed curriculum (Marcon, 1999).

**Social Class, Race, and Pedagogic Practice**

It is necessary to consider pedagogy more closely than simply labeling the pedagogic device as “progressive,” “directed,” or “both.” There are elements that make up these types of pedagogy that must be defined to be understood and identified. To aid in doing this, this study will apply Basil Bernstein’s theories of social class and pedagogic practice.

Within the pedagogic device, explicit rules are more likely to be found in schools favoring directed pedagogy. Implicit rules are more common in progressive pedagogies. However, Bernstein never uses the terms “progressive” or “directed.” Rather, he discusses the difference between visible and invisible pedagogies.
Bernstein’s theories involve hierarchical, sequencing, and pacing rules within the pedagogic device. Through hierarchical rules the transmitter (teacher) learns to be a transmitter and the acquirer (student) learns to be an acquirer (Bernstein, 2007). This defines the relationship between the transmitter and the acquirer, establishing the rules of social order (Sadovnik, 1991). Explicit hierarchical rules (e.g. statements such as “sit down,” “be quiet,” or explicit statements of rules) create subordination (Bernstein, 2007). Relations between authority and conduct are clear (Sadovnik, 1991). When using implicit hierarchical rules, the teacher acts indirectly (Bernstein, 2007). Power is masked by devices of communication, such as reasoning and questioning (Sadovnik, 1991).

Sequencing rules set the requirements for forward movement through the curriculum. For example, students must learn to read, then they may work from books. Students must learn numbers before learning higher mathematical functions. Explicit sequencing rules are rigid and focus on getting children to a level of competence that allows for independent work (Bernstein, 2007). Implicit sequencing rules allow for greater flexibility.

Pacing rules set the rate of acquisition (Bernstein, 2007). In schools with explicit pacing rules, students must work to keep up with the curriculum. This typically requires outside work (Bernstein, 2007), something very difficult for the lower classes as they are more likely to have non-academic family obligations and lack private space for schoolwork. The ability to keep up with pacing is heavily influenced by social class barriers. Implicit pacing allows for curriculum to be individualized by the student (Sadovnik, 1991).
Explicit hierarchical rules are part of a visible pedagogy. In this pedagogic model, children are highly directed by teachers. Invisible pedagogy includes implicit hierarchical rules. These rules are based on the socialization practices of the middle class. Therefore, invisible pedagogies, typically progressive teaching methods, are usually the practice of the middle class (Sadovnik, 2007).

Bernstein (1971) defines division of knowledge into subjects is the classification of knowledge. Strong division between subjects is considered strong classification, while integration of subjects is considered weak classification. The division of time in schools and the level of authority present in schools is considered framing (Bernstein, 1971). This is most evident in secondary schools where time is divided into periods. In early childhood education, strong framing is a very strict and rigid schedule. Weak framing allows for more flexibility and fluidity throughout the day. Strict, authoritarian discipline and hierarchy are also indicative of strong framing, while more relaxed classroom rules and invisible hierarchy are indicative of weak framing.

Invisible pedagogies allow for a more child-centered curriculum. Children may learn concepts at their own pace, rather than being taught as a group, as in a visible pedagogy. This presupposes a long academic life for children. Educational concepts may be delayed if it is understood that the child will be in school for a long time (Bernstein, 1975). This might lead to the conclusion that invisible pedagogy is more appropriate for the middle classes because those children are more likely to have a long academic career. However, the weak framing of an invisible pedagogy allows for the everyday experience of the child to be part of the classroom (Bernstein, 1975). This legitimizes rather than rejects the class and culture of the family, making it very
appropriate for poor and working-class children. Implicit hierarchical rules, weak classification, and weak framing are all part of an invisible pedagogy.

Visible pedagogies dictate a more teacher-directed curriculum. Teachers teach explicitly in whole group settings. Children are pushed to acquire skills quickly, allowing for a shorter academic life, if necessary. Children are taught to read early. This allows them to learn from books, freeing the teacher (Bernstein, 1975). Visible pedagogy is favored by middle-class families once the child reaches secondary school (Bernstein, 1975). In early childhood education, it is more common in poor and working-class centers, where there is a belief that it is the most appropriate method of teaching children who have not already learned middle-class codes (Sadovnik, 2007). However, the strong pacing, sequencing, framing, and classification reproduces class inequalities (Sadovnik, 1991). Students who are lacking the advantages of the middle class often have difficulty keeping up, even in preschool and kindergarten.

Lisa Delpit’s work is concerned with the use of progressive pedagogy for black children. Just as Bernstein suggested skills may be delayed in classrooms using invisible pedagogy (requiring more school in the long run), creating a disadvantage for working-class students, Delpit declared that black children do not receive the same enrichment at home as whites, making the possible delay of basic skills detrimental (Delpit, 2006). Therefore, many black teachers view the teaching of skills to be essential for survival. Delpit argued that children would not receive the same skills from progressive programs.

Delpit (2006) suggested that black children should be taught directly so that they might learn to be aware of the “Codes of Power”: linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and the presentation of self used by the dominant class (middle-class whites).
These codes are easier to acquire if they are taught explicitly. Information can be implicit between members of the same group, but it is difficult to understand across groups (Delpit, 2006).

Both Bernstein’s and Delpit’s work suggest that directed pedagogy would possibly be the most beneficial educational model for low-income black children. However, Bernstein also stated that explicit (visible) pedagogies can reproduce inequalities in society through strong pacing and classification. Delpit said (as part of her reasoning to continue to use directed instruction with black children) that “black children expect directness.” An authority figure should behave as an authority, and black children require commands rather than questioning (Delpit, 2006). However, this too reproduces inequalities. Children are trained to be submissive and are then better prepared for low-status careers in which submissiveness is valued.

According to Bernstein, both invisible and visible pedagogical models are problematic for the lower classes. The middle class will be successful, regardless of the pedagogical model in the classroom. Parents have the ability to make up for deficiencies. But for the lower classes, it is unclear if one model is truly superior to the other.

**Contributions of this Study**

While several studies cited in this review considered the implementation of progressive pedagogy in low-income settings, they did not compare how outcomes differed between programs that were progressive and those that were not. Other studies compared the outcomes of progressive and directed programs, but did not control for race or income.

This study will compare progressive pedagogy in a low-income early childhood setting to a program that is more traditional. This study will do this while controlling for
both minority status and income, focusing on low-income minority children in impoverished Chicago neighborhoods.

The study will apply the work of Basil Bernstein in order to frame the analysis and to examine the classification and framing of implicit and explicit instruction. It will use Bernstein and Delpit’s work to consider the question of whether or not there is an appropriate pedagogic practice for low-income minority children.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This study is a comparative case study of two Head Start sites in Chicago. Data collection was over a period of five months, from the beginning of September until the end of January, not including testing of children the first week of February. For this study, I chose a Head Start agency that is known for using Reggio Emilia, a pedagogy and philosophy more common in affluent schools, and an agency that uses a pedagogical approach more typical of low-income programs in Chicago. This study considers the following research questions:

1) What are the pedagogical differences between the programs and how does each use its curriculum?

2) Is there a difference in student academic growth between the two programs?

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of each program in terms of the children’s development in language, problem solving, social and emotional, and artistic expression?

4) How does the strength of classroom hierarchical framing influence classroom management and internalization of rules and routines.
5) How well to children internalize middle class codes in each program? (Middle class codes are defined as internalization of authority, use of elaborated language, and the use of Standard English.\(^1\))

**Site Selection**

In the City of Chicago, the Head Start grantee is the city Department of Children and Youth Services (CYS). As the grantee, CYS oversees delegate agencies (those smaller agencies actually providing Head Start programs) and their adherence to federal Head Start guidelines. CYS requires that all delegate programs use the same system for attendance and medical/dental records and work with CYS for necessary services, such as mental health and nutrition. Additionally, CYS requires that all programs use Teaching Standards Gold (formally Creative Curriculum) as a curriculum model and as an assessment tool. Therefore, all delegate agencies must use the model provided by Teaching Standards Gold for assessments (given three times per school year) and teacher observations, regardless of any other curriculum or pedagogical models provided by the delegate agency. Also, as Head Start is a federal programs, all CYS delegate agencies must adhere to guidelines for family income provided nationally by Head Start.

The State of Illinois provides a prekindergarten program (Preschool for All) that offers a 2.5 hour program for three- and four-year-old children. This program has widely partnered with existing programs, such as Head Start. Thus the programs become state, as well as federal programs. In Chicago, Preschool for All is managed by the Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Partnerships (CPS). CPS oversees state programs to ensure that teachers and sites are providing a program that will help children

\(^1\) The ability to delay gratification and having a future orientation will not be assessed in this study. While these are middle class codes, typical child development would preclude the internalization of these behaviors among preschool-aged children of any social group.
to meet Illinois Early Learning Standards. CPS provides teacher workshops and support, as well as funding. Under Preschool for All, head teachers must have at least a bachelor’s degree and a Type 04 Illinois teaching certification.

In choosing programs for this study, it was imperative that I chose programs that were both Head Start and Preschool for All programs. Choosing sites under Head Start and CYS regulations ensures that all children in the study will come from families at similarly low socioeconomic levels. This also ensures that teachers are using the same instruments for assessment and observation and that there is some similarity in curriculum. Using Preschool for All and CPS programs ensures that teachers at both programs have similar qualifications, that there is a universal set of standards, and that all teachers have access to similar continuing education.

Additionally, both programs in the study are full-day programs, necessitating city-provided funding for full-day childcare. Thus, both programs chosen for this study have the same three funding sources: city childcare, state prekindergarten, and federal Head Start.

There is one final parallel between the two sites. Both delegate agencies began as settlement houses in the late nineteenth century and the founding ideals and services of both settlement houses and settlement their house founders, have been fundamental in expansion of social service, and of Social Work as a discipline. Additionally, both have been known specifically in Early Childhood Education, at different times, as pioneers in the teaching of young children in poverty. Both agencies now offer a variety of programs in addition to early childhood education, including elder programs, after school care, and job-finding assistance.
As previously stated, the first site was chosen because it is part of a delegate agency that chooses to use Reggio Emilia as its program philosophy and pedagogy. The program is highly progressive, drawing on the work of Dewey and Vygotsky. Reggio Emilia is used agency-wide and is the topic of most faculty meetings and trainings. This agency is well-known for this and I was personally made aware of their work in Reggio while in my undergraduate program in Early Childhood Education at Butler University. I initially contacted the director of the early childhood program about my project, and was turned down. Because the program is so well-known for their work in early childhood education, they have a number of students that would like to work with them. I contacted the program again, this time using contacts in my undergraduate program and going directly to the agency director, and my proposal was given more consideration. After several months of discussion about the purpose of the project, research methods, and confidentiality of families’ information, I was given approval. I was assigned a center in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago’s South Side ("Loris Malaguzzi Family Center"), where I was subsequently assigned two full day classrooms.

Both classrooms at this site had twenty children and three teachers. In both classrooms, the head teacher had Reggio-specific her university teacher education program. The head teacher in each room also had a bachelor’s degree (and for one, a master’s degree) and was state-certified. The assistant teacher in each room had an associate’s degree in early childhood education and the teacher aide in each had a CDA (Child Development Associate certificate). Both classrooms were similarly furnished and had access to additional facilities at the site, including the gross motor room and the

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2 Malaguzzi has several preschool classrooms, including half day programs.
art studio. The playground was under construction for the whole of data-collection, and was not used by either classroom during that time.

I had originally chosen for the comparison site the agency that I worked for when I was a Head Start prekindergarten coordinator. The agency had initially agreed and we discussed possible research sites. However, two months prior to the start of data collection, the site was chose to pull out. This was not terribly surprising, as the agency had never been a part of a research study before, and many of the managing personnel were uncomfortable with the project. It was, however, disappointing.

I called several other delegate agencies in the city, including another old settlement house, much like the delegate agency for Malaguzzi. This other agency is more widely known in early childhood education as the location of an early kindergarten program than for its current early childhood program. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the early childhood program was Froeblian. However, the program is now a typical modern early childhood program for low-income children. While the program has some progressive elements, there are large portions of directed instruction and directed behavior through the course of the day.

The education director for this agency was excited about the project was able to gain approval to research at one of the centers within a few weeks. As I believed at that time that Malaguzzi would have a significant African American population, I was assigned a site in the city’s Woodlawn neighborhood, also on the South Side of Chicago (“Woodlawn Head Start”). At this site, there were only two (of three) classrooms receiving funding from both CYS and CPS. These were the classrooms that I was assigned.
At this site, one classroom had at most fifteen children, while the other topped out at twenty. There was some variability in the numbers of children, as this center had slightly more child mobility than the other center. However, open spots did not last more than a few days.

The smaller of the two classes was obliged to maintain a class of fifteen due to the physical size of the classroom. The square-footage was such that the center could not legally have more children in class. Otherwise, the rooms were similarly furnished and supplied. Both rooms had access to additional facilities including a gym, playground, and an unused classroom. Each class had three teachers for most of the study. Both head teachers had bachelor’s degrees and state certifications. Both assistant teachers had associate degrees. The third teacher in each room was part of a separate grant that allowed them to work in the center as part of their own education in early childhood. In the smaller classroom, this grant lasted only for the Fall semester. Thus, this teacher was not present in January.

While I was expecting to find predominately African American populations at each site, this turned out to not be the case. Malaguzzi had a very small African American population (the site director estimated around 5%). In two classrooms that I worked in, I saw only two African American children. Only one had parental consent to be included in the study. The majority of the children at the site were from Mexican immigrant families. Conversely, Woodlawn was 100% African American (both children and staff).

However, the two populations were more alike than they were different. Both neighborhoods had high crime, a great deal of gang activity, and intense poverty.
Unemployment was referenced as a major concern by teachers at both sites. Many of the parents at both sites had little education. Several were very young parents. Teachers at both sites had similar concerns about parent involvement in the children’s educations, both through participation at school and expanding teaching at home.

While this I was not able to match populations for race in this study, race is still an important factor. Both populations are minority groups that have struggled with, and continue to struggle with discrimination. This is indicated by the work of many racial scholars such as Wilson (1996), Pattillo-McCoy (1999) and Massey and Denton (1993), all of whom have demonstrated modern racist attitudes among whites toward African Americans as well as structural barriers preventing upward mobility for poor blacks. Similarly, the work of such scholars as Dohan (2003), Small (2004), and Bean and Stevens (2003) clearly show racist attitudes among whites toward Mexican American similar structural barriers preventing upward mobility among poor non-white immigrants. This populations are not their same, but they share many of the same social and economic hardships as a direct result of race.

Lisa Delpit’s (2003) work speaks to both race as well as class. Delpit’s ethnographic work demonstrates learning difficulties and confusion when “codes of power” are taught implicit across racial, as well as social class, groups. Both African American and Mexican American children are outside of the dominant culture and would thus require teachers to teach them middle class codes—such as internalization of authority, the use of elaborated language, and Standard English. Delpit’s work also suggests that the teaching of these codes be explicit.
While there were a total of 75 children in the four classrooms, not all children were included in the study. The teachers and site directors discussed the study with parents\(^3\) and gave them consent forms to sign. Additionally, Malaguzzi translated the consent form into Spanish for families that spoke little English. Not all families signed the form. I also chose not to include any child that started at either site after observations began, as I would not have a full five months of observations on that child. Four children at Woodlawn moved away during the data collection period; three from Classroom 3 and one from classroom 4. At the end of the study, there were a total of 51 children included in the study: 17 in Classroom 1, 9 in Classroom 2, 10 in Classroom 3, and 15 in Classroom 4.

**Methods of Data Collection**

Data collection for the case studies consisted of observations, interviews of parents and educational staff, photographs, collection of work samples, and pre and post testing of children using the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement. Time was divided between the two sites and the two classrooms within the sites. I spent the first two weeks of each month at Malaguzzi. Mondays and Wednesdays were spent with Classroom 1, and Tuesdays and Thursdays were spent with Classroom 2. I spent the second two weeks of the month at Woodlawn. Mondays and Wednesdays were spent with Classroom 3, and Tuesdays and Thursdays were spent with Classroom 4. All data collection took place during this time, save the post test of the Woodcock-Johnson.

Most of the data in this study comes from classroom observations. I observed the educational day in each classroom during their designated days. I entered the room at

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\(^3\) I saw most of the parents rarely and had seen very few at the start of the study. I left the signing of consent forms to site personnel, as families knew and were more comfortable with them.
9:00 and observed all class activity through lunch. As both Head Start and Preschool for All are considered half-day programs, the afternoon is considered childcare time. I also observed each classroom through naptime one day each month for the first three months of the study. Observational days also included field trips for Classrooms 2, 3, and 4. This, coupled with holidays, gave me the most in-class time (60 hours) with Classroom 1 and the least with Classroom 3 (52½ hours).

I joined each classroom as a volunteer with the intention of being a participant observer. However, as all four classes typically had already had three teachers, I was needed rarely. When I did assist, I normally helped to clean tables and prepare for lunch, serve or supervise lunch, set up cots for naptime, dress children for outdoor play, or do general classroom cleaning. I attempted to avoid teaching as much as possible and tried to mimic the teachers when classroom management became necessary. However, it was understood that I would step in if there was any perceived danger to the children or if the teachers were losing control of the class.4

Most of my observational time was spent quietly observing the children and handwriting observations nearly constantly while in the classrooms. However, as both Reggio Emilia and Teaching Strategies Gold require teacher observations, none of the children found this behavior odd. I was in the classrooms often enough that, without exception, the children spoke to me freely, shared their work with me, and listened to me when necessary. While I was a quiet observer most of the time, to them I was part of the classroom when I was there.

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4 Both became necessary at least once, but only while at Woodlawn.
I observed all children and teachers during whole group instruction, recording conversation between teachers and children, teaching method, classroom management techniques, and the activities of engaged and disengaged children. During individual and small group instruction (free play), I moved around the room, observing each small group and/or learning station. I tended to move in a circular fashion, visiting each station in the same order during the day. However, this was abandoned on occasion when noteworthy classroom events (i.e. misbehavior or special projects) drew my attention. After the event, I would return to observations of learning stations.

All observations were taken in long-hand in a notebook. Hand-written observational notes were transcribed MS Word within a day of the observation and coded, at least monthly, for classification, framing, prevalence of Illinois Early Learning Standards at the classroom level, and child areas of growth at the child level (using the Illinois Early Learning Standards). Coding in classification and framing demonstrated what was being taught at a given time (classification) and how it was being taught (framing). Coding using learning standards demonstrated how often each standard was covered in each classroom and, as it turned out, how much time was spend in instruction and how much time was spent in either transition or classroom management. Individual child coding showed the areas in which the children were working most, at least during my observations, and in which I would most likely see child growth.

The coding scheme for classification and framing was based on a similar coding scheme used by Ana M Morais and Isabel Neves (2001) in their study of science education in Portugal. Their scheme used Basil Bernstein’s theory of classification and
framing in considering the strength of both classification and framing in all four observed classrooms.

According to this theory, classification refers to the division between differing disciplines (Bernstein, 1971). More directly put, it is a measure of what is taught during a specific point in time. A classroom with the strongest classification (C++) keeps subjects separate (e.g., specific times for language arts, mathematics, science, etc.) with little to no overlap between them. This includes rules for pacing, sequencing, and hierarchy. Classrooms with the weakest classification (C--) do not separate subjects. A single activity may be used to teach several disciplines.

Framing refers to the use of the outcome of relations between categories in the pedagogic device (Morais & Neves, 2000). It is a measure of how information is taught. A classroom with strong framing (F++) will have a rigid daily schedule which is strictly enforced. Teaching and classroom management will be explicit (visible pedagogy). A classroom with weak framing (F--) will have a great deal of flexibility in the schedule. The curriculum may have guidelines, but it will have few, if any, required components. Classroom rules will be enforced, but through less strict means. Teaching and classroom management will be implicit (invisible pedagogy).

A classroom with strong classification and framing (C++ F++) uses a traditional, teacher directed pedagogy. A classroom with weak classification and framing (C-- F--) uses a progressive, child-directed pedagogy. A classroom may also be mixed. Framing may be weak while classification is strong, or vice versa. Also, there are various levels of strength and weakness in both classification and framing. Classification and/or framing in a classroom may be both stronger than that in a progressive classroom and weaker
than that in a traditional classroom. These classrooms build their pedagogic device from both progressive and traditional elements.

I created a coding scheme that considers the strength of classification and framing in several different classroom elements\(^5\). Because of the overlap of classroom elements, I coded for each separately. Classroom elements that are weakly framed or classified are typically those also considered more progressive. Therefore, this coding system helped to determine what elements of the classroom were more progressive and how children responded to those elements.

Very strong classification (\(C^{+++}\)) required complete separation of academic disciplines (teaching or social and emotional skills were not included in coding for classification). This code was only used if only one discipline was being taught in the classroom (i.e. not during the free play period). The code was used primarily for whole group activities that drew on only one academic discipline, such as the identifying letters or counting objects. Strong classification (\(C^{++}\)) demonstrates that multiple disciplines are taught the same time, but in specific ways or in specific learning areas. Disciplines may be taught during the free play period, but the activity itself draws on only one discipline. Small group activities drawing on one discipline, such as letter writing, use this code. This code is also used for required whole group activities draw on two disciplines. Weak classification (\(C^{+}\)) could also be used for either whole group or small group/individual periods. During whole group, this code indicates teacher-driven activities that draw on more than two disciplines. During small group/individual periods, this indicates activities that draw on two disciplines. Weakest classification (\(C^{-}\)) indicates an activity

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\(^5\) Appendix A
or event during a small group/individual period that draws on more than two disciplines. This code could be used for a whole group activity drawing on more than two disciplines, but only if the activities is child-driven.

Very strong framing (F++) indicates very explicit teaching, such as teaching in which children are only receivers of instruction and have no active role in framing instruction. For example, teacher lectures or child chanting of letters or phrases. This code also indicates authoritarian discipline, such as commands directed at children, punishment, or threats. Finally, this code indicates explicit teaching of classroom routines and/or middle class codes. This includes requiring children to sit or stand in a specific manner, serving children food, and stopping activities to discipline children.

Strong framing (F+) indicates explicit teaching with child participation such as call and response or a teacher-directed small group activity. This code also indicates explicit, but not authoritarian discipline such as explicit behavior reminders (“We don’t jump.”, “It’s time to clean up.”). There is some explicit teaching of codes and routines associated with this code, but the events are less extreme. Teachers might direct children to sit or “get ready” for an activity, but be less explicit about specific body positioning or seating arrangements. Teachers also might heavily aid children in serving themselves meals or cleaning the classroom.

Weak framing (F-) indicates implicit teaching, such as songs, teacher guided (not directed) activities, suggestions for extending play, and teacher guided discussions. This code also indicates implicit discipline, such as redirection, implicit reminders (“Free play is over, it’s time for story.”), and demonstrating or guiding children through problem-solving. Through the use of implicit discipline, children also learn routines and codes
implicitly. Children are also able to serve meals and clean classroom areas with some help. Very weak framing \((F^-)\) indicates very implicit teaching, such as making environmental changes, participating in child-lead discussions, expanding on children’s ideas and conclusions through conversation or demonstration, and questioning children’s conclusions (“How do you know?”). This also includes weak hierarchical discipline in which children are provided agency in classroom management, allowing them to come to acceptable behavioral choices (seemingly) on their own. Teachers use questioning techniques to guide behavior. This code also indicates evidence of internalization of classroom routines and/or middle class codes. Children are about to help each other to dress, clean the classroom, and serve meals without guidance or reminders from teachers.

Once all observations were coded, I tabulated and charted the levels of strongest to weakest classification and framing for each classroom for each month of the study, as well as overall levels. This demonstrated changes in strength or weakness of classification and framing over time as well as differences between individual classrooms.

Coding for Illinois Early Learning Standards was based directly on state-created standards and benchmarks. I created a coding scheme based on these standards,\(^6\) and then coded based on individual academic events; that is, specific events in the classroom that address a standard.\(^7\) Events are classified by a clear change in activity or child. Therefore, teacher lecture would be one event, but individual questioning of children would constitute separate events, as children would separately have to consider the

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\(^6\) Appendix A

\(^7\) I chose not to code for social and emotional development at the classroom level. The state standard is so broad that it is difficult, at the classroom level, to differentiate between discipline and social/emotional growth. This standard was only used at the child level.
question and formulate an answer. A conversation between two children would be two separate events, one for each child. Activities might cover several standards. For example, three children building a castle from blocks while conversing about what they are doing would cover three separate standards; math/problem solving (building), arts and creativity (building of a castle and the accompanying imaginative game), and language/literacy (conversation).

This coding scheme was intended to demonstrate how often standards were taught in each classroom and the methods by which they were taught. It had the unintended consequence of clearly showing how each class used time, as it is very easy to see in the observational notes long periods of transition or classroom management when no academic standard was being addressed. The coding for all four classrooms was tabulated, which demonstrated not only how much time was spent on each standard, but the difference in the number of academic events between classrooms.

While I used the same coding scheme in the same way at the child level, I used the coding differently. The codes were never tabulated. Given that I only saw each child at most four days per month, I assumed that the standards that they were hitting during my observation were not the only standards covered. Thus, tabulation of the coding would be meaningless. Instead, I used the coding to direct me to developmental areas that I saw often and in which I would, therefore, be most likely to see growth.

During the course observations, I created separate files for each of the 51 children included in the study. At the end of data collection, I evaluated the observation notes for each child using the assessment tool in Teaching Strategies Gold, the same one used by the teachers. The teachers in each class also provided me with their own observations
over the five month period for five children in each classroom. I was able to compare these observations to my own to see if the teachers and I were seeing the same levels of growth in each child. I was then able to determine for each of the 51 children how much growth they had over the five-month period in observed developmental areas.

I was able to observe a field trip in three of the four classrooms. Observations for field trips were different in several ways. First, as I was needed throughout the day as an active volunteer, I did not take any notes during the trips. Instead, I wrote down everything that I remembered after the trip. These note were kept separate from other observations notes and were not coded at all. Instead, the trips themselves—the location, preparation, child engagement and behavior, etc.—were compared to each other.

During the course of the study, I took photographs of each classroom once per month; I also took photographs during field trips. Photographs were taken of the classroom environment, whole group activities, and individual children. Individual child photographs were used, along with observations, to determine child growth. Group and environment pictures were used both to consider and illustrate classroom pedagogy.

Screenings were administered during the first month of observations and during the first two weeks of February. My allotted time for initial screenings was limited, so I was not able to screen all children. This, coupled with the four children lost during the study, and one child’s refusal to do the screening, limited the number of screened children to 38: 20 at Malaguzzi and 18 at Woodlawn. For follow-up screenings, as I was

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8 At the end of the study, I had nearly 800 photographs.

9 Limitations were due to my own mistakes. I failed to allot additional enough time for screens, both in number of days and time at the center for initial screenings. I did not arrive early for these screenings as I did for follow-ups. As a result, my allotted time ran into lunch and nap, so I could not continue.
not doing observations, I had more days and was able to take more time with the screenings.

I used the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement. I borrowed the testing instruments from the early childhood office at Chicago Public Schools. CPS also provided me with the training necessary to use the instrument. I used tests for Letter-Word identification, Story Recall, Understanding Directions, Spelling (letter writing), and Applied Problems (counting and simple calculation).10 These five tests cover basic reading skills, oral language (expression and comprehension), basic writing, and mathematic reasoning. Together, they work with a broad range of academic skills.11 For this reason, they were also recommend by CPS for this study.12 I used the Woodcock-Johnson Form A for the pretest and From B for the post test. Because this instrument requires that students continue with each test when they are answering correctly and stop only when they have given several incorrect answers in a row (hit their testing ceiling), the length of time of testing varied among children. Testing time ranged from around ten minutes for younger and less advanced children to over a half hour for older and more advanced children.

Test results from the Woodcock-Johnson correspond to an age level deemed appropriate for each level of test performance (an age-norm). For example, two correct answers on Test 1 corresponds to an age-norm of three years, five months. Nine correct answers on the same test corresponds with an age-norm of five years, four months. It is possible on any test to score into the adult range. For each child, I compared their test

10 Tests 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10
11 Appendix A
12 CPS was conducting their own study of state pre-K sites use the same tests from this instrument.
scores to their age for both the pretest and post test, with the expectation of five months of growth between the two, regardless of the actual score. Scores were also averaged by classroom.

I interviewed eleven of the twelve classroom teachers (one refusal).\textsuperscript{13} Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. Answers for each interview were tabulated to ascertain like answers between teachers and coded for classification and framing. Teacher interviews varied in length, from fifteen to forty five minutes, depending on the length of answers.

I also interviewed the site director and education coordinator at Malaguzzi and the site director from Woodlawn.\textsuperscript{14} These interviews were also recorded using the voice recorder and transcribed. Like the teacher interviews, these answers were tabulated. However, the interviews were not coded. While each of these staff members has opinions about what happens in the classrooms at their site, none are in a classroom full time and, therefore, they have limited influence over what is actually happening in the classroom.

I interviewed four parents in each classroom. I attempted to leave the selection of the parents up to the teachers, as I did with the child consent forms. However, teachers in all four rooms had difficulty getting parents to commit to interview times. Teachers at Woodlawn suggested that I come in early and stop parents at pick-up. I ended up using this method at both sites. Thus, my selection of parents was largely based on the time that children were dropped off, which parents had some extra time to meet with me, and,

\textsuperscript{13} See teacher interview questionnaire, Appendix A

\textsuperscript{14} Woodlawn does not have a site-level education coordinator
in the case of Classroom A, which parents spoke English. I did have one parent at each site who scheduled an early afternoon interview. These two parents were selected by the teachers.

The parent interview questionnaire\textsuperscript{15} asked parents about their impressions of the school and about their own child’s progress. Parent interviews lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. They were also recorded with the voice recorder and transcribed. Answers in the parent interviews were tabulated for like answers. They were also coded using a separate coding scheme developed to highlight parent concerns and impressions across all 16 interviews.\textsuperscript{16}

All methods together create a clear picture of each of the four classrooms: of what happened in the classroom, why, and how it affected child learning. The methods also consider the importance of the children’s families, family beliefs about childhood and learning, and family perceptions of the school.

Table 1: Data collected by student at Malaguzzi

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15 Appendix A

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**Classroom 3**

One of the four parent interviews in Classroom 3 was of a parent that did not approve her child’s participation in the study but was interested in participating herself. Thus, it does not appear on the table.
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CHAPTER FOUR:
SETTING AND PLANNING

Setting

Loris Malaguzzi Family Center is located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago’s South Side. The neighborhood was once the home of the Union Stock Yards. The presence of the stock yards was a large draw for immigrant populations, particularly from Eastern Europe, at the turn of the twentieth century. Life in the neighborhood at that time was profiled in *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair.

The current neighborhood demographics\(^1\) are 31% African American, 39% Hispanic, and 20% Caucasian or other. The community ranks as one of the top ten neighborhoods in the city in high percentages of young children. 49% of these children live in poverty. Single parent families make up 49% of households; 74% of these households have incomes below the poverty line. The rates of births to teen mothers, babies born at low birth weight and infant mortality are among the highest in the city.

The teachers at the center cite poverty, immigration issues, neighborhood violence, and English language learning as the primary community concerns. Teachers also mentioned concerns about the number of young parents that the center serves.

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\(^1\) All neighborhood information was provided by the center.
There’s a lot of violence in this community. There’s many times that we go out for walks and it’s very dangerous because there’s been a lot of gang violence. Last year, we were in the playground and there was a drive-by, right in the middle of when the children were playing. So usually, we just have to rush the children inside ‘cause it’s really dangerous to be out there. Especially because we’re right on the corner, so there’s a lot of drive-bys around here.

*Classroom 1 Teacher*

Not only are there a lot of non-English speaking parents here, but also there’s a lot of uneducated young parents here who don’t know how to work with their children in the right way, or even talk to them or treat them right because they’re so young that they don’t comprehend that the way they are with their children has a lot of effect on them.

*Classroom 2 Teacher*

The area near the center has several chain fast-food restaurants, check cashing services, and small shops. There are some banking chains nearby as well as a large chain supermarket (Dominick’s) fifteen blocks north of the center. The most prevalent neighborhood features are the large Swap Meet (flea market) a block from the center and the industrial complex two blocks away. The lot across the street is used as storage for shipping containers. Large trucks drive continuously up and down the street in front of the center. Vibrations from these trucks can be felt in the second floor classrooms.

The center was built to “meet the need of an underserved community.” The site design was based on the design of an older (and very successful) center within the same managing agency, with some minor modifications. The architectural firm engaged to design the building worked with the site to facilitate the utilization of the Reggio Emilia approach.

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2 Appendix B, Photo 1

3 Appendix B, Photo 2

4 Appendix B, Photo 3

5 Center provided information.
Those who follow the Reggio Emilia approach to childcare believe that the child’s development is an important teacher. The child not only observes his or her environment but also transforms it. At [Loris Malaguzzi Family Center] we hoped to build an environment rich in various materials, patterns, textures, scales of space, types of light, and places to be. We also, however, tried to leave blanks—nooks and crannies and wide-open spaces that the children can infuse with their own—often impermanent—constructions and investigations. With Reggio buildings, the children and teachers carry on what the architect has only begun!

_Statement from center architectural firm_

When the center opened in 2002, it was named for a world-famous progressive educator. The name was chosen to emphasize the center’s commitment to education as the path to liberation and the importance of developing critical thinking rather than treating learners as depositories for knowledge.

The center serves children ages six weeks to twelve years. It has twelve classrooms, two art studios, a nature room, and a gross motor room, in addition to various office and conference spaces for adults. The center also has an on-site kitchen. The playground is currently undergoing renovation and was not usable for at any time during the data collection period. The center was designed to have a great deal of natural light; it has large windows throughout. However, safety does come into play in this part of the center design. Many of the downstairs windows, particularly the large windows in the gross motor room, are made of glass bricks rather than panes of glass, thus allowing in light but protecting the children from the neighborhood.

The center entrance is bright and welcoming.\(^6\) It opens into a small entryway with offices on either side. The entrance has both seating for parents and a play area for children.\(^7\) There is a separate room for parents to meet with family services workers and complete paperwork. The lower floor houses classrooms for the younger children

\(^6\) Appendix B, Photo 4

\(^7\) Appendix B, Photo 5
(infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds), an art studio for these children, the kitchen, and the gross motor room. The upper floor has the preschool and school-age classes, the art studio for these children, and the nature room. Classes have specified times when they might use the art studios or gross motor room. The gross motor room is used heavily during the winter when children cannot go outside. The art studios are most typically used when a classroom is working on a special project or exploration. The nature room is usually open. Throughout the center, walls are decorated with classroom documentation panels and photographs.

Both classrooms were brightly-lit, softly colored rooms filled with natural materials and natural light. They were similarly furnished, with child-sized furniture, toys, and art material. Both had a large shelving unit specifically for art materials, as well as computers, a large collection of building materials, and various other toys. The dramatic play area (the play kitchen) in both classrooms had a full-sized table and real (rather than play plastic) plates, pots and pants, and silverware. Both rooms had an adult-sized cushioned bench and an adult writing desk (for child use in Classroom 1 and for parent use in Classroom 2). Both had windows looking into the hallway and into the classroom next door and large windows looking outside with window seats. Conveniently, both classrooms also had child restrooms in adjoining the room.

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8 The school-age program serves children from 5-12 after school, during summer vacation, and on days that schools are closed but the site is open (teacher conferences, report card pickup, etc.).

9 Appendix B, Photo 6

10 Appendix B, Photos 7 and 8
Classroom 1 had a large area for blocks and whole group instruction\(^{11}\), art shelves and easels\(^{12}\), a quiet reading area\(^{13}\), computers, a dramatic play area\(^{14}\), a writing area, and multiple tables and table activities. The primary science area was a light table in the corner\(^{15}\) of the room and a sensory table, usually containing water, near a child-size sink. Some of the available space was taken up with necessary but non-educational areas, such as cubbies and teacher storage.\(^{16}\) Like the hallways, the classroom was decorated with documentation panels and photographs, including photographs of the children’s families. The teachers also kept a work-in-progress board documenting the children’s current exploration.\(^{17}\) In addition, natural elements were present: there were several plants and a fish tank. There was no child artwork on the walls, save a large collage made by the children several years prior.\(^{18}\)

The classroom had three teachers and twenty children, aged at the start of the study between three years, three months and five years. The head teacher was a white woman with a master’s degree in education and specific training in Reggio Emilia. She had taught in private Reggio programs before taking her current position. The classroom

\(^{11}\) Appendix B, Photos 9 and 10

\(^{12}\) Appendix B, Photos 11 and 12

\(^{13}\) Appendix B, Photo 13

\(^{14}\) Appendix B, Photo 14

\(^{15}\) Appendix B, Photo 15

\(^{16}\) Appendix C, Classroom layout 1

\(^{17}\) Appendix B, Photo 16

\(^{18}\) I do not have a photo of this specifically, but it can be seen in the background of Photo 12.
also had a teacher assistant, a Hispanic woman with an associate’s degree and working on a bachelor’s, and a teacher aide, a Hispanic woman with a CDA (Child Development Associate certificate). All had between four and seven years of teaching experience. The teacher assistant and teacher aide were both English/Spanish bilingual, while the head teacher spoke only English.

Classroom 2 was slightly larger than Classroom 1. Thus, the cubbies and teacher workstations were less of a hindrance. This room had many of the same areas: block and whole group instruction\(^\text{19}\), art supplies\(^\text{20}\), computers, writing table, dramatic play\(^\text{21}\), and a quiet reading area\(^\text{22}\). The additional size allowed for a sensory table for sand as well as a water table and a larger light table. The classroom also had an additional chrome table, used primarily for sensory experiences (clay, putty, etc.) and cooking. Space was not unlimited, however. Children in Classroom 2 painted on paper attached to the wall rather than on an easel. As with Classroom 1, this classroom was decorated with documentation panels and photographs. Additionally, as a corner classroom, the room had the advantage of having windows on two sides.\(^\text{23}\)

Like Classroom 1, Classroom 2 had three teachers. In this classroom, all three were Hispanic and English/Spanish bilingual. The head teacher had a bachelor’s degree in education and training in Reggio Emilia. She had previously taught in the public

\(^{19}\) Appendix B, Photo 17

\(^{20}\) Appendix B, Photo 18

\(^{21}\) Appendix B, Photo 20

\(^{22}\) Appendix B, Photo 19

\(^{23}\) Appendix C, Classroom layout 2
school district. As in Classroom 1, the teacher assistant had an associate’s degree in early childhood, and the teacher aide had a CDA. The teachers had between 4 and 10 years of teaching experience. The classroom had twenty children, aged at the start of the study from three years, five months to five years.

Children in both classrooms were primarily Hispanic. There were two African American children in Classroom 2 and an Italian American child in Classroom 1. At the start of the school year, Classroom 1 had several children who spoke only Spanish. There were some, but not as many, Spanish speakers in Classroom 2. There was some mobility within the classrooms. Both classrooms had one child dropped for low attendance late in the study and gained a child from the half-day classroom. Attendance, with a few exceptions, was very good in both classrooms.

Woodlawn Head Start is located in Woodlawn, a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. The Woodlawn neighborhood was once a middle class white neighborhood and home to many University of Chicago professors. African Americans began to move into the neighborhood after racially restrictive covenants were outlawed in the 1950s. The influx of these new residents and the availability of federal housing loans led to massive white flight from the neighborhood. By the early 1960s, the area was a predominantly African American neighborhood. The area is now nearly 95% African American.

The Woodlawn neighborhood is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. Median income is less than half the city average. About 40% of residents live below the poverty level. However, the neighborhood borders Hyde Park, one of the city’s more

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24 In neither case was the dropped child part of the study.
affluent neighborhoods and home to the internationally renowned University of Chicago. In fact, Woodlawn Head Start was less than a thirty minute walk from my office on the University of Chicago campus.

Teachers at the site were very concerned with community violence. Children were seldom taken outside and never went for walks around the neighborhood. Teachers had good cause to be nervous. There was a shooting around 3:00 in the afternoon on one of my observation days down the street from the center. Several community meetings were held at the site while I was there regarding the violence.

I notice certain things with certain kids, like when I was taking a picture of one of the children here, he put up a gangbang sign. And I’m like, “how would they learn that at four and five years old.” So, I think one of the things that they need to learn is that there’s another out…So, I think that’s an area that we talked about last week and I want to try and talk about that again this week with a book in this classroom about gangs and things like that, using cartoon characters.

*Classroom 3 Teacher*

It’s not really a safe place. Even, you would see other centers or places, they might go outside in the community and do things or they might go on walks. We don’t do that here. So, it’s unsafe for the children. We just decide not to; we’d rather be safe. Even though that’s a good learning experience for the children.

*Classroom 4 Teacher*

The area surrounding the center was largely residential.²⁵ There was a gas station (owned by the grandfather of one of the children) and a bodega on the corner. There were a few locally owned restaurants down the street. There were no supermarkets and little in the way of healthy food. The closest fresh food offering that I found was a Walgreens several blocks away.²⁶ There was a low-income apartment complex less than five blocks from the center. According to the teachers, many of the center’s children came from there.

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²⁵ Appendix B, Photo 21

²⁶ Due to a recent agreement between Mayor Daley and Walgreens, the drug store chain carries fresh fruits and vegetables in food desert neighborhoods.
The site is a community center. In addition to the Head Start program, it has an after-school program (through age 12), a senior group that meets regularly, and various community outreach programs. The center regularly hosts community meetings. Thus, the Head Start program only takes up about half of the building.

Classroom 3 is on the ground floor of the building, in a room formerly used by the center’s after-school program. The remaining after-school classroom is next door. Most of the rest of the ground floor is taken up with office space and the center’s gymnasium. The second floor has offices for child care administrative staff, Classroom 4, a third classroom, a food preparation area (not a kitchen), and an empty classroom. The empty room was once Classroom 3’s room. The class was moved downstairs over the summer. In the first two months of the study, Classroom 3 continued to eat lunch and nap in the upstairs room.

The two classrooms included in this study are the only rooms in the center funded by Preschool for All in addition to Head Start. The third room has young three-year-olds: children who turned three too late (after September 1) to enroll in Preschool for All. The program is preparing to add a two-year-old program and was in the process of preparing the empty classroom while I was there.

The building is much older than Malaguzzi; in fact, several center parents attended Head Start there themselves. The building is dark and much less inviting than Malaguzzi. While the classrooms have large windows, the panes are frosted, allowing in little natural light. In addition to the classrooms, the children have access to a gym, used for gross motor when the weather is uninviting—sometimes. The gym had several

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27 The center once had a large after-school program. In recent years, it is less than a third of the size that it once was.
missing floorboards and some of the windows near the ceiling were missing glass. As a result of the broken windows, the gym was often too cold to use in the winter. There was also a playground, but it was only used during the first week of observations in September.

As in Malaguzzi, both classrooms had child-size furniture and multiple toys and supplies. However, in these rooms all the materials were toys, rather than the real materials provided for children at Malaguzzi. The rooms were more brightly colored and decorated in a mixture of children’s work and teacher-bought materials (number and letter charts, pictures, shapes, birthday chart, homework chart, etc.). Both classrooms used a restroom down the hall from the room.

The classrooms were similarly furnished and decorated. All furniture was child-sized and appeared to come from a supplier of preschool furnishings. Most of it was brightly colored and plastic. Dramatic play areas had toy kitchen materials rather than the real plates, pans, and silverware in Malaguzzi classrooms. Natural elements were largely absent. There were few pictures of the children and none of their families. The classrooms looked like traditional classrooms, but lacked many of the comforting elements present in Classrooms 1 and 2.

Classroom 3 was the smallest room in the study, both physically and in terms of class size.\(^{28}\) The room was so small that it was only allotted fifteen children. It had all of the same learning centers as the other rooms; they were just smaller. The classroom had an area for whole group time and blocks\(^{29}\), a dramatic play area\(^{30}\), an art area\(^{31}\), a

\(^{28}\) Appendix C, Classroom layout 3

\(^{29}\) Appendix B, Photos 23 and 24
library, science area, and a writing table. There were also two tables and numerous “table toys”. While the classroom had a computer for teacher use, there were no computers for the children. The classroom was decorated with a variety of store-bought charts showing numbers, letters, shapes, and colors. Children’s work was displayed on bullion boards, on the windows, and in free space around the room. Much of the displayed work has clear signs of teacher involvement—either the use of precut materials or dictation.

The classroom had three teachers for four of five months of the study. In this classroom the head teacher had recently graduated from college with her bachelor’s degree in education. She had previously been a teacher assistant in another agency. The assistant teacher had an associate’s degree in early childhood and was working on her bachelor’s degree in education, ironically at a Reggio-based teacher education program. The third teacher was working at the site as part of a grant program. She worked in the classroom temporarily before leaving to attend college full-time in January. All three teachers were African American. Levels of experience were much more varied in this classroom than at Malaguzzi, ranging from twenty years (for the assistant teacher) and none (third teacher).

30 Appendix B, Photo 25
31 Appendix B, Photo 26
32 Appendix B, Photo 27
33 Appendix B, Photo 28
34 Appendix B, Photo 29
35 Appendix B, Photos 30 and 31
The classroom had fifteen children by the end of the study, but was still filling at
the start. Children ranged in age from three years, eleven months to five years and one
month when I began observations in September. Three children left during the course of
the school year, all of whom had been included in the study. Two children left in early
October (and were then replaced by two children from Classroom 4 in an attempt to
balance gender). One child left in December.

Classroom 4 was twice the size of Classroom 3, as it had once been two smaller
rooms with a dividing wall. As a result, the room was long and narrow, with two doors
to the hallway and windows on two sides. Classroom areas were spread across the room
with the whole group/block area taking up a lot of space near the middle. Like the other
classrooms, this room had a dramatic play area, an art area, writing desk, library,
science area, and tables with ‘table toys.’ The art area, library, and science area were
bunched together in the back of the room and seldom used. There was a sensory table
with sand, which I saw used once. It was typically covered with unsorted children’s
work. Like Classroom 3, this room had a computer for the teachers but no computers for
the children. The room was decorated with store-bought charts and children’s work.

36 Appendix C, Classroom layout 4
37 Appendix B, Photo 32
38 Appendix B, Photo 33
39 Appendix B, Photo 34
40 Appendix B, Photo 35
41 Appendix B, Photo 36
As in Classroom 3, the children’s work bore hallmarks of teacher input; most was either created from pre-made materials or contained teacher dictation.

Classroom 4 had three teachers for the duration of the study. As in Classroom 3, all three were African American. The head teacher finished her bachelor’s degree in education less than two years prior to the start of the study. She had previously worked in a home daycare. The teacher assistant had an associate degree and was working on a bachelor’s degree during the study. The third teacher was part of a literacy grant received by the center, and was also working toward a bachelor’s degree in education. The range of experience in this classroom was between fifteen years (the assistant teacher) and none (the third teacher).

The classroom had twenty children for most of the study. Like Classroom 3, the room was not quite full in September. However, the classroom filled quickly. Four children left the classroom during the course of the study. Two of these children were transferred to Classroom 3 in November. Both children were part of the study. Two children left in early January: one who was part of the study and one who was not. At the start of the study, children ranged in age from three years, eleven months to four years, eleven months.

All of the children at the center were African American. All of the staff, including teachers, administrators, janitorial staff, etc., were also African American. All children and parents were native English speakers. Attendance at the center was somewhat sporadic in the winter. As many of the children lived nearby and walked to school every day, parents tended to keep them home or with neighbors when the weather was unfavorable.
While the neighborhoods had some differences, they had many of the same problems. Teachers at both sites had concerns about unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and neighborhood violence. Immigration issues were the only concern unique to one site. Both neighborhoods had high unemployment rates, high poverty rates, underemployed residents, high percentages of single parent households, and high numbers of teen mothers. Both neighborhoods have gangs, and teachers at both sites have witnessed gang activity and shootings in the area.

The neighborhood surrounding Malaguzzi has slightly better resources. There is a supermarket nearby and there are banks in the area. There are more fresh food and healthy options than in the neighborhood of Woodlawn. However, Woodlawn has the advantage of being fairly close to both Jackson and Washington Square Parks. While these parks can be dangerous, particularly in the evening, they do provide green space that does not exist in Malaguzzi’s industrial neighborhood.

While the differences between the neighborhoods are relatively minor, the schools themselves are quite different, as is particularly apparent in the included photographs. Malaguzzi was built to be a progressive early childhood center. There is space for children to explore, areas for them to investigate, and plenty of room for them to create. The space is inviting and comfortable. Woodlawn is a series of classrooms added to a community house. While there is space for children, there are parts of the building that are decidedly not for children. The space does not invite children in the same way.

The classrooms are also very different in the two centers. Classrooms 1 and 2 are bright, but with muted colors, and comfortable, with many soft places to sit and areas to explore. The classrooms have “provocations”: environmental elements added to pique
the children’s curiosity, such as the windows between rooms and nature elements. Children are invited to explore and work with the environment. Classrooms 3 and 4 are overwhelming, with many bold colors, textures, and wall decor. The classrooms did not engage children to explore as freely. While the presence of learning centers allowed for some experiential learning, there were many more elements allowed for no experimentation or imagination than in Malaguzzi classrooms.

**Lesson Planning**

All classrooms started with a period of whole group instruction. There was a period of free play and small group instruction, and then large motor play. While children in both schools spent much of their free play time in similar classroom learning areas, teacher planning dictated any changes to these areas or the ways that children may used them. Lesson planning also determined the structure of the whole group activity and plans for the use of gross motor time.

Teachers in all four classrooms had a lesson planning period each week. The final product of these sessions seemed to be a guide for classroom activities over the course of the week, but not an absolute. I did not find that any classroom followed their lesson plan exactly at any time during the data collection period. However, the lesson plans were clearly a guide to practice and reflected the teachers’ vision for how the week would proceed and what information they wished to cover during the week.

Lesson planning at each school reflected the educational philosophies of the schools and of the teachers. The Malaguzzi classrooms’ child-directed teaching philosophy mandated treating the classroom as a learning community. The primary
concern when writing a plan was to meet the children’s interests while facilitating growth.

Well, we sit as our team, and we plan by what we have been observing during the week with the children, what their interests are. And we sit together in the middle of the week, like maybe Wednesday and we just come up with ideas and things so we can follow what the children are interested in.

*Classroom 1 Teacher*

We have a meeting each, once a week. Sometimes we have more than one. We sit down and talk about what we’re going to do, what the kids are interested in, follow what they are interested in. That’s really based our interests on their interests.

*Classroom 2 Teacher*

Everyone in the classroom had a voice in the lesson plan. All three classroom teachers planned together and all three voices were equally heard—regardless of education level or title. The children also had a voice in lesson planning. Teachers observed and talked to children throughout the week to evaluate both ability and interest and brought these observations into lesson plan meetings. Teachers worked to create a lesson plan that was engaging while differentiating instruction. The result was week of whole and small group activities tailored as closely as possible to the children.

Teachers at Woodlawn believed in a more regimented curriculum and planned their own classrooms in that manner. Lesson planning was not a team activity. Head teachers planned alone, giving assistant teachers and aides little voice in classroom activities. While there was some concern about differentiated instruction for varying abilities, the children’s interests were less of a consideration. Teachers did observe children in the interest of lesson planning, but this was to assess ability rather than interest—not both, as in Malaguzzi.

Actually, I pull together most of mine and I use their standards, and they have that comparison with the Illinois Standards. And they have Creative Curriculum, so I just use that. And

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42. Teaching Standards Gold creators recently changed its name from Creative Curriculum. Teachers sometimes still refer to the curriculum model as Creative Curriculum.
I pull together. I like carlscorner.org, and they have really great activities for the kids with letters, you know when you’re learning the letters and numbers and things like that.

*Classroom 3 Teacher*

We have to work around the services and what CPS is saying their goals are, so I have to do a lot of work with that. Also, the other work with the students that are developing typically.

*Classroom 4 Teacher*

Both classrooms used Teaching Standards Gold for their child assessments. To Woodlawn, Teaching Standards Gold was also a curriculum and was considered when lesson planning. However, both Woodlawn head teachers were uncomfortable with the lack of direction for teachers in the curriculum. Both wished for something more regimented with clearer instructions for teachers.

I’m used to the Harcourt. And we have Creative, we just pull things together, which is not the best to me. I really like when there’s a standard curriculum when you can open the book and actually teach from that ‘cause I think Harcourt is really great, you can just teach. It actually has all the materials, the books, the lessons, for math, literacy. Things like that—the whole thing and it’s in one book and one lesson and you can just go through each week and just follow that instead of pulling everything together.

*Head Teacher, Woodlawn*

There was almost complete disinterest on the part of the head teachers in the integration of child interest into the curriculum. Both felt that teaching would be easier, and just as effective, with a curriculum that offered a clear daily plan.

Malaguzzi largely disregarded this curriculum in favor of the school’s Reggio philosophy, which the teachers also considered the curriculum. Creating a Reggio classroom was a primary objective when lesson planning. Meeting any standards set by Teaching Standards Gold was secondary.

But, I would say that we are definitely Reggio first and then Creative Curriculum. That’s the reason why I’m here, because it is a Reggio Emilia inspired school.

*Teacher, Classroom 1*

We use Gold Assessment curriculum and we implement using our Reggio philosophy. So, we do activities that we know are going to cover the basic objectives. So, that’s how

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43 Interestingly, both assistant teachers expressed a desire to draw on child interest when lesson planning.
we really implement it. We don’t change our philosophy or do worksheets or stuff like that, but we do try to use the materials that we have in the goals we’re trying to obtain through the Reggio philosophy

Teacher, Classroom 2

The value of the children’s voice in lesson planning speaks to the strength of the framing of hierarchical rules in each site, as will be illustrated more fully in the following sections. The strong framing of lesson planning in Woodlawn created subordination. Children were unable to dictate their own desires for classroom activities and were instead obliged to follow the plan developed by the head teacher. The wish for a regimented curriculum on the part of the Woodlawn head teachers also suggested strong framing of sequencing and pacing rules in the classroom.

In Malaguzzi, hierarchical rules were much weaker. Children were not present physically at lesson planning meetings, but their interests, needs, and desires were the primary focus—above the wishes of the teachers. Thus, they have an active, and nearly equal, voice in lesson planning. Framing of both pacing and sequencing was also much weaker in lesson planning than in Woodlawn. As the interests of children were foremost, rather than a rigid curriculum (or the want for one), sequential acquisition of skills was neither required nor necessary.
CHAPTER FIVE:
CLASSROOM TEACHING

Whole Group Activities

When I arrived in each of the four classrooms at 9:00, the children were finishing breakfast. In all classrooms, children were to go to the rug and wait for others to finish, though children in Classrooms 1 and 2 usually had the option to go to the quiet area (library). Children in Classroom 2 were also allowed to get out their journals. Shortly after 9:00 (between 9:05 and 9:15, depending on the classroom), the teacher began “circle time”, the core element of whole group instruction. This lasted between fifteen and forty minutes, again depending on the classroom. From circle, children had a free choice period, followed by a gross motor period. On occasion, in all four classrooms, children were unable to use the indoor gross motor facilities. On these days, they had music and movement in their classroom during their gross motor time. Children typically had a story to calm them before lunch, which was served between 11:30 and 11:45. After lunch was some sort of quiet activity with the whole group, followed by a nap.

The instructional time was effectively divided into two types of periods—whole group activities and individual/small group activities. Circle time, story, and music and

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1 Classroom 3 children were still in Classroom 4 at this time, as their classroom did not open until their teacher arrived, shortly after 9:00. They waited on the rug in Classroom 4.
2 This was reversed for children in Classroom 1, as they had scheduled time in the gross motor room at 9:30.
movement were all whole group periods. Free choice, the gathering time between breakfast and circle time, and before nap were periods for individual and small group work. Gross motor was variable; usually children played individually or in small groups, but sometimes they played a game as a whole group.

In all four classrooms, individual/small group periods allowed the children more opportunities to direct their own learning. For the most part, they were able to work where they chose for at least part of the period. However, during whole group time, the children were largely required to participate in whatever activity the teachers had planned.

In Classroom 1, children were called to the rug at around 9:05. By this time, most of the children had finished breakfast and brushed their teeth, but there was usually a latecomer or two still eating. One of the teachers joined the children on the rug, typically the head teacher or assistant teacher. Sometimes a second teacher joined the group. At least one teacher cleaned up the remains of breakfast. The children would chat with each other or the teachers as they were getting settled. The teacher would take attendance and then start to sing a song (usually “Make a Circle”); the children would join in, and circle time would begin.

Circle time activities varied from day to day. The period started with two or three songs or fingerplays. The teachers used a variety of known songs and fingerplays, though occasionally a teacher would introduce something new. Many of the songs involved counting, for example “Five Little Speckled Frogs” or “Five Little Monkeys.”

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4 I only saw the Teacher Aid (Teacher 3) lead circle time once.

5 Fingerplays are songs or rhymes that include hand movements, e.g. “Itsy, Bitsy, Spider.”
There were also several welcoming songs in which the children were each greeted by name. In January, “Today is Monday”, based on the Eric Carle book, was a particular favorite. A few times, when the children were “antsy”, the teachers divided them into twos, and had them sit facing their partners while holding hands and touching feet. The children then rocked back and forth, singing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

On Monday, the children would be asked about their weekends. All children would have the opportunity to speak, though they were not required to. They told stories with varying degrees of detail about the weekend, usually including such activities as going to the park or playing with cousins. Children who were English language learners told their stories in Spanish, and one of the Spanish-speaking teachers translated for the class. However, several of these children began to tell their stories in English as the school year progressed.

I fell in the garage and got blood everywhere. I was crying for my papi because I wanted him. I was running.

M. in September, 4 years old

We go to a party. We play duck, duck, goose. My friends, we go, it was my house and we play duck, duck, goose and we play cars with my Playstation.

R. in December, 5 years old
English language learner

Yesterday, I go to my friend L. We went to McDonalds and when we were done, we went to a store. We went to a restaurant. You get money and you put it in the water and there’s fish in there. I had chocolate and L had chocolate too.

J. in January, 4 years old

When weekend story sharing was a circle time activity, it was usually the only activity. Other days, teachers would lead a discussion on a pre-chosen topic. On observation days, this often had something to do with health and safety, such as wearing seatbelts or washing hands. Other discussions related to something specific happening in the classroom. During one circle time, the teacher led a discussion about the proper way
to pass a bowl to a neighbor at lunchtime. The focus of the discussion was how to keep the serving spoon from falling out of the bowl when passing.

Class discussions were also used to direct the classroom’s Reggio-based exploration. In both classrooms at Malaguzzi, children did a year-long “exploration” of a topic which was of interest to them. The exploration might change over the course of the school year as children’s interest shifted. In Classroom 1, the exploration was centered around the children’s interest in building. They had discussions about and shapes and the shapes that create buildings in early months. Near the end of my study, the interest had shifted to castles, both in terms of building castles and living inside of castles.

Classroom discussions regarding the exploration of building. This included such topics as looking at pictures of buildings taken on a neighborhood walk or day before and deciding how to turn the classroom into a castle.

All class discussions took on a similar format: the teacher would pose a discussion topic (“I want to hear about your weekends,” or “What would we have to do to our classroom to turn it into a castle?”) and then call upon children to answer. Both teachers and children responded to children’s answers, though teachers were more likely to do so. Teacher questions served to further prompt children to expand their answers and their thinking. If the discussion was in regard to the exploration of building, one teacher would take notes on the discussion.

   Teacher:  What would we have to do to change our room into a castle?”
   J: We have to make dresses for the girls. Princess dresses and glass slippers and jewelry and put decorations.”
   A: That’s great.

   Class discussion, January

Children sat on the rug in a lopsided circle during circle time. While they were instructed to sit, they could position their bodies however they chose. It was not unusual
for children to lean against the wall or a shelf or to play with their shoes, nor was this discouraged. The teachers sat on the floor as part of the circle. Children were discouraged from talking amongst themselves, as that would make it difficult to hear children who were participating in the whole group activity. Getting toys out of the surrounding baskets was also discouraged, but some expectations were made for new children and, at times, for a special needs child.

Story time was usually between lunch and naptime, though there were sometimes extra stories on days that the class could not use the gross motor room. Children were typically at the rug before story time started, having gone there to look at books after lunch. The teacher sat in a low chair, slightly above the children, so that the book would be easier to see. Children gathered near the teacher in a group rather than positioning themselves in a circle. The teacher would introduce the book and read the story, prompting and questioning at certain points during the story. Afterwards, she would question the children briefly about what happened.

All of the books that I observed being read to the children were well-written and had engaging stories and good illustrations. Most were by well-known and well-respected authors. I rarely saw a child who was not engaged by the story and most children were usually able to retell some story elements.

A period for music and movement in the classroom was not always part of the daily schedule. While a set period for gross motor development was required, the teachers (and the children) preferred either to go outside or to use the gross motor room

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6 Appendix D, Photo 1
7 This observation does not include some books that children brought from home and asked the teachers to read.
in the center. However, as the largest room in the building, the gross motor room was sometimes used for meetings or other events and was, at these times, not available for the children’s use. On these days, the children would stay in the classroom to play movement games on the rug (the same space used for circle time).

The most popular music/movement game was musical chairs. Children set up the chairs on the rug and then danced around them in a circle while listening to a CD of children’s music, until one teacher paused the CD. Children who were “out” usually stood to the side and continued to dance. I observed a game in January in which children were encouraged to keep going around in the circle when “out” and simply not to sit down, but this became confusing for everyone.

Other musical games tended to follow CDs, and the majority encouraged children to follow directions given in the song (tiptoe, jump, skip, etc.), though a few songs encouraged non-structured dancing. Movement games that did not include music included cognitive games with rhymes, such as “Doggie, Doggie, Where’s Your Bone” or less structured games without CDs such as “Everybody’s Sleeping.”

Of the three whole group periods, classification was weakest during circle time.

All activities worked with multiple disciplines. Discussions required language and social

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8 Appendix D, Photo 2

9 Appendix D, Photo 3

10 In this game, all children sit in a circle. One child is selected to be the “doggie” and covers his eyes. The teacher gives one of the children in the circle a “bone” (usually a block) to hide behind her back. The “doggie” then must wake up and guess who has the bone while the other children chant a rhyme. Appendix D, Photo 4.

11 In this game, all of the children lay on the floor, pretending to sleep. The teacher sings “Everybody’s Sleeping”, ending the song with an animal that the children will be when they awake. The children pretend to be the animal and the song starts over. This game was often used during transitions as well as during music and movement.
emotional skills in addition to the skills covered by the discussion topic itself (health, math, etc.). Songs and fingerplays worked with language, music, and (usually) math. Story time and music and movement both showed stronger classification, but the classification was still weak. Stories were intended to work primarily with language and literacy skills, such as understanding story elements, the structure of a book, and story retelling. However, many of the stories themselves addressed other skills. Similarly, music and movement was primarily intended to work with gross motor skills. But many of the gross motor games also required the use of other skills.

Framing was weak throughout all three periods. Children were required to sit and be respectful (quiet when others were speaking, somewhat attentive) during circle and story times, but there were no other rules for behavior. Children could freely converse with the teacher and give their own impressions of the lesson. There was no required participation in either of these periods or during music and movement. Teaching was implicit, most notably during circle time. Skills and concepts were taught through conversations with children rather than directly and explicitly.

In Classroom 2, circle time began between 9:00 and 9:10. Children had finished breakfast, though a few were still brushing their teeth. Children arranged themselves in a circle, facing the teacher. Circle time was started by the head teacher or by the assistant teacher if the head teacher was absent. However, as the teachers moved through circle time activities, it was not unusual for the assistant teacher or the teacher aid to take over. During one observation, all three teachers led circle time at some stage. Children talked amongst themselves as they gathered on the rug. The teacher sat on the floor at the head

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12 Appendix D, Photo 5
of the circle (which was really more of an oval). The other two teachers cleaned the table after breakfast and chatted with parents dropping off latecomers.

The teacher leading circle time would begin by taking attendance. This was the only regular circle time activity in Classroom 2. Other activities varied widely. Early in the school year, activities were informal. As Classroom 2 had their gross motor period at 9:30, very often much of circle time was used as a gross motor warm up—stretching or music and movement games. Other days, circle time was used for an additional story.

By late November, circle time was sometimes used for more structured activities and games. In one popular game, the children divided into two teams. The teacher held up word and picture flash cards. The children read the cards using the pictures. In another flash card game, the teacher would hold up letters. Children whose name contained the letter would hold up their hand. This usually dissolved into conversations between children and teachers about letters, the sounds they made, and where they appeared in children’s names, teachers’ names, and around the classroom. Children also did some more structured math activities, such as taking turns counting children during attendance or counting manipulatives, such as beads.

By January, the class’s exploration of the performing arts took over much of circle time. Any child who wished to perform during circle time was free to do so. Most often, this was one child who would sing and dance to Michael Jackson’s “Bad” (with original choreography). Children would also listen to both classical and popular music while attempting to sing and dance along with both.

On my last day of observation, whole group time was used entirely for this exploration and for the children’s work with The Three Little Pigs, work that was
normally part of story time. The class went next door to the school-age classroom, which was empty of children and had a stage. After some warm-up exercises, the children were each allowed to perform (in small groups) for the class. Then the teachers picked parts for a production of *The Three Little Pigs*. The children put on the production twice with minimal direction from the teachers. In both productions the narrators guided any children unsure of their parts. However, most of children knew their roles well.

There was a great deal of activity overlap between circle time and both story and music. This made the length of the circle time somewhat variable. On days that the children left the classroom for gross motor time, circle time lasted no longer than twenty minutes. However, when it was combined with other activities, it was often between thirty and forty minutes.

While circle time was often used as a warm-up for gross motor, any day that the classroom could not use the gross motor room (or go outside), circle time moved directly into music and movement. As in Classroom 1, teachers in Classroom 2 often used movement CDs for children that gave direction. However in later months, this sometimes led to listening and dancing to classical or popular music. Other movement games included keeping a dance tempo as the teacher beat a drum or racing in potato sacks. The class also played some turn-taking games, such as “Froggie in the Middle”, that allowed children to perform a bit for classmates.

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13 Parts included the three pigs, the wolf, the momma pig, and a narrator.

14 Appendix D, Photos 6-9

15 Appendix D, Photo 10

16 In this game, the children sit in a circle and sing the song “Froggie in the Middle.” Children take turns getting in the middle where they dance or jump. Appendix D, Photo 11
Not including an occasional story during the circle time period, I observed two separate story times during the day. The first occurred at the end of free play as the teachers and some of the children were setting up the tables for lunch. The second occurred just before nap. Teachers read a variety of books during the story time before lunch. Old favorites (of either the children or the teachers) were often chosen. Other times, the teacher (usually the teacher aid for this period) chose a story pertaining to a classroom issue. During a day that one child had been hitting other children frequently, the story was *Hands are Not for Hitting*. Another day, when a child was very distraught because another child had accidentally drawn on her paper, the story was *Feeling Sad*, leading to the following exchange:

Teacher: A., do you want to come hear the story?
A.: No, I’m sad.
Teacher to the class: This story is *Feeling Sad*.
A.: That’s how I’m feeling.
Teacher: Then come hear my story.
A. stops crying and goes to rug.

* A. in December, 4 years old

This story was followed by a discussion about feeling sad, in which A. participated fully.

The second story time, just before nap, was used for the dramatization of *The Three Little Pigs* as early as October. The teachers used masking tape to create a stage on the rug, and the children performed the story two or three times before their nap. It was the interest in story dramatization during this period that eventually led to the class’s exploration of the performing arts. As referenced previously, by January, both the exploration and the dramatization had become part of circle time.

Classification was often weak during whole group time, but not always. While the performing arts activities, the stories, and the music and movement activities drew upon skills from several disciplines, some of the more structured activities showed strong
classification. Letter and word games with flash cards worked with language and literacy skills (primarily with letter and word identification) and counting activities drew strictly upon math skills.

The framing, however, was weak throughout. As in Classroom 1, children were expected to sit and to be respectful. Framing was somewhat stronger in this respect, however. Children in Classroom 2 had assigned seats on the rug. Teaching was largely implicit. While this was to be expected during such activities as story dramatization or telling stories about feelings, it was also true during strongly classified activities. While the flashcard games worked with specific disciplines, the teaching was not as explicit as might be expected. The flash cards were used to prompt the discussion of letters and words and how they work rather than to drill skills. In counting activities, children were never corrected when they miscounted. Instead, several children counted the same thing (children or manipulatives) and the group then discussed what count was likely correct.

In the case of nearly all activities the actual pedagogy was invisible, though at times the activity made it seem as though the pedagogy was visible. The real teaching was seldom as explicit as it appeared.

Children in Classroom 3 went upstairs to Classroom 4 when they arrived; there they had breakfast and looked at books with Classroom 4 children. At 9:00, or shortly after, their head teacher arrived. She gathered her class and took them to their own classroom, where the children went immediately to the rug and sat in a circle facing the teacher. The teacher sat in an adult-sized chair beside the calendar and whiteboard. The grant-funded teacher (third teacher) sat behind the circle, also in an adult-sized chair.
The assistant teacher did not arrive until 9:30. Because of the transition between classrooms, circle time did not begin until nearly 9:15.

The class went through the same series of songs every morning at the start of circle time. They began with a song asking where each child was (“Where is …?”) in which each child, at their turn, would stand and sing a response. This would be immediately followed by “I am Special” and then “1, 2, 3 Little Friends” in English and Spanish. There was never a deviation from this order. Sometimes, there was not even a pause between songs.

After the opening songs, children were called to count classmates. A girl was chosen to count girls, a boy was chosen to count boys, and then one child was chosen to count all of the children together. Because it was not uncommon for some children to still be having breakfast in the upstairs classroom, this sometimes required the adding of children that were in the building but not yet in the classroom. Children were actively corrected when counting, both by the teachers and by other children.

The counting was usually followed by calendar. The children would sing a song about the days of the week and identify the day using a chart in the classroom. They would then identify the previous day and the one following. Next, the month was identified, usually by a child who had a birthday during that month. The children would then count the number of days in the month, using a classroom calendar.

As in Classroom 1, on Mondays the children were often (though not always) asked to talk about their weekends. There were, however, some differences. The teacher went through this activity quickly. Not everyone was called and answers were fairly

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17 Appendix D, Photo 12
short. There was little call for elaboration and no real discussion about the children’s activities.

R.: I rode a horse. I ride the horse everywhere. He follow wherever I go.  
R. in November, 4 years old

S.: I went to my nana house. Even my dog was there.  
S. in December, 4 years old

There were occasional discussions at other times, but not as commonly as in Classroom 1. The format was similar to weekend discussions. The teacher would pose discussion topic (“Tell me about your weekends” or “What are you having for Thanksgiving dinner?”), and a few children would give quick answers; then the group would move on to the next topic.

Circle time was used for skill-building, primarily in letter recognition. The teacher in Classroom 3 used a “letter of the week” model, beginning with A at the start of the school year and focusing on a new letter each week. The new letter was introduced during Monday circle time. The teacher would hold up a letter chart, and the children would chant together all letters covered so far (“Upper case A, lower case A,” and so on). The teacher would stop at the new letter and draw it on the white board. The children would then briefly call out known words that started with the letter, often with a lot of teacher prompting. (For F, “What is this on the end of my leg?”) Words would be written on the board.

The teacher would then read a story from a series of alphabet books. Each book (called Little[Letter], e.g. Little E, Little F) had the same plot. A child, named Little [Letter], would find a variety of things that began with the letter to put into a box. The books made no sense and many of the pictures were ambiguous (e.g. a picture of a bird
was called a “jay” in the J book). They were not engaging stories. However, they were read at least once per week, if not more.

While the letter was introduced on Monday, it was approached in circle time the same way each day. Children looked at the letter, discussed the sound, listed words, and then went through the book. Circle time lasted from thirty-five to forty minutes each day. This was the longest regular whole group period in any classroom observed. Aside from the reading of the letter story during circle time, there was not a regular story during the instructional day. Occasionally, there would be a story between free choice and gross motor in the gym. However, the primary story time was after naptime and was, therefore, not observed.

Like the classrooms at Malaguzzi, Classroom 3 had a music and movement period in the classroom if the gym was not usable (as was often the case in December and January due to the cold weather). However, this was only observed twice. More often, something else happened that took up the time. One day each of the children showed an ornament that they had made during free choice. Another day, behavior in the hallway was poor, so there was a class discussion (largely between the teachers) regarding appropriate behavior.

When the children did have music and movement, the activities were similar to those in Malaguzzi. During one period, the children played “Hokey Pokey.” Another day, the teacher played music and the children danced. They danced together and then

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18 The instructional day runs from 9:00 to 11:30. The period after lunch is considered childcare and does not receive Head Start funding.
the teacher suggested that they take turns so that each could show off their dance moves.\footnote{Appendix D, Photos 13 and 14}

Classroom 3 had the strongest classification during circle time of the four observed classrooms. There was some overlap of disciplines in the opening songs and during calendar. But these activities were not as weakly classified as songs or fingerplays in Malaguzzi classrooms. The “letter of the week” activities had very strong classification. While there was a story, the story did not promote multiple disciplines as did those read in Classrooms 1 and 2. The other activities clearly only addressed letter learning. The counting activities, unlike the similar activities in Classroom 2, required clear right and wrong answers without allowing for the higher-order thinking skills addressed in Classroom 2. The discussions were more weakly classified than other activities, but again, they were more limited than similar activities at Malaguzzi.

(Discussions in Classroom 1 required more interaction between children, prompting the use of more interpersonal and language skills.)

Framing was also quite strong. The children did not have assigned seats, but they still had more stringent behavioral requirements than either Malaguzzi classroom. The children were to be sitting with legs crossed (criss-cross applesauce) and hands in their laps. The phrase “criss-cross applesauce” was repeated frequently by teachers, and children who did not comply were chastised and sometimes removed from the area. Children were to be quiet unless called upon to speak. As with seating, non-compliance could lead to scolding and removal from the area. Teaching was wholly explicit.
Children were not asked to draw conclusions or to do much problem solving. The teacher directed all learning throughout the circle time period.

In Classroom 4, the children finished breakfast and then went to the rug to look at books along with children from Classroom 3. Their circle began when the Classroom 3 children left, around 9:10. One child gathered the books to be put away, and the children arranged themselves into a circle. As in Classroom 3, the teacher sat in an adult-sized chair near the whiteboard. The other two teachers joined the group after all the children had finished breakfast (or were moved into the empty classroom). Like the head teacher, the other teachers sat in adult-sized chairs.

Circle time began with the same songs as in Classroom 3, in the same order. The children started with “Where is…”, followed by “I am Special” and then “1, 2, 3 Little Friends” in English and Spanish. This was usually followed by some kind of activity, but activities varied. Near the start of the year, the teacher was following a “letter of the week” model similar to Classroom 3, but this was abandoned by October. I observed some discussions, including one just before Halloween (“Name something you know about pumpkins”) and another before Christmas (“What are you asking Santa to bring?”). A few times, the teacher made use of classroom charts. Once, the children were called to identify shapes. Twice I observed calendar. The week before the holiday break, there was a Christmas story read to the class.

There were two noticeable learning themes during the course of the study. In November, the class did a short study of families. There was some counting of family members, and during one observation, a child showed some family pictures. In January,
the class was studying safety. This manifested in circle time as looking at books with different signs, discussing the shapes of the signs, and going over safety rules.

Circle time in Classroom 4 typically lasted between ten and fifteen minutes. On many days, the opening song and some brief discussion about free play activities were the extent of the circle time. Discussions, when present, were brief.

There was usually a story between free play and gross motor. These stories, like those at Malaguzzi, were usually engaging stories written by well-known and respected authors. The teacher (usually the third teacher) would prompt for understanding during the story and lead a brief discussion afterwards.

Music and movement happened with more regularity in Classroom 4 than in Classroom 3. Classroom 4 had movement CDs similar to (and in some cases the same as) those used in Malaguzzi classrooms. The children had a few favorite games, such as “Sticky Bubblegum.” In January, when music and movement in the classroom became more frequent due to heating issues in the gym, the teachers started bringing out rhythm sticks during this period. The children would hit their sticks in time with the music or march around the room with them. A few games required children to hit their sticks together a specific number of times.

Classification in circle time was usually weak. The occasional skill-based activities (letter of the week, identifying shapes) were more strongly classified. However, these activities were much less frequent than similar activities in Classroom 3. Discussions were weakly classified, but not as weakly as those in Classroom 1. Classification in theme-based activities was also weak. Stories were similar to those read

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20 Appendix D, Photo 15
in Malaguzzi classrooms and had weaker classification than Classroom 3 stories. Music and movement activities were also similar to those at Malaguzzi and also had weak classification.

Framing was comparable to framing in Classroom 3. Behavior at circle time was nearly as strict. Children were to sit quietly with legs crossed and hands in their lap. However, they were not removed from the circle *as often* for non-compliance. When there was an activity beyond the opening songs, the teaching was explicit. Discussions were heavily directed and children were not to repeat statements or observations previously voiced by someone else. Story prompting, while not entirely unlike prompting in Classrooms 1 or 2, was more directed. There were clear right and wrong answers rather than possible observations.

Classrooms 1 and 3 had the most predictable circle time periods of the four classrooms. However, Classroom 1 had the weakest classification and framing of the four and Classroom 3 had the strongest. Though the circle time in Classroom 1 was fairly predictable, it allowed for a great deal of child participation and implicit teaching. The circle in Classroom 3 allowed for little child input beyond specific answers for specific questions, and the teaching was explicit.

In several cases, similar activities between classrooms were used differently. Classrooms 1, 3, and 4 each had discussions as a somewhat regular feature in whole group instruction. However, only in Classroom 1 did the discussion allow for give and take between the teachers and students, rather than the students simply answering questions posed by the teachers. Classroom 2 did a great deal of letter recognition work, just as Classroom 3 did. However, letter work in Classroom 2 required that the children
come to understand how letters work to make up words and how words can be taken apart, rather than just recognizing the letter as an initial sound. Both Classroom 2 and Classroom 3 regularly had children count each other. In Classroom 3 there was a clear goal: how many children were there? In Classroom 2, the teachers were more concerned about the children learning how to use numbers. How many children did each person count? How could we find out who was right?

The opening songs were so ingrained in Classrooms 3 and 4 that the teachers did not even need to participate. The children almost mindlessly went through the sequence each day. In Classrooms 1 and 2, there was much greater variation. There was always some kind of opening song or fingerplay, but it changed. Favorites could be used repeatedly, but the class would move on once a song become mundane.

Story was quite similar in all classrooms. While I rarely observed a story (other than the alphabet stories) in Classroom 3, when there was a story, it was of similar quality to stories in the other classrooms. All four classrooms prompted for understanding during the story and questioned after, though the questioning in Woodlawn classrooms was shorter and more directed. Music and movement was also similar in all classrooms. Similar, or the same, CDs were observed in all classrooms except Classroom 3, which had the least structured (and least frequent) music and movement period.

**Small Group and Individual Activities**

Small group and individual activities were treated as the core of the curriculum in all four classrooms. All eleven interviewed teachers expressed the belief that children learn primarily through play, and all four classrooms were designed to facilitate this. As
previously stated, the classrooms had similar learning areas for children and a daily schedule that put forth the free play period as the primary morning event.

As all of the classrooms had three teachers for the majority of the data collection period, the teachers could easily provide teacher-led (or teacher-guided) small group activities during free play while still having teachers available to guide individual learning. While small group activities were more frequent in some classes than in others, all classrooms had small group activities with some regularity during the data collection period.

While the free play period was the primary time for individual work during the instructional day, it was not the only time. Children had some time for individual free work before breakfast at Malaguzzi (Woodlawn was not open early enough for this). There was also some individual time after breakfast and before circle time in all four classrooms and after lunch in Malaguzzi classrooms.

There was more structure leading into the primary free play period in Malaguzzi classrooms than there was at Woodlawn. In both Classrooms 1 and 2, teachers chose table activities. In Classroom 1, these activities were to be used for the duration of the period, while in Classroom 2 they were usually used for a small group activity and could be exchanged for something else once small group work ended. In Classroom 1, teachers also dictated the building toys to be used on the rug, most often large blocks, as they were a class favorite and best supported the exploration of building and houses.

Free play periods were around an hour in all four classrooms and were more likely to go long on days that children did not leave the classroom for gross motor. The period tended to be slightly shorter (by about 10 minutes) in Woodlawn classrooms, as
these classrooms did not have adjoining restrooms, and teachers were thus obligated to take all of the children to the restroom together.

Small Group Instruction

While small group instruction in Classroom 1 was typically teacher guidance of a child-led activity, teachers also created and led some small group activities. These were most often led by the assistant teacher and usually worked on a more specific skill than other free play areas. Children were not required to go to small group and tended to come and go as they wished, unless a child had a specific need for a skill that was the focus of small group. For example, during one small group period in January, the focus was name writing. Older children (those preparing for kindergarten next year) who could not yet write their names were required to go to the small group and were called over. Younger children could more freely drift in and out.

Most small group activities were teacher-created games using manipulatives. There were several counting/math-based games. In many cases, the game was left out on the table as a provocation, and the teacher joined in when children showed interest and began to play the game. Older children would most often play the game as it was created, while younger children would be more likely to develop their own game using the provided materials.

Many small group activities were child-led. Children might request a game, such as a memory or a match game, that required some teacher guidance. The teacher would then sit with the group of children that wished to play until they tired of the game and moved onto another activity. Alternately, a group of children might play together in an

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21 Appendix D, Photo 16
area, and a teacher would join them. The teacher would then discuss what the children were doing and possibly make some suggestions to guide play, either verbally or through demonstration.

In Classroom 2, small group activities were more structured and more obligatory. The teachers explained in their interviews that Tuesdays and Thursdays (my observation days) were used for kindergarten preparation.

Activities were set up on the table after breakfast, during circle. Upon returning from circle, children chose their areas. Some children, especially older children, might first be assigned to a small group activity. Some days, especially near the end of the observation period, all children would be assigned to a small group. However, some days no one was assigned to a group. By the same token, older children did not necessarily have to go to a small group every day.

Most small group activities focused on math and literacy concepts such as counting, sorting, categorizing, writing, and identifying letters. However, I also observed small group work in science (examining leaves found on a community walk and writing about them), safety (identifying signs), and art (various painting or collage projects). In most of these activities, the teachers would join the activity at the start to give instruction and guidance. Usually, the teacher would then leave and allow the children to work together, returning later to assess progress. However, if there was an activity that needed
closer supervision (e.g. something potentially messy) the teacher would remain at the activity, but still allow the children to work with minimal direction.

Literacy activities most often consisted of journal writing and letter identification. Teachers worked with ability groups, usually consisting of children around the same age. Within the group, teachers would individualize instruction and activities. Children that were working on early letter recognition and name writing might be tasked with name practice, with the teacher writing examples in their journals. Later work would involve indentifying and writing individual letters. Children who knew most or all of their letters would more likely be asked to write stories, in which children used primarily inventive spelling and illustrations. The youngest children had drawing journals rather than writing journals. Teachers worked with these children on story drawing and dictation.

Math activities were more varied. One of the children’s favorite games was “Small, Medium, Large.” Initially, this game required that children work together to sort pictures of items into small, medium, and large categories. Children would usually play without a teacher; the teacher would check their progress once the game was completed. The teacher and children would then talk about the properties of different items based on their size. (“Which piece of cake would you want if you’re not that hungry?” “Which

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22 Appendix D, Photo 17

23 Appendix E, Work samples 1 and 2

24 Older children had both drawing and writing journals. They used their drawing journals before breakfast or after lunch.

25 Appendix D, Photo 18; Appendix E, Work Samples 3 and 4

26 Appendix D, Photo 19
plane would hold the most people?”) Teachers later expanded the game to include the sorting of different classroom objects, such as counting bears.  

Other math activities included matching numbers to quantities, counting out various quantities of numerous items, sorting for various properties (including different letters), and puzzles of varying complexity. Teacher participation was contingent on the level of difficulty the activity posed to the children, the children’s engagement in the activity, and how well the children were working together. If children had a clear understanding of the activity, were working steadily, and were cooperating, the teacher would either leave the area or stay to converse and guide, but not to direct. 

Some art activities were treated as small group activities, but they were structured differently than literacy and math activities. Children were not typically sent to art. Children could leave at will, not only when the activity was over. Children also had leverage to modify the activity if they lost interest or wished to try something other than what the teachers had planned. During one art activity, the teachers had set out paper bowls of collage materials. The project was supposed to be creating some sort of collage on paper. However, the children became more interested in the bowls. They decided that they looked like little hats and used their materials to decorate them. The teacher, rather than stopping them, tied the bowls to their heads. 

When small group activities ended—either when the task was complete or the children lost interest—the area would be cleaned and the children would then be allowed

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27 Appendix D, Photo 20

28 Appendix D, Photo 21

29 Appendix D, Photo 22
to get out toys at the table or to go to another learning area. Assigned small group work usually involved one quarter to half of the class and lasted twenty to thirty minutes of the free choice period.

Small group activities in Classroom 3 were either art or literacy activities. These activities were always at the same table and lasted throughout the free play period. Children went to the small group (project) table during free play, completed their project under the supervision of the teacher, and moved on to other activities. While some activities were optional, many were mandatory. After the children who voluntarily went to the project table finished, other children would be called to complete the activities at the table. These children tended to rush through the activity to get back to whatever they had been doing previously.

Projects tended to be related to the letter of the week. The children often colored or decorated pictures related to the letter (e.g. elephants during e week). These projects used pre-made or teacher-created materials and required the children to do little more than cut, glue and color. In observation notes, most of these activities were categorized as focusing on motor skills rather than art or creativity. Other letter of the week projects consisted of writing the letter numerous times or using stamps or stencils to create the letter.

Near holidays, children made holiday-based projects. These included paper pumpkins for Halloween, paper turkeys for Thanksgiving, and foam ornaments for

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30 Appendix E, Work sample 5
31 Appendix D, Photos 23 and 24
32 Appendix D, Photo 25
Christmas. Of these, the Christmas ornaments required the most creativity. Rather than color or cut out a picture, the task was to use foam pieces to decorate a foam ornament.\textsuperscript{33} Other projects had vague instructions, such as “draw a safety picture” or “draw a picture of things that start with D.”

A teacher sat at the table for the duration of the free play period. The teacher called children who had not yet completed the project, put out materials as children moved in and out of the area, and guided progress. Projects that had a specific required product were more closely directed.

Small group time in Classroom 4 had a similar format to that in Classroom 3. There was a project table used for small group activities. Activities were either art or literacy based. One teacher sat at the table and called children to complete required projects. Most of the differences between small group instruction in Classrooms 3 and 4 were in the areas of frequency and duration. In Classroom 4, small group was not open for the entire free play period. Rather than holding the learning area open and attempting to have all children do the activity, teachers usually only had the area open for about half of the free choice period. Also, there was not a planned project every day.

At the beginning of the school year, when Classroom 4 was also doing letter of the week, there were several projects in which the children were required to draw a picture of the letter (e.g. a “C” picture).\textsuperscript{34} Later projects were based on a classroom or

\textsuperscript{33} Appendix D, Photos 26 and 27

\textsuperscript{34} Appendix D, Photos 28 and 29
holiday theme: pumpkins for Halloween, trees for Christmas, and family trees and family drawings during the study of family.\textsuperscript{35}

A teacher would sit with various groups of children for the whole of the small group period. She would call children that had not yet completed the project and keep materials out and fresh. The teacher would also guide, or direct, the project depending on the level of creativity required. For any required drawing, the teacher would ask each child to tell her about the picture, and write down what the child said (story dictation).

As with whole group instruction, small group work at Woodlawn was more strongly framed than that in Malaguzzi. Instruction was more explicit and teachers more closely guided and directed student work. Though small group work was most prominent and most compulsory in Classroom 2, teaching was still implicit. Children worked as independently as possible with teachers intervening when necessary. Teacher intervention in Classroom 1 was similar. Classification was similarly strong for all four classrooms.

Dramatic Play

The dramatic play area was set up as a kitchen in all four classrooms. All had child-sized kitchen furnishings: stove, refrigerator, and cabinets. All had tables and chairs (adult-sized in Malaguzzi, child-sized in Woodlawn). All had dolls, dress-up clothes, and toy food. The dramatic play area was one of the most popular learning centers in all of the classrooms. This, along with the limited size of the area, required that the number of children allowed to play in the area was restricted to two to four children at one time.

\textsuperscript{35} Appendix D, Photo 30
This area was problematic at clean up time in all classrooms, as the numerous toys and movement in the area often left a significant mess.

While dramatic play was popular in Classroom 1, it did not have the draw of the rug and building toys. However, it was usually full (four child maximum) for the duration of the free choice period. Children played a variety of imaginative games in the area. The most popular seemed to be pretending to be dogs. The children created an 18-inch square area by opening the refrigerator door toward the wall. The “doggie” would sit in this area, pretending it was his house. Children also played “family” quite often, with various children pretending to be parents, children, and other relatives. There were some non-family related cooking games and doctor/hospital games, and likely several others that I did not recognize either because I did not observe the game set-up or because the children were playing in Spanish.

December 1, 2010: Dramatic play. A. at doctor’s office. Dr. K. uses spoon as a tongue depressor. J. joins. A. reminds her to change her name [on the choice board]. A. “Ow, my teeth hurt! Ow! Ow!” K. taps A.’s hands with knives and spoons. K. leaves A. is momentarily upset. Then to J., “Okay, you’re the kid, I’m the doctor.” Checks her out with tongue depressor/spoon. Taps her knees with the spoon. Then gives her a cell phone. J. uses phone as camera.

A., 5 years old, K., 4 years old, and J., 3 years old

I also observed the creative use of several dramatic play toys. Toy sushi was used as a toothbrush and as a laser pistol. Baskets were used as hats. The kitchen furniture changed entirely in the children’s imaginations, depending on the game.

Imaginative games grew in complexity as the school year progressed. Children in Classroom 1 did not simply assign roles. They acted roles out for extended periods, maintaining the roles through full conversations and series imagined events.

36 Appendix D, Photo 31
January 12, 2011, Dramatic play: Girls are escaping some kind of danger. J. and M., “Mommy!”
A., “Stay there, stay there.”
A. rescues the colored blocks from rug area. M. hoards all the blocks. J. appeals to A.
A., “Share. Share now!” Each (M. and J.) play with a few blocks while A. talks on her cell phone.

A. and M., 5 years old, J., 4 years old

The dramatic play area was also very popular in Classroom 2. However, the numbers of children allowed in the area at one time was very limited. Usually, only two children could play at a time. Occasionally a third was allowed into the area. Once, near the end of study, four boys were allowed to play in the center together. Dramatic play games varied greatly. There were occasional family games with parents and babies. Children would pretend to cook or dress up to go somewhere. More often, children would serve food to each other through the puppet theater. Doctor games were popular, as there was a doctor’s kit and costumes. These games tended to be elaborate, with a doctor saving some kind of accident victim. Several of the older boys favored superhero games. Battling imaginary creatures was a common element when they played together.

3 phones for 4 kids. None for A. He holds up an empty hand, “I’ll just pretend I have a phone.”
All get in the car (sit on windowsill). All but S., the driver, get butter knives. Get out and fight.
I., “I saw the monster. He’s under the table.”
Teacher tells boys to put knives back.
S. calls the police, “Some zombies are coming in our house. They took our money.”
A., “The zombies invaded, okay? Let’s go, guys.”
Suit up to go fight the zombies with dramatic play costumes.

S., I., C., 5 years old,

37 Appendix D, Photo 32
38 Appendix D, Photos 33 and 34
39 Appendix D, Photos 35 and 36
Dramatic play was by far the most popular area in Classroom 3. The area was limited to four children, though additional children tended to drift in. Most of the imaginative games were food related. Children started cooking and serving as soon as they entered the area. They would serve food over the shelf to the block area and carry plates around the room to deliver to teachers.

October 26, 2010,
R., “Can I have some of your corn?”
T., “I got hot dogs.” Both get spoons and sit down to eat.
R., “You ain’t gonna let me get my watermelon.”
T. gets food for R. R., “Ms. Stephanie, I’m eating some noodles. Thank you, T.”

R. 4 years old, T, 3 years old

Family games were also common. However, unlike those in Malaguzzi classrooms, these games seldom moved very far past the stage of assigning parts or acting out a single event. However, there were other more sustained dramatic games. These games tended to leave the dramatic play area as a child took on the role of fire chief or postal worker for an extended period while moving around the classroom.40

As in Classroom 3, dramatic play was the most popular area in Classroom 4. This area was likewise capped at four children, but sometimes additional children wandered in. Imaginative games tended to be family and food based. The most popular game was getting all of the family into a car (created by lining up chairs) and going somewhere (usually a party). Children packed clothes, food, and babies and took all in the car with them. This game was present in the dramatic play area in some variation

40 Appendix D, Photos 37-39
throughout the entire study.\textsuperscript{41} Aside from destination and participants, there was little deviation from day to day.

L. puts a doll in a high chair, “That my baby car seat.” Sits beside and pretends to drive. “I’m at the beach.”
K., “We ain’t going to no beach. We going to Chuck E. Cheese.”
L., “Oh well.” Puts baby back in the car seat and gets back in the car.
2 cars. K. drives one with G. holding a baby in the back seat. L. and N. (with baby) in the other. K. turns over driving to G. and then looks for something to comb the baby’s hair.

\begin{center}
\textit{K. and G., 5 years old  
L. and N., 4 years old}
\end{center}

Of all the dramatic play in the four classrooms, the imaginative games in Classroom 2 showed the most complexity. This could be related to the whole group work that the class was doing in the performing arts, particularly drama. However, even in September, children demonstrated the ability to take on roles and to create a story and maintain the game. This was also apparent in Classroom 1, though more so in later months (and more often in the block area). Children in Classroom 3 were able to take on roles, but seldom told any kind of story through their dramatizations. Children in Classroom 4 could tell a story, but it was the same story over and over.

Classification and Framing were equally weak in all four classrooms. Dramatic play draws on several different disciplines, primarily language/literacy and social/emotional skills. The nature of different games can add more disciplines. Thus, children in all four classrooms were working on several skills while in dramatic play. Established rules were similar in all four classrooms (number of children, cleaning the area) and enforcement was also similar (removing children from the area, days away from the area for children that did not help clean).

\textsuperscript{41} Appendix D, Photos 40 and 41
Blocks/Floor Toys

After circle time, the rug used for whole group time became a space for floor toys. Blocks were used often, particularly in Classroom 1, but other toys could also be used on the rug. The classrooms used this area for other building toys, such as large Legos, magnet blocks, and marble runs. This area also provided open space for floor puzzles and for playing with large cars and trucks. Like dramatic play, this was a very popular area in all classrooms. However, while Malaguzzi classrooms specified the number of children who could play on the rug at one time, I saw little evidence of this in Woodlawn classrooms.42

The rug was the most popular area, by far, in Classroom 1. It was always the first area to fill up when children were choosing free play areas. Unfortunately, the area was limited to four children. This was due to space restrictions and safely, as the children worked most often with large and heavy wooden blocks. However, due to the area’s popularity, children tended to sneak in. It was very common during free play to find children in other learning areas either watching the rug from across the room or standing nearby, waiting for someone to leave the area.

Classroom 1 was unique in the study in that only one rug toy could be out at a time. This toy was chosen by the teachers. While there were several different building toys available for the rug, the choice was most often “big blocks.” This was a favorite of the children. Their work with big blocks on the rug prompted the classroom exploration of building and houses. The children would use the blocks to build houses, complete

42 Occasionally a teacher would announce that there were too many children on the rug and send some elsewhere. However, after five months of observation, I have no idea if there was a specific limit to the number of children allowed to play in this area in either classroom.
with beds and televisions, as well as castles. While house building was most common, children also used blocks to create barriers or cages for certain children who were pretending to be animals (usually dogs or alligators). Other times, they would build a stage and perform before building something new. Near the end of free choice time, the children would knock down their structures and walk around on the fallen blocks. While blocks were most commonly used for dramatic games, children would also experiment with building different kinds of structures, such as bridges and ramps. They would then test these out by walking across or sliding down structures.

In Classroom 2, the rug area was popular, but not nearly as much so as the same area in Classroom 1, or even as much as some other areas in the classroom. Play was limited to two children (three starting in January). Children could freely take out whatever toys they wished. However, teachers monitored the area to prevent children from taking out more toys than could be played with at once. The area had the same materials as the rug area in Classroom 1. Because Classroom 2 children were more likely to vary play and material use on the rug (as they were not exploring building in the same way), I was more likely to see different materials used in this room.

43 Appendix D, Photos 42-46
44 Appendix D, Photo 47
45 Appendix D, Photo 48
46 Appendix D, Photos 49 and 50
Classroom 2 children did occasionally play with big blocks. As in Classroom 1, they were sometimes used as ramps or as enclosures for children pretending to be animals (in this room, usually dogs or lions). Children also built complex structures with smaller unit blocks. While these structures were not large enough to play inside, as the big block structures were, children could instead use small dolls in their structures. While dolls fit well in these structures, they were also sometimes played with on their own or with doll furniture.

Other commonly used rug materials were large Legos (Duplo blocks) and large wooden trucks. Legos allowed for a great deal of variation in play, as the classroom had trains and cars, in addition to the square blocks. Trucks not only allowed children to push them around the rug, but could also be used to haul materials, as they opened and could be taken apart. Trucks were often used with dolls.

In Classroom 3, there seemed to be no limit to the number of children allowed in the rug area. As the class was small and there was a great deal of interest in other learning areas, the rug area seldom became overcrowded, despite its popularity. In this classroom (and somewhat in Classroom 4) it was much more likely that two different activities were taking place at the same time in the area than in Malaguzzi classrooms.

Rug activities in Classroom 3 were similar to those in Classroom 2. Toys included large Lego blocks, wooden trucks, big blocks, and unit blocks, though the room

47 Appendix D, Photos 51-53
48 Appendix D, Photo 54
49 Appendix D, Photo 55
50 Appendix D, Photo 56
did not have as many of these materials as did Malaguzzi classrooms. All of these toys were used with some regularity. Big blocks were used in several different ways. Early in the school year, children built houses, though more often for stuffed animals or dolls than for themselves. Later in the study, they built stages and cars. Thus, imaginative games with blocks tended to be fairly similar to those in Classroom 1 and the dramatic play area of Classroom 4.51 Legos were used similarly to those in Classroom 2, with the train and cars played with most often. Trucks were also used in a similar fashion.

Classroom 3 children also had some additional materials that they frequently played with on the rug. The most common were floor puzzles. Floor puzzles were a very popular activity. One or two children would get a large jigsaw puzzle out of the box, and several other children would drift over to watch or help.52 Children in this classroom also had more wheeled toys than Malaguzzi children. In addition to the Lego cars and train, there were smaller wooden cars and a wooden train.53 Children put the track together or created a road from unit blocks and drove these toys around the rug.

Classroom 4 had many of the same materials as Classroom 3 and the same lack of restrictions on numbers of children allowed to play in the rug area. However, as the class size was larger, it was more common for the area to become overcrowded. The teachers never enforced a restriction on numbers of children, choosing instead to move children when the area became crowded.

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51 Appendix D, Photo 57
52 Appendix D, Photos 58 and 59
53 Appendix D, Photos 60 and 61
In addition to the toys present in Classroom 3, children in Classroom 4 were allowed to take toys from other areas in the classroom to the rug. Occasionally, children would take smaller building sets or the marble run to the rug. This allowed them more space, and gave them the ability to build taller structures than when playing with these toys at a table.

A popular game in Classroom 4 was using the large blocks to build a television and a video game console. Children would set up seats and, using small unit blocks, pretend to play. I observed this game several times, though not with the frequency of the car game in the dramatic play area. Another popular game was using the large Lego blocks to make a birthday cake.

S. picks up the Lego cake. It slips out of her hands and breaks. She and K. rebuild. Talk about who it is for.
S., “I want it to be my birthday.”
K., “You gotta let me be the mama.”
S., “Okay.”
K., “I’m the mama.”

S. and K., 4 years old

As with dramatic play, classification was weak in all four classrooms. Work with building toys allowed children to draw on problem solving, language, and social/emotional skills. Framing was slightly stronger than the classification, but for different reasons. Malaguzzi teachers were much more strict regarding the number of children playing at the rug at one time. Additionally, Classroom 1 teachers chose the building toy for the day. However, once on the rug, children were free to explore and build as they wished and to work out any disagreements about the project on their own.

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54 Appendix D, Photo 62
55 Appendix D, Photo 63
Woodlawn children had fewer restrictions on both numbers and materials. However, teachers were much more likely than Malaguzzi teachers to stop constructions perceived to be too high or unsteady, as well as to step in when children started to argue.

**Manipulatives**

All four classrooms had multiple types of manipulatives to be used at the table. These included small building toys (e.g. small Legos, linking pieces, waffle blocks), board puzzles, small motor activities (e.g. lacing cards, self-help boards\(^{56}\), small cars, and counters (e.g. bears, wooden cubes, buttons.) These toys focused on problem solving skills, fine motor skills, or both, while allowing children to work together and to draw upon language and social/emotional skills.

Teachers in Classroom 1 chose the table manipulatives for the day. However, this choice was usually based on skills children needed to work on, the exploration of building, or current child favorites. Manipulatives or math games were out on one or two tables while the third table was used for art. Small Legos were out often, as they were the favorite of a special needs child who seemed to find them soothing. Dominoes were popular in December and January. Children preferred to separate these by color before stacking them in different ways. Counters were often out for various activities; in addition, children used them to talk to other children or narrated conversation between counters to themselves.\(^{57}\) During a period of the building exploration when children were interested in the structure of the city, they played with cars and wooden buildings at the

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\(^{56}\) Self-help boards are boards covered fabric that must be tied, buttoned, snapped or zipped together. These boards are intended to help children to learn to dress themselves.

\(^{57}\) Appendix D, Photos 64 and 65
tables. Self-help boards were out once, but the children showed little interest in them, apart from using them as a bed for one child’s doll.

In Classroom 2, children selected manipulatives for the table after small group activities ended. During the free play period, manipulatives were not as popular with children in Classroom 2 as with those in Classroom 1. As small group instruction tended to involve manipulatives or math games, most children left the tables after groups were finished in favor of other activities. Building toys, such as Legos or Unifix cubes, were more popular.\textsuperscript{58} Puzzles of varying difficulty levels were also a common choice. However, as many of the children worked with manipulatives or math games during small group, many left the tables after groups were finished. Several of those who did not were content to continue the small group activity on their own.\textsuperscript{59}

In Classroom 3, children selected table toys on their own. As with rug toys, several different toys could be out on the table at once. Legos were out daily. There was one child in the classroom that took Legos out every day and played with them for most, if not all, of the period.\textsuperscript{60} Children also worked on puzzles and with lacing cards. They would sometimes get out games, such as matching or fine motor games. Teachers would then join the table to show them how to play the games correctly. Occasionally\textsuperscript{61} children would get out some different toys, but not as frequently as either puzzles or Legos.

\textsuperscript{58} Appendix D, Photo 66

\textsuperscript{59} Appendix D, Photo 67

\textsuperscript{60} Appendix D, Photo 68

\textsuperscript{61} Appendix D, Photo 69
Classroom 4 children would also get out multiple toys at once. However, unlike Classroom 3 children who still kept toys separate, Classroom 4 children would play with different toys together. For example, counting bears might ride around in a small car. Children also played with a variety of building toys, with the marble run being the most popular (once the teachers provided several marbles to use with it). Puzzles were out almost daily.

Classification and framing were much the same with manipulatives as with rug toys. All activities were weakly classified, drawing on multiple disciplines. Teachers provided more structure in choosing activities in Malaguzzi, but Woodlawn teachers provided more structure once activities had begun. As with other free play activities, Woodlawn teachers were more likely than those at Malaguzzi to settle disagreements, to have any building perceived to be too high dismantled, or to use explicit instruction when children appeared to be struggling to solve a problem. In both schools, framing was stronger than classification. Yet, Woodlawn classrooms had stronger framing than Malaguzzi, even though Malaguzzi teachers were more involved in the choosing of table activities.

Art
All classrooms had both an art area and easels. Classrooms typically had some sort of art activity during the day. In Woodlawn, the small group activity was often the daily art project. These projects had specific expected products. Malaguzzi classrooms allowed

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62 Appendix D, Photo 70
63 Appendix D, Photo 71
64 In Classroom 2, the teachers created easels by hanging paper on the wall from a clothesline.
for more child direction in art. The art learning area was for exploration of materials rather than creating a specific art project.

At Malaguzzi, art was central. The center had two art studios, one for infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds and one for preschool and school-aged children. Both studios were as well stocked as some adult studios. There were paints of all kinds (including oils), colored pencils, crayons, markers, oil pastels, paint markers, a wide variety of paper, clay, a kiln, and many more supplies in drawers and on shelves that I did not have a chance to go through. The classrooms were almost as well stocked as the studios. In addition to the preschool classroom staples (crayons, markers, tempera paint, paper, pencils, and glue), both classrooms also had oil and watercolor paints, paint markers, oil pastels, charcoal pencils and clay. Teachers and administrators prided themselves on giving children “real” materials to use. Art supplies were considered an important classroom resource. Teachers in both classrooms used materials as if there was an unlimited supply—which, in essence, there was. Administrators did not begrudge them buying new supplies when classrooms ran out.

Both Classrooms 1 and 2 often used paint in the art area. Children drew and painted over drawings, mixed colors, and covered their papers with various colors that they found interesting. Both classrooms allowed for and encouraged the exploration of multiple types of drawing materials. Children also had many opportunities to draw and daily had access to drawing materials throughout the free play period. Teachers would often suggest drawing if children had something to say or describe.

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65 Clay was used for both art and sensory experiences. Further discussions of clay will follow in the section on sensory play.

66 Appendix D, Photos 72-77
V. tells the teacher that he saw Santa outside. The teacher asks questions. V. says he was flying. The teacher suggests he draw a picture. V. works on his picture of Santa. “He needs a beard. And a big fat belly.”

V. 5 years old

Teachers observed drawing and painting projects and changed or provided more materials as needed. For example, if a child was using a pencil to draw a rainbow, a teacher might get her colored pencils or pastels to work with.

Children in both classrooms used art as expression and were highly encouraged to do so. Two children in Classroom 2 drew multiple pictures of a child who was upsetting them while talking at length about why they were upset. Children in Classroom 1 often drew pictures of each other doing various things. Art allowed expression for even the youngest children, who often used materials to make lines or swirls. Drawing and painting were also a favorite activity for an autistic child in Classroom 1, who enjoyed drawing ladybugs and tracing trucks.

Teachers in both classrooms incorporated art into the classroom explorations. In Classroom 1, the head teacher introduced architecture books in October. The children examined the structures in the pictures, focusing on different shapes that they saw, and then drew their own pictures, either copied from or inspired by the books. In Classroom 2, the children used the art studio to create backdrops for their Three Little Pigs productions.

Art was a large part of both classrooms and seemed to be constantly ongoing. Head teachers in both classroom placed a great deal of importance on art and self-expression.

We are a Reggio Emilia inspired program, which is a play-based, arts-based, child-centered approach to learning that is based upon the child’s interest.

Teacher, Classroom 1
I like that they are helping nurture children’s artistic side. As with anything else, when cutbacks happen, arts are the first thing to lose funding. I think it’s really important, if it’s in children naturally, for them to be expressing themselves through visual arts and performing arts.

*Teacher, Classroom 2*

Children at Woodlawn rarely had the opportunity to explore art materials as fully as Malaguzzi children. Materials were more limited, and the selection was less extensive. The art area in both classrooms had crayons, markers, tempera paint, watercolors, and colored pencils. The use of materials involved greater restrictions than at Malaguzzi. Teachers and children were very aware that materials would one day run out and thus limited their use.

M. and S. take paper and markers to back table to draw. They are decorating their paper with colored tape. A teacher takes the tape dispenser. M., “If we take all the tape, there’s not going to be no more.”

*M. 4 years old  
Classroom 4*

T. finds rainbow-colored tape. He asks the teacher if he can use it. The teacher has never seen it before. She tells T. that she would rather save it for something else.

*T. 4 years old  
Classroom 3*

In addition to not having the breadth and quantity of different drawing materials available to Malaguzzi, Woodlawn also did not incorporate the “real” materials that all teachers had among their art supplies. All materials were made for children and made to be easily used and washable.

Unlike Malaguzzi children, whose art involved free exploration of materials, Woodlawn children typically had an art project as a small group activity. I never observed free exploration of art materials or unsupervised drawing in Classroom 3. Even when the activity of the day was drawing, a teacher sat with children at the table to oversee children’s work. In Classroom 4, the children occasionally had access to the easels, and once a teacher got out collage materials and glue for a child-initiated project.
Children could also use paper and markers to draw, though free drawing without teachers dictating a theme was rare.\textsuperscript{67}

Children’s work, upon completion, was the subject of story dictation. Children told the teachers about their drawings while teachers wrote their words. While children usually had some sort of story or idea about their drawings, I did observe several occasions in which children really had little to say. In these cases, they were prompted by the teacher into saying something.

Framing in Malaguzzi was much weaker than in Woodlawn. Art and art materials were intended to promote free self-expression. Thus, the teachers gave very little guidance. Children could use materials freely and were welcome to get out the materials that they needed. Art in Woodlawn was more structured. Children did not have free access to materials and rarely did children have the opportunity to create what they wished rather than what a teacher had dictated. Classification was weak in all four classrooms. The teachers used art to teach a number of additional disciplines, including social/emotional skills and language.

Science

The science learning area was very similar in classrooms at the same school, but very different between the two schools. Malaguzzi classrooms used a light table as their primary science area. With the light table, they used a variety of translucent materials as well as some more traditional classroom science equipment. Woodlawn classrooms had

\textsuperscript{67} Appendix D, Photos 78 and 79. Note, there are no pictures of Classroom 3 and few of Classroom 4 as most of the pictures depicting art have already been used to demonstrate small group.
a traditional science center with various science materials, such as magnifying glasses and sensory bottles.\textsuperscript{68}

Classrooms 1 and 2 both used their light tables frequently. Classroom 1 had a small table, set low to the ground, that children could use while sitting on the floor. Classroom 2 had a larger table (as the classroom was larger) that was high enough for children to stand around. In both classrooms, translucent magnetic blocks were a popular choice for light table work.\textsuperscript{69} Classrooms also had translucent Lego blocks that were used occasionally. In addition, children experimented with other materials at the light table. Classroom 2 had a set of X-ray prints that children examined on the light table before matching them to their bodies.\textsuperscript{70}

Classroom 1 children had little interest in science materials in the classroom beyond the light table. Classroom 2, however, used the additional science materials available, such as sensory bottles, magnifying glasses, magnets, and large rubber bugs. Children experimented with these materials on the light table, as well as using the translucent materials provided.\textsuperscript{71}

In both Malaguzzi classrooms, the light tables were heavily used. However, the science areas in Woodlawn classrooms held little interest for children. In both classrooms, the science area was set apart from primary play areas. In Classroom 3, the

\textsuperscript{68} Sensory bottles are clear bottles filled with something intended to be of interest to the children, such as colored water and floating feathers, bells, or beads.

\textsuperscript{69} Both classrooms used these blocks elsewhere, but I observed them used most frequently at the light tables. Appendix D, Photos 80 and 81

\textsuperscript{70} Appendix D, Photo 82

\textsuperscript{71} Appendix D, Photo 83
area was next to the cots and almost under the children’s cubbies. In Classroom 4, the area was near the back of the room. Unsurprisingly, the children did not go to these areas very often.

Both classrooms had small hexagonal tables with a magnifying glass surface and small compartments for materials. The classrooms had multiple sensory bottles, magnets, magnifying glasses, and binoculars. One of the Classroom 3 teachers added pinecones to the science area after a visit to a state park. There was an occasional passing interest in the area, but never for sustained play.\(^\text{72}\) In Classroom 4, the area was used most often by children that wished to play in the dramatic play area but could not because it was already full. The children would take stuffed animals from the nearby library area and feed them with sensory bottles taken from the science area.\(^\text{73}\)

Classification and framing equally weak in all four classrooms. All science areas drew on multiple disciplines (problem solving, language, social/emotional) and teachers allowed free exploration in all four classrooms. The difference between the two schools was in the way that the learning areas engaged the children. At Malaguzzi, the children were drawn to the light tables and played in the area for extended periods of time. At Woodlawn, the science areas held little interest for the children and so they spent little time there.

\(^{72}\) Appendix D, Photo 84

\(^{73}\) Appendix D, Photo 85
Sensory

Classrooms approached sensory experiences through both table work and through sensory tables.\textsuperscript{74} Sensory experiences help children to work with their hands in a variety of ways, thus building fine motor muscles. These experiences also allow children to experiment with and explore the properties of different materials. Many classrooms classify sensory experiences as part of science.

Malaguzzi classrooms each had a sensory table, which was usually filled with water and toys for measuring and pouring. Additionally, Classroom 2 had a smaller sensory table filled with sand. Other than the color of the water, or the addition of soap bubbles, the material in these tables changed little, except for the day after the first snow. On this day, the teacher aide in Classroom 1 filled the sensory table with snow.\textsuperscript{75} The assistant teacher added watercolor, and the children (while wearing gloves) were able to play with pink-tinted snow in their classroom.

While the materials in the sensory tables seldom changed, children never lost interest. They enjoyed molding the sand and playing in the water. Sensory table play was often accompanied by an imaginative game. Children would pretend to be scientists working in the water table, make food in the sand, or show toy animals how dive through the water.\textsuperscript{76}

Children also had opportunities for sensory experiences outside of the sensory tables. Malaguzzi classrooms used multiple table materials for sensory. Clay was used

\textsuperscript{74} Sensory tables are tables that have a large tub or basin that teachers can fill with a variety of materials for children to explore. Sensory tables are usually filled with water or sand.

\textsuperscript{75} Appendix D, Photos 86 and 87

\textsuperscript{76} Appendix D, Photos 88 and 89
frequently, as were silly putty and playdough.\textsuperscript{77} With all of these, children used some cutting tools, such as plastic knives and scissors, and, occasionally, cookie cutters. In addition to playing with the sensory materials, children in Classroom 1 helped to make the playdough used in the classroom. Teachers added many of the ingredients (as they included hot water), but children were able to work with fresh dough and mix in the colors.

In Woodlawn, both classrooms had sensory tables, but they were seldom used.\textsuperscript{78} I observed the sensory tables in each classroom being used only once or twice during the data collection period. Both sensory tables had sand, but only enough to cover the bottom of the tub.\textsuperscript{79} The children did seem to enjoy playing in the sensory tables when they had the chance. When I was able to observe sensory table play, children in both classrooms pretended to make food.

The children in both classrooms played with playdough, but only during the early months of observations.\textsuperscript{80} The center had bought playdough for the children’s use, and by late November, it had started to get old and crumble. Once this happened, the teachers threw out the dough. The school did not buy more while I was there, and the teachers did not know how to make playdough, as the Malaguzzi teachers did. Children did enjoy the playdough when they had it. They had a variety of playdough toys, including plastic knives, cookie cutters, and molds.

\textsuperscript{77} Appendix D, Photos 90 and 91

\textsuperscript{78} This was because both had some cracks and could not hold very much sand or be used for water.

\textsuperscript{79} Appendix D, Photos 92 and 93

\textsuperscript{80} Appendix D, Photo 94
As was the case with science areas, classification and framing were equally weak for all four classrooms. Sensory activities drew on a number of disciplines, and teachers in all classrooms allowed for free exploration. Additionally, the children in all classrooms were engaged by sensory activities. The difference here was in the availability of materials necessary for frequent sensory experiences. Malaguzzi classrooms had sensory tables in good repair, allowing them to use the tables on a daily basis. They also had materials for table experiences. In Woodlawn classrooms, the sensory tables could not be used often, and the playdough was unusable by mid-November. For Woodlawn children, sensory experiences were a treat. For Malaguzzi children, they were part of everyday classroom life.

**Writing**

All four classrooms had a specified writing desk for children. This area is required for the Chicago Public Schools’ focus on early literacy and is thus necessary for compliance with Preschool for All. All classrooms used their writing tables frequently.

Malaguzzi classrooms had writing journals for children. These were kept at or near the writing desk, and children were free to write in them at any time during free play or after meals when waiting for other children to finish. In Classroom 2, much of the writing in journals was done as part of whole group, though children did sometimes choose to get out their journals at other times. In Classroom 1, children were encouraged to tell detailed stories that teachers would then write in the journals. The head teacher stated that later in the school year, the children would try acting out these stories.

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81 Appendix E., Work Samples 6 and 7
Writing centers in Malaguzzi classrooms had, in addition to writing journals, different kinds of pencils and markers, stencils, and paper punchers of different shapes. Children used these supplies at the writing center or, if there was not space, at a larger table nearby.

Children in Woodlawn did not have writing journals, but they still had a variety of other materials in their writing desks. There were different kinds of paper, pencils, markers, stencils, and letter stamps in the desks. I observed children in both classrooms take scissors from the art area to the writing desk.

While Malaguzzi children seemed to enjoy writing, this learning area was actually more popular in Woodlawn. This could be because Woodlawn children were heavily encouraged to work on letter recognition during whole group time. It could also be because both Malaguzzi classrooms had time for journal writing elsewhere in the day. Regardless, the writing table in Classroom 3 was one of the most popular areas in December and January, and the writing center in Classroom 4 was rarely unused during free choice time.

Again, classification and framing were equally weak in all four classrooms. The classification was not as weak in this area as in many others, but the children did draw on both literacy and fine motor skills. Teachers largely left children to explore this area independently. Only once did I observe a teacher coaching a child through writing (Classroom 4). Children were more often allowed to practice letter forms and inventive spelling on their own.
Library and Computer

All four classrooms had a quiet area with soft seating and books. In Malaguzzi classrooms, this area was available but seldom used during free choice time, though it was used at other times during the day. In Woodlawn classrooms, the library was frequently used during free choice time, but seldom for reading books. In Classroom 3, the library often became a continuation of the adjoining dramatic play area. In Classroom 4, children fed stuffed animal babies from sensory bottles from the science area or sat on the couches and talked. The library in Woodlawn classrooms was primarily used during whole group instruction as a time out area for children not following teacher expectations.

Classrooms 1 and 2 had computers for the children, while Classrooms 3 and 4 did not. The reason for this was unclear, as computers were provided by the city and not the agency. Malaguzzi classrooms had similar educational software. Computers were heavily used at the beginning of the year, but much less so in later months, especially in Classroom 1 where the computer was seldom requested or turned on.

Independent Work Outside of Free Choice Time

The brief times in the morning between breakfast and whole group (as slower eaters finished) and in the afternoon between lunch and naptime were used for some independent work, but in a different manner than the designated free choice period. The morning transition was a free choice period in all three classrooms which had a morning transition period, while the afternoon transition was used for additional work in Malaguzzi classrooms, but for very little in Woodlawn.
In Classroom 1, children were free to look at books after breakfast. Children used the library and tended to line up on the bench as they read. Classroom 2 had a similar schedule, except that children could go either to the library or to the rug, and some children also got out writing journals. In these classrooms, children shared books, often picture reading to each other.\textsuperscript{82} This was also the case in Classroom 4 (Classroom 3 did not have a morning transition period). Children shared books on the rug, reading together and discussing pictures until all children had finished breakfast and Classroom 3 children had left for their room.\textsuperscript{83}

However, the afternoon period was treated differently in Woodlawn classrooms. Children sat at the lunch tables until all had finished, then went to the restroom, and, upon returning to the classroom, usually had to wait at a table until the teachers put beds down for naptime. Malaguzzi classrooms used this time for journal writing.\textsuperscript{84} Children in both classrooms took journals, pencils, and markers to the rug, then worked in their journals and chatted until the teachers put the beds down.

Both of these periods were weakly framed and somewhat weakly classified. Like the writing center, these transition activities drew on skills in both literacy and socialization. Also, as with the writing center, teachers allowed children to explore on their own. These periods gave teachers an opportunity to prepare for the next activity. In the morning, this entailed ensuring that all children had finished breakfast and cleaning up afterwards. In the afternoon, this consisted of cleaning up after lunch and setting up

\textsuperscript{82} Appendix D, Photo 95

\textsuperscript{83} Appendix D, Photo 96

\textsuperscript{84} Appendix D, Photo 97
the room for nap. At both schools, children were well-occupied with their own activities during the morning transition. However, in the afternoon, Malaguzzi children were provided with an activity, while Woodlawn children sat quietly at tables.85

**Physical development and health**

Both meal times and the gross motor period were included in the instructional day primarily to address the physical needs and development of the children. Head Start programs must provide nutritious meals to students: breakfast, lunch, and, in a full-day program, an afternoon snack. Head Start programs must also provide a period to focus on large muscle development. Both schools met these requirements by providing meals and gross motor time during the instructional day. All four classrooms had a morning gross motor period of at least one half hour.

However, the treatment of these activities varied between the two schools. While both schools followed the Head Start mandates for health and development, teachers at Malaguzzi incorporated the activities into other classroom activities and into classroom pedagogy, while teachers at Woodlawn drew back from the children during both gross motor and meal times. Malaguzzi teachers were just as active in guiding and teaching children during physical development activities as they were during other activities; Woodlawn children were more likely to do activities on their own, away from the teachers. Thus, while Woodlawn met all Head Start requirements for physical development activities, the teachers did not use them to build upon the children’s learning in other areas as fully as teachers in Malaguzzi.

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85 Meal transitions will be elaborated upon in the section on classroom management.
Meals at both sites were intended to be served in the classrooms, family-style. Family-style meals require that food is brought to the children in their classroom, with each component of the meal in separate (or 2-3 separate) bowls. The children then pass the bowls around the table, serving themselves each type of food. At Malaguzzi, this was the accepted procedure for meal. At Woodlawn, it was a rarity.

In both Malaguzzi classrooms, one or two children would be called to prepare the tables with a teacher, while the rest of the children and the other teachers lead a whole group activity on the rug. In Classroom 2, this time was used for a story. In Classroom 1, there was usually a short game, such as “Everybody’s Sleeping.” Children then washed their hands and went to one of three tables. One teacher sat at each table.

The lunch tray arrived shortly after the children were settled. Each component of the meal was divided into three serving bowls, one for each table. Teachers passed the food to tables quickly, usually with the help of two or three children. The children served themselves the food, passing the bowl after taking their portion. Children then poured their own milk out of a half gallon jug. One child poured while another held the cup to prevent spilling.

Children began eating once everyone at their table had been served. Conversation during lunch was highly encouraged. Teachers asked questions to prompt conversation if the tables started to become quiet. However, as the school year progressed, this was rarely necessary. Children discussed their food, events of the day, stories from home, and

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86 Children had assigned tables, but not chairs, in both classrooms. As children were divided between teachers for assessments and observations, teachers typically sat with the same children that they observed. This allowed for mealtime observations.

87 Appendix D, Photos 98 and 99

88 Appendix D, Photo 100
many other things. In both classrooms, children were very interested in the ingredients in their food. The names of the types of food served and their properties come from lunchtime discussions.

Lunch: Children serve themselves lunch. O. talks about how tiring it was to build at blocks today. J. and S. talk in robot voices.
S. to O., in robot voice, “Look at my apple.”
O. in robot voice back, “That’s not an apple, that’s an orange.”
S., O., and A. look for seeds in their oranges.

J. and S., 5 years old
O. and A., 4 years old

At Woodlawn, a true family-style lunch was quite rare. I observed this only once in a Woodlawn classroom. Usually, one teacher from each classroom took two children back to the room during the gross motor period. These children helped clean and set the tables. When the other children arrived, they washed their hands, sat at tables (no assignment), and waited for lunch. While children at Malaguzzi conversed at the tables while waiting for lunch, usually gesturing with their hands or adjusting their place settings, Woodlawn children were required to sit quietly with their hands in their laps. Conversation was allowed, but was to be kept quiet and was often halted if the teacher believed that the room was getting too loud.

Teachers served children at their seats. Often, the teachers would start to serve food as the children were washing their hands and finding their seats. The children waited until all food was served. The teacher and children would then list all of the different foods served that day. Early in the school year, the teacher would read aloud each item of the menu and the children would repeat it in unison. In later months, this practice was abandoned in favor of the teacher calling out the majority of the foods

89 Appendix D, Photo 101

90 Appendix D, Photo 102
without child participation. But, the teacher and students still ended together, saying, “…and ice cold milk. Enjoy your lunch!” together.

Children conversed amongst themselves during lunch. The teachers were sometimes involved in the conversations, but they talked more to each other. The teachers did not prompt conversation among children in the same way that Malaguzzi teachers did. Most child conversation was in regard to the food they were eating, though there were several conversations about television or movies, including some plot retelling. Voices were to be kept low during conversations and children could not speak to any child not seated at their table. If voices become too loud, the teachers would turn out the lights and announce a silent lunch. When this happened, all conversation was to cease.

While children at both centers had the opportunity to practice verbal language during lunch, Woodlawn did this largely without teacher guidance. Teachers seldom conversed with children and spoke to them primarily when it was necessary to serve more food or to discipline. Woodlawn children also did not have a chance to learn or practice the self-help skills that a family-style lunch is intended to teach. Children at Malaguzzi were able to serve their own food and pour their own milk, and they could to self-manage the amount of food they were taking, so as to leave enough for others. They also worked together to manage difficult tasks. When Malaguzzi children needed help, they looked to each other first and to teachers second. Woodlawn children were served and had no need to help or be helped by other children. They sought help from teachers first.
All classrooms had a specified gross motor time that was typically held somewhere other than the classroom.\textsuperscript{91} In favorable weather, it was preferred in all classrooms to take children outside. When weather was less favorable (as it was during most of the winter months) children played in an indoor gross motor room.

During the time that I was observing classrooms in Malaguzzi, the playground was undergoing renovation. Thus, I was never able to see the playground in use. However, children and teachers still made use of the outdoors. Children took walks around the neighborhood and played on sports fields and on the playground of a small nearby park.

In Classroom 1, the children’s interest in building began early in the school year. During the fall, the class went on many walks around the neighborhood to examine buildings.\textsuperscript{92} They looked at the different types of buildings and at the shapes that made up the buildings. They then began to notice other shapes around the neighborhood. Teachers extended this study into the classroom as the children’s interest grew. The teachers (under child guidance) took pictures of different shapes and then bound the pictures into a book of neighborhood shapes for the classroom library. It was during this study of neighborhood buildings that he head teacher added large, full-color architecture books to the classroom art center.

Classroom 2 also took neighborhood walks in the fall. As Classroom 2’s exploration of performing arts began later than Classroom 1’s exploration of building, early neighborhood walks were concerned with other things. During several walks in

\textsuperscript{91} Exceptions to this are discussed in the section on whole group instruction.

\textsuperscript{92} Appendix D, Photo 103
October, children observed changes in foliage.\textsuperscript{93} Children looked for various colors amongst the leaves around the neighborhood, including colors not found in leaves, such as blue. However, rather than correct the children, the teachers encouraged them to continue looking, allowing children to draw their own conclusions about whether or not such colors are present in leaves. The teachers brought leaves that children found particularly interesting back to the classroom. The children discussed the colors of the leaves during a whole group period. The leaves were then added to the art area, where the children were able to draw and trace leaves.

On days when they did not take neighborhood walks, Classroom 2 went to the park.\textsuperscript{94} Children discussed their surroundings on the way, and the teachers encouraged them to elaborate on their observations and ideas.

\begin{quote}
J.: “There’s a castle right down the block!”
Teacher: “How do you know it’s a castle?”
J.: “I don’t know. ‘Cause I saw it in a movie.”
Teacher: “I don’t think that’s a castle.”
J.: “Yeah, it is. Everyone loves castles, right?”
Teacher: “Who do you think lives there?”
J.: “A knight, a king, a queen, and a baby and that’s it. Oh, and the wicked witch.”
\textit{J. 5 years old}
\end{quote}

The children used both the playground and the sports fields at the park. The playground was fairly large, with climbing equipment and swings, a small basketball court, and open space where the children could run.\textsuperscript{95} The area was surrounded by a two-foot-high wall and benches. Children were not allowed to play chasing games for safety reasons. Teachers positioned themselves around the playground where they could both supervise and interact with the children. A typical arrangement might be one teacher

\textsuperscript{93} Appendix, Photo 104

\textsuperscript{94} Classroom 1 went to the park as well, but never on a day that I was observing the class.

\textsuperscript{95} Appendix, Photo 105
pushing children on swings and monitoring the playground equipment, one teacher playing basketball with a few children, and one teacher showing children how to maintain their balance while walking on the low wall.

The sports fields provided free space where the children could run, but also allowed for some imaginative play. During one trip to the park, I observed a game of imaginary baseball, suggested and guided by the teacher.\textsuperscript{96} The children ran the bases and pretended to throw and catch balls.

I observed very little outdoor play at Woodlawn. Children used the playground only during the first week of observations in September. While the weather stayed mild well into November, teachers chose to keep the children inside.

Woodlawn had a small playground behind the school building. Much of the space was taken up with climbing equipment, though there was still plenty of space for children to run. Teachers sat on benches around the perimeter (positioning themselves close together) and supervised play. Interaction with children occurred either when children approached the teachers or when teachers needed to correct behavior. However, there was some play with children from the benches. Children looked for bugs at the teachers’ feet, served imaginary ice cream from the top of the slide, and hid behind teachers when being chased by other children.

K. throws pretend ice cream to a teacher. “Ice cream.”
Teacher: “What kind is it?”
K.: “Um, manilla [vanilla].” To another teacher: “What kind you want?”

\textit{K., 4 years old}

Teachers never took the children on neighborhood walks. They were concerned that the neighborhood was too dangerous for this kind of activity. All neighborhood

\textsuperscript{96} Appendix D, Photo 106
information collected suggests that Malaguzzi and Woodlawn were located similar in high-crime neighborhoods. It is unclear whether Woodlawn was in a more dangerous neighborhood, or whether the teachers perceived it to be more dangerous than Malaguzzi teachers perceived their own neighborhood. This is possible, as the industrial complex and shopping plaza near Malaguzzi looked considerably less threatening than house with boarded up windows near Woodlawn. However, as there were shootings in the neighborhood near Woodlawn during the data collection period, teachers may simply have been particularly aware of neighborhood dangers.

As with meal times, children in Malaguzzi had more interaction with teachers during outdoor play than did children in Woodlawn. While teachers in Woodlawn did play with children to some extent, they did not interact fully with children for the entire period, as Malaguzzi teachers did. Much of the Woodlawn teachers’ interaction was with each other. Conversely, Malaguzzi teachers spoke very little to each other during outdoor play or walks. Additionally, Woodlawn teachers did not extend outdoor exploration to the classroom. During one day of outdoor play in Classroom 3, several of the children became very interested in a bug. They watched its progress for several minutes and discussed it at length during lunch that day. However, there was almost no acknowledgement of this by the teachers. This contrasted significantly with the extension of outdoor experiences to classroom experiences observed in both Malaguzzi classrooms.

Malaguzzi had a large gross motor room in the first floor of the building for indoor play. The room had a wide open space in the center, narrowing slightly at the sides. It had large windows (glass bricks) and a high ceiling. There were mirrors on the
wall, low enough for preschool-aged children, as well as the infants and toddlers that also used the room. Ladders were mounted to walls on two sides with cushions below. The room had riding toys (primarily tricycles and toddler-bikes), as well as balls, jump ropes, balance beams, rocking see-saws, and other large motor toys. Each classroom in the center had a scheduled time for use of the gross motor room. Classroom 2 was scheduled for just after circle time (around 9:30). Classroom 1’s gross motor time was scheduled after free play, around 11:00.97

Time in the gross motor room was spent very similarly by children in both Malaguzzi classrooms. Children entered the room and sat by the window until the previous class of children left,98 and the teachers chose an activity and set up the room. Like table activity selection in both classrooms, teachers chose one or several gross motor activities for the children. While teachers usually set out groups of large motor toys, sometimes they opted instead for a whole group game. “Duck, Duck, Goose” was popular with both classes. Teachers in Classroom 1 sometimes set up an obstacle course with a series of activities for children to complete. Classroom 2 teachers favored a relay race in which children crossed the room in multiple ways (e.g. run, hop, crawl, in a potato sack). None of these whole group activities allowed for much child choice. However, all were very popular and children often requested a game or race.

More often, the children played more freely with gross motor toys.99 The room was divided in half or into thirds. Riding toys were in one section. In other sections,
children might play a game with a teacher, either with a ball or a parachute. At least one section was allocated for free play with gross motor toys. Just as at the playground, teachers spread around the room in order to supervise and interact with the children. There was little conversation between teachers.

Children at Woodlawn played in a full-sized gymnasium when they could not play outside. The gym had a high ceiling and wood paneled floors. There were mats on the wall under the basketball hoops, though some had fallen off. Several of the windows near the ceiling were broken, allowing in cold air and making the gym unusable when outside temperatures approached zero. Several of the floorboards in the corners were loose, and old mats were piled around the room. In short, it was not the ideal indoor play environment that Malaguzzi children had.

The available gross motor toys were less than ideal as well. During most of my observations, the children had only a few rubber balls and hula hoops to play with. As all three classrooms (about forty-five children when all were present) had gross motor together in the gym, many children did not have a toy to play with. In December, teachers starting bringing a few more toys to the gym, so children were also able to play with a hopscotch mat, jump ropes, and can stilts.

Teachers occasionally played games with the children. Usually these were games like “Mr. Fox, what time is it?” in which children attempt to cross the gym without being caught by the child playing Mr. Fox. When children were caught, they sat out, becoming non-participants in the game. They shortly became restless, causing games to end early. Children were more receptive to less structured games in which all could participate.

One day, a teacher led all of the children around the gym as part of an imaginative
Children pretended to run for and then ride the bus, visit a relative, and eat cookies. Another day, two teachers started playing London Bridge with a small group. Within a few moments, all of the children had joined in.

However, most days, children played with the toys they had or ran around the gym. Children that did not have a toy usually played some kind of chasing game. Sometimes children played imaginative games either as part of a chasing game or as something separate. Several of the older boys often organized basketball or football games. But given the number of children in the gym at once and the lack of structure, it was highly unusual for the period to pass without a conflict between children. Aggressive children, children that did not follow pre-set gym rules, and children that were engaging in behavior that teacher considered inappropriate or unsafe were obliged to sit out. Occasionally, some children sat out more than they played.

As during playground time, teachers interacted little with children while in the gym. Teachers were seated around the room on benches, occasionally talking amongst themselves. Interaction with children occurred when children approached a teacher or when children required discipline or were crying. When teachers needed to initiate interaction, they yelled to the children first, then approached if there was no response. Teachers also used the gross motor period in the gym to work on other things outside of
the gym. The children were often left in the gym with only two or three teachers and myself.

Just as with outdoor play and meal times, the teachers seldom used the gross motor period in the gym to guide learning. This period was treated more as a break by most of the teachers. Children could be left to their own devices while teachers did other work. The primary role of teachers was supervision to prevent injury.

Both healthy meals and gross motor time are necessary for healthy child development. For this reason, they are mandated by Head Start for all children. Both schools met these mandates. The children at both centers had nutritious meals at regular times. Both centers also had a period for gross motor play. However, teachers at Woodlawn chose not to extend the curriculum into these periods. Rather than allowing the children to learn self-help skills and cooperation through family-style meals, they served the children. Rather than expanding on things children found interesting during outdoor play, teachers allowed playground events to be forgotten as soon as the classes went inside. Teachers directed their attention primarily to inappropriate behavior, rather than play with and guide children during indoor gross motor time,

Classification and framing were fairly equal among all four classrooms for physical development activities. All activities incorporated several disciplines, though physical development was the most strongly stressed. Children in Malaguzzi also drew on science, language, problem solving, and social/emotional skills. Woodlawn children drew on language, social/emotional skills, and occasionally problem solving. Framing

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104 I am not sure what these things were. As I stayed in the gym with the children, I do not know what teachers were doing when they left.

105 In one case, I was left alone in the gym for a few minutes with the children.
was weaker in Malaguzzi than in Woodlawn. Instruction in Malaguzzi was more explicit at the start of games in the gross motor room, though children led the games once they began. Most instruction in the gross motor room, outdoors, and during meals was implicit. Lunchtime procedures were well internalized by all children. At Woodlawn, instruction during outdoor play was largely either implicit or non-existent. However, instruction was explicit during all games and during meals, and rules for behavior were strongly enforced.
CHAPTER SIX: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management has two components: the ways in which teachers introduce and implement behavioral expectations and the consequences for children who do not meet expectations. Children’s interpretation and internalization of classroom rules and routines depends heavily on management techniques applied by their teacher(s), but this is not the only factor involved. Children, like adults, have bad days. Children are also less able than adults to separate frustrations about external situations from a present in-school problem. In addition, child behavior is influenced by development. A growth spurt or phase of testing boundaries can change a child’s behavior almost overnight. No matter how well classroom rules are introduced and enforced by teachers, no classroom will have total compliance all of the time. Thus, consequences and the manner in which they are applied become equally important.

Most teachers find it necessary to teach rules and routines explicitly early in the school year. This was true of all four classrooms in the study and was reflected by stronger levels of framing in all four classrooms in September than in later months. However, in Malaguzzi classrooms, an internalization of classroom rules and routines was apparent in many children very early in the school year, while Woodlawn children were actively directed through routines and often reminded of rules throughout the study.
In Classroom 1, expectations were established largely by reminders to older and returning children, who then modeled behavior to younger children. Rather than laying down commands, teachers phrased behavioral requirements as questions, requests, or reminders:

R. refuses to share. Teacher, “R., I think it’s time for you and V. to go to another area.”

Teacher: “Can you put it in the cup, please B.?”

Boys climb over and under the chairs and around the table. Teacher, “Make sure you’re being careful.”

*Classroom 1, September*

Some rules for behavior, particularly during whole group instruction, were not enforced for very young or new children. It was not uncommon for one or two three-year-old boys to get out blocks or dinosaurs during a story or whole group activity. Teachers neither drew attention to this behavior nor did they correct it. While inappropriate behavior was largely ignored, appropriate behavior was praised. A new or young child was praised by all teachers for putting away toys and joining the group, remembering to clean up, or participating in a group activity—especially the first time they did so.

Establishment of rules and routines in Classroom 2 was very similar. Older and returning children were given reminders, while younger children were given a bit more leeway. However, younger children were not allowed to ignore expectations to quite the extent that was allowed in Classroom 1. Instead, one or two teachers would hold young children on their laps during whole group activities in which they were not inclined to participate.¹

¹ Classroom 1 teachers used this technique as well, but I observed it more often in later months and most commonly with a special needs child.
Questioning rather than directing was very common in Malaguzzi classrooms with all children, but most commonly with older children. Children seemed to interpret questioning (correctly) as directives, but still treated the directives as though they had some agency. Negotiation was common, but usually ended with some sort of compliance to the original directive.

A. was holding stuffed toy from home throughout circle.
Teacher, “A., can you leave Waffles in your cubbie? He can’t go to the gross motor room.”
A., “Can I leave him here?” He puts on a shelf.
Teacher, “Sure.”

Classroom 2
September

Reminders in Classroom 2 were more thinly veiled directives than they were in Classroom 1. Rather than gentle reminders that children should clean or be careful, many reminders were phrased as things “we” should, or should not, be doing.

B. is getting out toys. Teacher, “B., we aren’t playing with toys. Not yet.”

Classroom 2
September

Classroom management in both Malaguzzi classrooms at the beginning of the school year was characterized by teaching techniques to encourage internalization of classroom expectations. While hierarchical framing was strongest in both classrooms in September, teachers were ultimately working to achieve a weak hierarchy for later in the school year. By using requests, questions, and reminders, teachers gave children agency in behavioral choices from the beginning, allowing them to internalize classroom expectations for behavior.

In Classroom 3, rules and routines were introduced through commands. From the beginning of the school year, all children were expected to sit quietly with legs crossed and hands folded during whole group instruction. They were expected stand still
and remain quiet while in line. They were also expected to clean up toys, putting all back in the proper place. This standard of behavior was achieved (or rather attempted) through nearly constant directives. Children were directed precisely how to sit, stand, clean, address teachers, and follow instruction. When instructions were not followed, teachers either announced that they would be waiting until all were “ready” or repeated directives louder.

Teachers, “Criss-cross applesauce, hands in your lap. Cross your legs.” Various talking. Another teacher (loudly) “1, 2, 3, ZIP your lip.”

Teacher, “Attention! We can sit here until I have your attention.”

Teacher, “Who’s ready to line up and go to the washroom?” K. “Me.” Another teacher, “If you can say ‘me,’ you’re not ready.”

Classroom 3
September

Establishment of rules and routines was similar in Classroom 4 to that in Classroom 3. Teachers directed children through behaviors considered appropriate at each stage of the day. As in Classroom 3, this required silence during whole group instruction and while lining up in the classroom. However, consequences were more severe for not following instructions or conforming to accepted behaviors. Classroom 4 started using time out of the gross motor period in September as a punishment for “not listening” at whole group instruction or minor conflicts with other children. Threats of time out or threats of abruptly ending or canceling an activity were common.

Teacher., “S., use your manners at the table, please.” “T. use your spoon and don’t sit there and make a mess.”

1st teacher, “We need everyone on a letter.” 2nd teacher notes individual children that need to sit back on a letter. 1st teacher., “We may just sit on the rug and not go to areas today.”

Several children are not listening to the story. Teacher threatens to write names of children who will have to sit out. Must be ‘obedient’ at school.

Classroom 4
September
Children at Woodlawn were not given choices, or even the pretext of choices, as children at Malaguzzi were. There was no alternative for complete conformity other than a negative consequence. Children in Classroom 4 would likely miss out on an activity or free play period if they were not following teacher directives. In Classroom 3, children would have to wait until all were “ready,” and thus also lost time from other activities. As in Malaguzzi, hierarchical framing was strongest in both Woodlawn classrooms in September. It was also much stronger in both of these classrooms than in either Malaguzzi classrooms. Teachers established strong positions of authority early, allowing children little agency in behavioral choices.

Classroom transitions are defined as the space of time between activities and time required to close out one activity or prepare for another. This includes cleanup time, restroom breaks, hand washing (before lunch or when entering the classroom\(^2\)), lining up and walking through the building, dismissal from whole group instruction, and preparation for nap time. I found that the ease of moving children through transitions correlated to the average number of academic events during the school day. Classrooms that were able to get children through transitions quickly had more time for instruction. However, when children did not transition easily between activities, classes could become stuck in the transition for an extended period.

Cleanup could be difficult in all four classrooms. Teachers in all classrooms gave children five minute warnings prior to cleanup so that children could wrap up projects and games. Woodlawn classrooms both had cleanup songs to make the transition clearer. However, children in all classrooms would typically prefer to continue playing rather

\(^2\) Anyone entering a Malaguzzi classroom was required to wash their hands upon entering. This included teachers, parents, children, and support staff. Children were also required to wash their hands when returning from an activity outside of the classroom. This procedure was not in place at Woodlawn.
than cleaning up. Cleanup required focus and often the ability to sort and separate materials. Children who struggled with this would become frustrated during cleanup.

Cleanup time was particularly difficult in the dramatic play area of all four classrooms. The area had many different types of toys and many different areas in which to put them. In addition, play took place as children moved around the area, rather than sitting on the floor or at a table as in other areas. Teachers in all classrooms attempted to limit the mess at the end of the free play period, when the entire classroom would need to be cleaned at once. All classrooms limited the number of children allowed in the dramatic play area at any given time. Teachers in all classrooms also monitored the mess during the free play period, sometimes stopping children to have them clean a bit. In Classroom 2, children in the dramatic play area were required to start cleaning five minutes before the rest of the classroom.

However, dramatic play was still a difficult area to clean, and children doing so rarely finished as quickly as children cleaning other areas. The difficulty was compounded in all classrooms by children wanting to continue to play rather than clean. I observed children in Classrooms 1, 2, and 3 who were not allowed to play in the dramatic play area as a direct result of failure to clean up the day before. Classroom 3 teachers would threaten to close the area entirely for several days.

In both Classrooms 1 and 3, I observed an incident in which cleaning of the dramatic play area took far longer than necessary, cutting significantly into the gross motor period. However, the teachers dealt with the situation differently. In Classroom 3, all children who had finished cleaning waited on the rug (silently) while four children and a teacher worked in the dramatic play area. Another teacher sat with the children on the
rug, enforcing silence and immobility. In Classroom 1, the assistant teacher and teacher aide took all children who had finished cleaning to the gross motor room—much to the shock of the children still cleaning. The head teacher stayed behind to help, and then held a quick (about 2 minutes) meeting to discuss why they had to stay behind. The children then went to the gross motor room and played for the rest of the period.

Typically, after cleanup time, children in all classrooms would go to the rug to prepare for their next activity. In Classrooms 1, 3, and 4, this was gross motor. All three classrooms had a restroom break prior to this gross motor period. Classroom 1 was at a distinct advantage, as the classroom had had an adjoining restroom. This was true of Classroom 2 as well. Because children did not have to leave the classroom to use the restroom, they did not have to go in groups. They could also go as needed throughout the day without teacher supervision, making a morning restroom break less vital. In fact, Classroom 2’s schedule was such that they did not need one at all. Children simply lined up for gross motor immediately after circle. However, Classroom 1 teachers found that a scheduled break prior to gross motor was necessary.

During this break, a teacher stationed herself near the restroom, in the teacher preparation area. Another teacher sat at the rug playing a game with children waiting to use the restroom and those who had already been. Children were sent from the rug in gender groups and then returned individually. The third teacher worked on any unfinished cleaning or sat on the rug with the group. The restroom break was finished quickly. Children then lined up in pairs (older child with younger child) and walked downstairs to the gross motor room. The entire transition, including the restroom break, took less than ten minutes.
In Classroom 3, to get to the restroom children had to cross the lobby and walk halfway down a short hallway. The restrooms were located on the side of the building with offices for other social services, so children were obliged to be quiet. Additionally, as the restrooms were so far from the classroom, children could never go unaccompanied. After cleanup time, children would go to the rug and wait until all were quiet and still. They would then line up to go to the restroom. If the lining up was too noisy, the children would be required to sit back down and then line up again. Once an acceptable line was formed, the children and two teachers would walk to the restroom. If there was a third teacher, she would stay in the classroom to do any necessary cleaning.

Children were divided by gender and sent to their respective restrooms; a teacher stood outside each door. When children finished, they lined back up in the hallway. If children were able to do this with minimal noise or dawdling in the restroom, they would then walk directly from the restrooms to the gym for gross motor play. However, if children were too loud in the hallway or were “playing” in the restroom, the class returned to the classroom, where they sat back on the rug and then lined up again to go to the gym. The entire transition was seldom less than ten minutes and was usually around fifteen minutes. On days that children were the least compliant, the transition could easily take half an hour or more, with much of the time spent waiting for children to be quiet. On one occasion, the transition from the classroom to the restroom and back to the classroom took so long that the teachers decided not to go to the gross motor room at all.

In Classroom 4, the restroom was not in the classroom, but it was at least close. The restroom was in the upstairs hallway, just outside of the classroom, so teachers did not need to take the entire class at once. Teachers could also start to send children to the
restroom during cleanup. Children lined up at the door in two lines (boys and girls). One or two teachers stood at the classroom door where they could both monitor the line and watch children go into the restrooms. When children returned, they went back to the rug to wait with another teacher. However, there was no game at the rug as in Classroom 1. Children sat quietly (or somewhat quietly) as they waited. The class then lined up and walked downstairs to the gym.

The entire transition in Classroom 4 took about ten to fifteen minutes. It was longer than transitions in Classroom 1, but shorter than those in Classroom 3. However, as in Classroom 3, there were occasions when the length was extended by children not being as compliant as teachers would like and teachers waiting for quiet and “readiness.”

The second whole group transition of the day led into lunchtime. Classrooms 1, 3, and 4 had lunch after gross motor time, while Classroom 2 had lunch after free play and a story. In Classroom 1, children returned from the gross motor room, washed their hands, and sat at their tables. A designated child at each table set the tables while other children conversed amongst themselves or with the teacher seated at their table. Lunch arrived shortly after the children sat down, usually within five minutes.

In Classroom 2, two or three children were called from the story to help set tables. The remaining children were called to wash their hands and go to the tables. As in Classroom 1, children talked at their tables until lunch arrived, again within a few minutes.

In both Woodlawn classrooms, children returned from the gym to the classroom and then sat on the rug. Tables were already set, either by a child during gross motor time or by a teacher. Classroom 4 children washed their hands in the restroom near the
classroom, while Classroom 3 children used a sink in their classroom. Children sat at the tables and waited for lunch. They were allowed to speak to each other quietly. However, if the classroom became too loud, a teacher would turn out the lights and children would sit in silence. Regardless of the noise level, all children were to be sitting with their hands in their laps. The wait for lunch was usually longer at Woodlawn than at Malaguzzi, often more than ten minutes.

The next transition, leading into naptime, was similar in Classrooms 1 and 2. Both classrooms had a literacy period (story, dramatization, journal work, or some combination) after lunch but before nap. As children were using only one or two classrooms areas, teachers could finish after-lunch cleaning and start to put beds down. During the literacy period, children were called to brush their teeth, use the restroom, and take off their shoes. Once naptime began, children got onto beds quickly, as all preparations were already complete. Teachers usually started working on paperwork right away and children fell asleep on their own.

Classrooms 3 and 4 also had similar pre-nap transitions. In Classroom 3, children sat at the tables until all had finished eating. Then one or two teachers would take children to the restroom while the remaining teacher put cots down. Children returned and got onto their cots. Teachers walked around the room, ordering children to be quiet, covering children, and moving children when necessary. Teachers only started working on other things when most of the class was asleep.

In Classroom 4, children would clean up after lunch and then sit at their table. Groups of four or five children were sent to the restroom when all children at a table were finished. One teacher put cots down as children were going to the restroom. Children
got onto their cots upon returning (or went back to the table to wait if their cot was not yet down). Children were rambunctious before nap and liked to walk around on each other’s cots or jump on their own. Teachers would order them into their own beds and then monitor them until most or all were asleep. Sometimes, as during whole group, teachers would make a list of non-compliant children who would not be allowed to participate in an after-nap activity.

While the cleanup times, especially of the dramatic play area, showed some similarities, transitions were clearly more strict and showed stronger framing at Woodlawn than at Malaguzzi. The primary feature of transitions in Woodlawn classrooms was the need for both silence and stillness. Children were expected to be either sitting or standing like statues, sometimes for periods of five to ten minutes, while they were waiting for other children to join them. This was never a requirement in Malaguzzi classrooms. Children on the rug were engaged in an activity while waiting for classmates, and children were allowed to talk and move around somewhat while in line.

The required behavior during transitions further demonstrates the strong hierarchical framing of Woodlawn classrooms. Children were clearly subordinate to teachers, and this was demonstrated to them continuously as they were required to conform to specific behaviors. In Malaguzzi classrooms, there were clearly rules and routines that needed to be followed, but during transitions children were able to behave much like they normally did.

Interestingly, the transitions in Woodlawn took longer, even though child behavior was more regimented. The average transition length in Classroom 4 was 14 minutes. In Classroom 3, it was 23 minutes. As each classroom had two whole group
transitions per day, then Classroom 4 spent an average of 28 minutes per day while Classroom 3 spent an average of 46 minutes in transition. As the Head Start academic day is two and a half hours or 150 minutes, Classroom 4 spent an average of 18.5% of the academic day in transition; Classroom 3 spent an average of 30% of the academic day in transition.\(^3\) Alternately, in Malaguzzi, Classroom 1 spent nine minutes in transition on average. With two whole group transitions per day, that would be eighteen minutes on average per academic day, or 12%. In Classroom 2, the average transition was only six minutes. Classroom 2 had just one major transition, so only 4% of the day was spent in transition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Average time per transition</th>
<th>Average time spent daily in transition</th>
<th>Percentage of time spent in transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>23 minutes</td>
<td>46 minutes</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>14 minutes</td>
<td>28 minutes</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regardless of behavioral expectations or strength of hierarchical framing, teachers in all classrooms were obligated at times to correct inappropriate behavior. However, the frequency of corrections depended upon teachers’ interpretations of misbehavior. Many behaviors deemed perfectly acceptable at Malaguzzi would have been punished by teachers at Woodlawn. Additionally, teachers between the two schools had very different approaches to correcting behavior. Consequences at Woodlawn were always more severe than at Malaguzzi, even for the same misbehavior.

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\(^3\) This does not include the transition from lunch to nap, as it is outside of the Head Start academic day.
In Classroom 1, teachers tried to redirect children to more appropriate behavior as much as possible. In this classroom, nearly all behavior management was verbal. If two children were having difficulty getting along, teachers would suggest that they play separately for awhile. Children playing inappropriately in a learning area would be sent to another area. A child that did not help to clean up in a particularly messy area, such as dramatic play or blocks, would have to play elsewhere the next day. For more extreme misbehavior, teachers would have meetings with children. Meetings dealt with the inappropriateness of such behaviors as hitting, rudeness toward other children during whole group, or mean remarks. These meetings tended to be small, involving only those children participating in the behavior. However, teachers would hold whole group meetings if the entire class seemed to be having difficulty with acceptable behavior.

Teachers moved beyond verbal redirection only when children failed to respond to it. If a child was called to an area several times and did not respond, teachers would go to get him. Teachers would physically guide children away from areas after requests for the children to leave on their own were ignored. In extreme situations, children would have to sit with a teacher, rather than participate with other children in an activity. However, the child was still allowed to participate in conversation, and they were only required to sit for two or three minutes before resuming activities. This was a period for the child to calm down; there were no true time-outs at any time.

Behavior correction in Classroom 2 was very similar to that in Classroom 1. Redirection was primarily verbal. Teachers held meetings with children, as in Classroom 1, and worked with children in other ways to verbally solve problems. Children were encouraged to work out problems amongst themselves. Teachers reminded children of
the reasons for rules when they were broken. (“What if you fell?” “What if someone got hurt?”) Safety and respect were at the core of classroom rules and behavioral expectations.

Teachers in Classroom 2 also addressed behavioral problems with stories, as was discussed previously. The classroom had several stories about inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting or biting, as well as stories about managing strong emotions. Teachers would use these books when necessary during story time and follow the story with a discussion about inappropriate behavior or what it was like to be very sad or very angry.

The key to managing inappropriate behavior in both Malaguzzi classrooms was the teachers’ understanding of the children. Few behaviors were really a surprise, as teachers were aware of children’s frustrations, developmental needs, and home stressors. Consequently, teachers were able to approach problems individually with a full understanding of the reasons for behavior. In Classroom 2, one of the youngest children in the room had a difficult time staying focused in some areas and tended to wander into other areas and interfere with other children’s work. Rather than punish him, teachers made an effort to put him in learning areas that allowed him to become engaged, and they avoided sending him to areas where he could not yet focus. The teachers also spent a great deal of time working with him one-on-one. In Classroom 1 an older child who tended to become frustrated when he did not get his way was allowed to leave the group and cool off when he became upset. In both classrooms, disruptive children might be removed from whole group instruction, but they were given a job elsewhere in the classroom rather than having to sit out alone.
This focus on the individual child when managing behavior stems from a Reggio principle concerning children’s relationships and interaction. According to this principle, the child is a product of his total environment: home, family, neighborhood, school, and other experiences, as well as developmental level and school work. Therefore, teachers must be as fully aware as possible of the total life of the child, referred to as the “whole child.” Teachers at Malaguzzi had the ability to address the root of behavioral problems, rather than just the behavior, because of their understanding of the whole child. They found out as much as they could about the children’s home lives, and they took copious observational notes while teaching. This Reggio principle, one that was highly valued by all teachers and support staff at Malaguzzi, allowed teachers to manage behavior on a very clear case-by-case basis.

In Classroom 3, the initial teacher reaction to misbehavior was verbal, as it was in Malaguzzi classrooms. However, the language and tone were very different. In Classrooms 1 and 2, teachers would speak to children in soft voices, calmly asking children why they behaved as they did or requesting that they go to a new area. In Classroom 3, teachers’ voices were harsh, sharp, and often loud. Teachers issued abrupt commands, telling children to immediately stop the unacceptable behavior. However, teachers would often follow commands with explanations in a softer voice, giving the reasons for the necessity to stop. Teachers also attempted to encourage children to work out issues amongst themselves, but these attempts tended to sound more exasperated than encouraging.

Teachers moved to some sort of punishment when verbal direction did not work. Teachers started to use threats rather than commands. The most common threat was to
speak to a parent. (“Do I need to talk to your dad?”) Usually, this was implied to mean at pick-up, but occasionally, teachers telephoned parents to speak to them about their child’s behavior. Another threat was the loss of an activity. While children from Classroom 3 did not sit out of the gross motor period as often as Classroom 4 children, teachers still threatened the loss of gross motor time quite often. During the week of a field trip, especially the day before, teachers would threaten children with the individual loss of the field trip. (“He must not want to go on the trip.”)

Classroom 3 also used time-outs frequently. During whole group instruction, children who were separated from the group were sent to the library. From this area, they could still see the teacher (and the teacher could see them) and follow the whole group lesson. If teachers perceived that children needed a time-out during free play (or any time other than a whole group period in the classroom), they were set in the “hot chair.” This was a small wooden chair behind the whole group area. Children were sent to the “hot chair” for an indeterminate amount of time. This, too, was used as a threat. (“Do you need a hot chair?”)

In Classroom 4, as in Classroom 3, children were commonly given verbal commands to stop inappropriate behavior. However, clear explanations were much more rare. More often, a vague explanation was given. The most common was a general “you weren’t listening.” This was used regardless of whether or not anyone had been talking to the child. Teachers also encouraged children to work out problems amongst themselves, but provided very little guidance. Children were usually told to “work it out” with no advice as to what to do. Teachers then intervened and took over when children were unable to “work it out.” One teacher had more successful conversations with
children about behavior. She seemed to be more willing than the others to have an exchange with children, rather than simply lecture, and she talked to children about how they might be feeling.

As in Classroom 3, teachers in Classroom 4 used threats frequently. The most common threat was the loss of gross motor time, which was frequently followed through upon. Children from Classroom 4 often sat out for part or all of the gross motor period as a result of misbehavior in the classroom. Teachers also threatened to talk to parents, but threats were more specific than in Classroom 3. On one occasion shortly before Christmas, a teacher threatened to tell a child’s mother not to buy a toy that the child particularly wanted.

Time-outs in the classroom were less frequent than in Classroom 3 and were very seldom used during the free play period. As in Classroom 3, teachers sent children to the library when separating them from whole group instruction. However, in Classroom 4, the view to and from the library was blocked by the teacher’s whiteboard, so a child in time-out could not follow circle time nor could the teachers see the child easily.

In both Woodlawn classrooms, teachers held group meetings when most or all of the class was having difficulty following rules and conforming to expectations. But, while Classroom 1 teachers and children had a meeting and then a discussion, and Classroom 2 teachers and children had a story and then a discussion, Woodlawn teachers gave lectures with no discussion.

Discipline practices at Woodlawn reinforced the strong hierarchical framing established at the beginning of the school year and evidenced through class transitions. As teachers at Malaguzzi talked through behavioral problems with children, they were
able to maintain the feeling of near-equality between students and teachers. Children understood that teachers were ultimately in charge, but the children’s choices were respected and acknowledged, even when they led to inappropriate behavior. Woodlawn children who did not meet behavioral expectations were told in no uncertain terms that their behavior was wrong and that if it did not cease, there would be unfavorable consequences.

Woodlawn teachers did not seem to be as in-tune with the children as Malaguzzi teachers were. On some occasions, they seemed oblivious to child behavior. In Classroom 4, I observed a child enter the classroom silently and sit at a table for nearly ten minutes before a teacher noticed him and gave him instruction. Not only did teachers not notice his entrance, but they did not notice his hesitation to become involved in classroom activities. Another child in Classroom 4 was chastised by teachers repeatedly for small behavioral infractions. Teachers did not try to understand why the child was acting out. They simply threatened louder and more often. They were oblivious to her frustration. The teachers also did not notice the child smacking herself in the face after being chastised. In Classroom 3, a particularly verbal child was continuously silenced. Teachers told his father that the child talked too much.

Most of the children in both Malaguzzi classrooms had clearly internalized classroom rules and routines by early October. That is not to say that the children did not have some occasional behavioral slip-ups, but for the most part, children followed classroom expectations. When a child did break a rule, he knew what he had done and why it was inappropriate.
Children went through the daily classroom routine with very few to no reminders. They knew what to do after finishing meals, when to clean up, where to go when sitting on the rug, where to go when entering the gross motor room, and what toys to get out in which areas. Children were well aware of the rules and reminded each other of them when necessary. They reminded each other when areas were full, where to put toys, how to set up the computers, when to get out journals, and of multiple other expectations. Children at Malaguzzi were also capable of working out problems alone or with other children. They served themselves meals and poured milk with no help from teachers. They helped each other dress in warm clothing to go outside. They would turn to other children to mediate disagreement. Children only went to teachers when they had exhausted all other options.

Woodlawn children misbehaved and broke rules more often than Malaguzzi children. A few children in each class continuously broke rules, regardless of the number of reminders and punishments that they received. Occasionally, children were chastised for behavior that they did not know was wrong or that they had seen another child engage in without reprimand.

Children at Woodlawn knew the routines, but did not always follow them without reminders. There was usually a child or two who did not follow proper procedures for meal cleanup, did not sit on the rug quietly, ran into the hallway, or took toys from one area into another. Children did at times remind each other of rules, but they usually did so in the same forceful tone that teachers used. Woodlawn children were not as able to work alone or with other children as were Malaguzzi children. They rarely went to each other for help, choosing to go to a teacher first.
The weak hierarchical framing in both Malaguzzi classrooms allowed children to become participants in, rather than only receivers of, classroom management techniques. As active participants in their own behavioral management, children were able to better internalize classroom expectations for behavior. At Woodlawn, children were given orders to follow, but they had no agency in the process. They were not able to converse with teachers about behavioral problems as regularly as were Malaguzzi children, and therefore they learned to blindly follow instruction without truly internalizing rules. The results of this were apparent during class field trips, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN:
OUT OF SCHOOL

Children in this study spent from six to nine hours in their center five days a week. Their life at school was obviously very important and represented a significant portion of their waking hours. But, school is not the only place in which children demonstrate knowledge and growth. It is expected that children apply what has been learned at school to non-school situations. Parent satisfaction with a program is often contingent on this. If a parent does not see his child demonstrate increased knowledge and improved behavior control, he assumes that the teachers are not doing their jobs efficiently.

Because home observations were not a part of this study, non-school demonstrations of skills and behavior were reviewed through field trip experiences and parent interviews. While children were still with their teachers and other children from their class during field trips, they were in still a non-school setting in which they interacted with people and environments that were unfamiliar. This required children to draw on their knowledge of behavioral expectations as well as assimilate the field trip’s educational content. Parent interviews revealed the both the parents’ understanding of early childhood education (thus, what they expect) and their satisfaction with their
children’s classrooms. Parent perceptions of their child’s growth were based on how much children applied school-learned skills to home situations.

Parents interviews also illustrate similarities and differences between families at each site. While this does not concern the children’s demonstration of school knowledge outside of school, it does served to demonstrate important similarities between parents at both site, especially regarding school selection, attitudes about early childhood education, and home reinforcement.

**Field Trips**

Over the course of the five-month observation period, I was able to observe three field trips.¹ Two of these were joint field trips with both Woodlawn classrooms (as well as the third classroom at the site), and one was a joint field trip with Classroom 2 and another classroom from the Malaguzzi site. This was the only trip taken by Classroom 2 during the observation period; Classroom 1 took no field trips.² However, the Woodlawn classrooms took field trips every month, starting in late October. I attended only the two that fell on the days I was at the center for observation.

While there were only three observations of field trips, such trips were important to the curriculum and pedagogy of both sites. Teachers attempted to chose field trips that would be beneficial and meaningful to the children. As both sites and managing agencies had limited financial resources, cost was a large consideration when choosing field trip venues and activities.

¹ Because I was needed as a volunteer on field trips much more than in the classroom, I did not take observation notes during the field trips. Instead, I wrote down all of my observations from the day after I left the venue.

² I joined Classroom 1 in several walks around the neighborhood, during which the class studied shapes that made up building. However, while the education coordinator considered this a field trip, and referenced it as such in her interview, the teachers did not. Thus, these experiences are discussed in the chapter on gross motor.
Malaguzzi Field Trips

All of the teachers at Malaguzzi stated that field trips were based primarily on the children’s interests. It was the goal of the educational staff (teachers, director, education coordinator) to align the field trip with the current classroom exploration as much as possible. Sometimes these field trips could be a bit unusual for preschool-aged children. However, as teachers followed the interests of the children, the classes went on trips that best expanded the children’s interest in and understanding of the current class exploration.

Last year we studied recyclables and I wanted to go to a recycling center here in Chicago on the far South Side, but some of my colleagues and my supervisor did not recommend it because...safety was a concern. So, we decided to go to the American Surplus store. So we went there, and they got to pick out, because they do have recyclable materials for sale. We divided them up into small groups and they got to pick out materials that they got to use to make their sculpture, made out of recyclables...They loved it! They walked in, right away, “Oh, I want to use this for the head. I want to use this for my arms.” We found other different types of recycled materials to use in other areas of the room, but they really, really loved it.

Teacher, Classroom 1

One group is going to the North Park Nature Trail because their classroom has been interested in nature and discovering things in nature. We also have classrooms that have taken just walking field trips around the neighborhood looking for shapes…. They have stopped me to look:” Well, what kind of shapes are in this building.? Are there circles, are there diamonds, are there squares?” We have a room who is interested in growing things so they’re going to visit a farm to see how things grow, where they come from, what’s the process of a plant...[One classroom] was interested in butterflies and they wanted to see the process of a butterfly developing, and being able to interact with butterflies and have them come and land on you and sit and hold a conversation with a butterfly. Even with our school-age program this summer, children were interested in other cultures so, thank God, they had a grant that allowed them to go on several field trips to several different Chicago neighborhoods. They got to visit Ukrainian Museum, the Mexican Fine Arts Museum, some place in Humbolt Park that they went to and I can’t think of the name of it. So they not only got to see their culture, but because of the grant, they got to sample foods from different cultures. And the children came back and they did these fabulous drawings about their experiences and what they remembered about these different places and what they learned about people from different cultures. We want to continue that now through the fall with looking at different holidays of people of different cultures and how they’re celebrated. See how much people are different and how much we’re alike. So that’s going to be interesting.
Not all field trips had to be part of an exploration. While this was preferred, especially during the school year, it was allowable to take trips simply to visit various city attractions. This was especially true in the summer, when the children visited numerous venues with outdoor activities, such as the zoo or various parks. While these trips did not necessarily contribute to the class’s year-long exploration, they did contribute to children’s life experiences and provided opportunities that might not otherwise have been available to low-income children.

We take a lot of different trips depending on the time of year. In the summer, we do a lot of outdoor trips, like Millennium Park, the zoo. When it’s more cold, we’ll do the museums: the Science and Industry Museum, the Shedd Aquarium. Over the summer we went, no, last fall we went to Peggy Nobart Nature Museum and the kids really enjoyed that.

Teacher, Classroom 2

Some of our children never go to a children’s museum with their parents because the parents are working or they are in school all day or they don’t have the money sometimes for the entrance fee. So, it is chosen by the needs of the community and the needs of the children.

Center Director

The trip that I attended with Classroom 2 was of this latter type. In late November, Classroom 2, along with another class from the site and several classes from other sites within the same agency, attended a specially scheduled Breakfast With Santa event at the Macy’s on State Street. Macy’s holds similar events throughout the holiday season, primarily for parents and children to attend. This event was held for Head Start children, beginning prior to the regular store opening. In addition to a large breakfast and visit with Santa, the children also received toys donated by the store.

I met the children at Macy’s the morning of the field trip. They arrived at 9:30 and had breakfast in the in-store restaurant. Teachers moved around and talked to the
children and took pictures while they were eating. Macy’s employees also talked to the children, including one dressed as a fairy, who sprinkled glitter on the children. Macy’s employees made various balloon sculptures for the children, which the children then wore or carried for the rest of the trip.  

After breakfast, the children were taken to visit Santa. Santa’s area was a small room inside the store. The space leading up to it was filled with various interactive decorations. Children could explore by pushing buttons or looking through windows. They amused themselves with this while waiting for their turn to see Santa. The group then went in to see Santa together. He talked to them about good behavior and believing in themselves. Several children showed off their balloon hats. The children then received their toys, put on their coats, and got back on the school bus.

The trip was well planned by Macy’s and the children enjoyed it very much. They were very well behaved throughout. There was no running, yelling, or crying—even when the occasional balloon broke. The children obviously had an understanding of how to behave on field trips. However, it is likely that the planning by Macy’s also had a lot to do with the children’s positive response. There was little down time and the children were entertained throughout the day. Overall, it seemed to be a good experience for children, teachers, and staff at Macy’s.

**Woodlawn Field Trips**

Teachers at Woodlawn stated that field trip venues were chosen by the teachers. Possible trips were discussed by the two head teachers (the head teacher for the third

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3 Appendix F, Photo 1

4 Appendix F, Photos 2 and 3

5 Appendix F, Photo 4
classroom did not seem to be involved in this process, though her class went on the trips as well), and they then took turns planning the monthly excursion. Trips were planned as far in advance as possible. Venues were chosen based primarily on cost with some consideration given to upcoming holidays or events (Halloween, Christmas, Black History Month, etc.). The interests of the children were not a consideration. It seemed to be assumed that the children would enjoy whatever was chosen.

We try to do one per month, but it doesn’t always work out like that because of funding issues. But we try to do one per month. We try to relate it to the theme, but it’s really hard to do that sometimes unless it’s like October, pumpkin patch or something like that.

Teacher, Classroom 4

The trips are chosen sometimes if they’re free or if they’re paid trips. The teachers kind of collaborate and network on which trips we’re going to go on.

Teacher, Classroom 4

The center director implied that the classes also occasionally took walking trips around the neighborhood (to the fire station or similar), but the teachers all stated that this was not the case. While the center was close to a fire station, two large parks, and the University of Chicago, teachers were concerned that neighborhood violence made these kinds of trips unsafe for the children.

As I went with Woodlawn on two separate field trips, it was my initial intention to spend one trip with each class. However, as the classes took all trips together, I spent most of both trips with both classes. I rode the bus with the group only once, and only one way.

The first field trip, in October, was to a puppet school at the Harold Washington Library (the main branch of the Chicago Public Library). This trip was chosen for its low cost and the puppet show’s Halloween theme.

I met the children at the center shortly before 9:00. Before leaving on the trip, the driver led a bus safety drill. It went very quickly and was confusing for both adults and
children. The children were loaded back onto the bus, and we left for the library. There was more confusion once we arrived. The lunchroom was too small for all three groups to have their snack prior to the show, so the classrooms had to take turns. Children not in the lunchroom were taken to the children’s library to look at books. 6 They had some difficulty sitting still and reading, and they were starting to argue by the time they had their turn in the lunchroom.

The children had their snack, 7 but not without arguments over different cookies and drinks. There was a major tantrum from one child when it was time to clean up and leave. The children were then taken to the multipurpose room for the puppet show. The children sat fairly quietly during the show. 8 Afterwards, the puppeteer brought the puppets out to meet the children. The children grabbed and pulled at the puppets, while the teachers did little to stop them. There was confusion over what to do next, as the bus would not arrive for another thirty minutes. The classes were taken back to the children’s library to look at books until the bus came. Again the children had difficulty sitting quietly and wanted to explore the space. The teachers did not allow this.

There were a lot of problems with this trip. The library staff was unsure of what to do with the children when the staff could not follow the expected plan. It was never clear what the children should do with their coats, and that became a constant cause of confusion and frustration for teachers and children. The children were unsure of what to expect or what to do with themselves and many of them acted out. While there were some problems with planning on the library’s end, it was clear that the teachers were not

6 Appendix F, Photo 5

7 Appendix F, Photo 6

8 Appendix F, Photo 7
prepared for this trip. The children did not know how to behave, and many tended to run away from the group. The teachers did not seem to recognize the children’s frustration, nor did they try to provide some sort of activity to calm the children and give them structure. In all of the time that we spent in the children’s library, it did not occur to any of the teachers to read a story.

The second field trip was very different. This trip was near the end of January, on the last day of classroom observation. The field trip was to the Swedish American Museum, a venue that had come to the teachers’ attention after conversations with me about places I had taken my own classes as a teacher. However, I realized a few days prior to the trip that the teachers really knew nothing about the location.

I met the group at the Swedish American Museum. The children entered and were guided by museum staff to the main exhibit hall. There was a brief discussion of the location of Sweden and of museum rules. The entire group was then taken to the top floor to visit the Children’s Museum of Immigration. The children were able to dress up and play in the model Swedish residence and the model American frontier farm. The children played for quite a while, cooking food, tending the garden, and rowing the boat that took them to America.

After this playtime, the children went into an arts and crafts studio and made floral wreaths from tissue paper. Lunch followed in the same room. The museum staff had planned to teach the children folksongs afterwards, but time had run out. Children sat

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9 Appendix F, Photo 8

10 Appendix F, Photos 9-12

11 Appendix F, Photos 13 and 14
with the museum guide and sang some of their school songs while they waited for the bus.

The children were much better behaved during this trip. There were a few factors that could possibly explain this. First, the children had been on several field trips by this time in the school year. In contrast, the trip to the library was the first field trip of the year. Also, the museum staff at the Swedish American Museum kept the children moving between activities, and there was very little downtime in which the children might become bored. The staff was also very clear about behavioral expectations and the order of activities for the day. Thus, the children knew what was expected of them and when. The children exhibited much less frustration and confusion during this trip than during the trip to the library.

Field Trip Discussion

None of these trips were really an extension of a current theme or class exploration. However, all three gave the children opportunities that they would not have normally had. In this way, they were able to have more of the educational experiences typical of middle class childhood.

However, the children still needed some behavioral guidance. It was unclear, as I only attended one field trip, whether the children from Classroom 2 were so well-behaved because the trip was well planned or because they had a clear understanding of expected behavior. Neither of these things were good playing nor clear behavioral expectations were present in the first field trip for Woodlawn. However, in the second trip, behavior was clearly much better. As I did not attend any of the intervening field trips, I cannot say whether this was due entirely to the planning of the museum staff or to a better
understanding of behavioral expectations. In either case, this suggests that some structure is necessary for appropriate field trip behavior and thus, a valuable field trip experience.

While field trips were not necessarily indicative of classroom experience and classroom pedagogy, they were an extension of it. Teacher planning of field trips in both schools aligned, at least partially, with teacher planning for the classrooms. Malaguzzi was concerned with how each trip would add to the classroom experience, and Woodlawn was more concerned with scheduling trips that teachers found interesting and that the center could afford. The weak framing in Classroom 2 might have allowed better internalization of behavioral expectations, enabling these children to better apply classroom behavioral expectations to a non-classroom experience. Framing in Classrooms 3 and 4 was much stronger. Child behavior was directed and therefore much less internalized. These children may have been less able to self-manage behavior or to apply classroom behavior activities to non-classroom activities than were the children in Classroom 2.

**Parent Interviews**

I conducted four parent interviews in each classroom, sixteen interviews in total. It was my original intention to work with teachers to schedule parent interviews throughout the day. However, only one classroom had four parents willing to commit to interview times. Instead, at the suggestion of Woodlawn teachers, I arrived at the sites early so that I could interview parents at drop-off. As parent interviews only took between five and fifteen minutes, several parents in each classroom were willing to stay for an interview. Consequently, my sample of parent interviews consists largely of parents that had some free time in the morning.
I interviewed three mothers and a father of Classroom 1 children, four mothers from Classroom 2, two mothers and two fathers from Classroom 3, and two mothers, one father, and a mother/father pair from Classroom 4. Thus, there were sixteen interviews of seventeen parents. Interview questions concerned site selection, knowledge of the program, and the parents’ impressions of their child’s progress. Interviews were coded based upon most frequent answers and topics.

Of the sixteen parents, nine chose the program based on convenience, as the program was very close to either their home or workplace. Of these, five were at Malaguzzi and four were at Woodlawn. Eight (three at Malaguzzi and five at Woodlawn) parents reported being aware of the program because it was nearby. Equal numbers of parents at each site (three at each, six in total) chose the program after some research of either the program or the teachers. Two parents at Woodlawn chose the center based on previous positive experiences. These same two parents attended the program themselves as young children. Another parent at Woodlawn had a family member that had attended the program. Three parents at Malaguzzi had family members go through the program.

We live in the area and, my niece, she started in, I think downstairs. So she was here a good two, three years. I saw how smart she was and everything. I encouraged myself—I saw her there, I want my daughter there.

My mom brought my sister here.

My grandfather got a shop right across the street and it’s easy where I can drop him off at school and pick him up at the same time.

---

12 This includes one mother who was also a teacher at the site.

13 The parent pair will be referred to throughout the interview as a single parent, as there was a single interview.

14 See parent interview questionnaire in Appendix A.
Convenient, you know what I’m saying? Plus it’s a nice school. Nice little school for him. All his friends are here.

*Woodlawn Parents*

None of the parents referenced the program curriculum or philosophy of either site as a criterion for choosing the program. While some parents (equal numbers at both schools) researched the school and the site, the concern was primarily whether the teachers were “good” and whether or not children seemed to be learning. One parent showed some interest in the physical structure of Malaguzzi, but she was more interested in the size of the building (very large, plenty of space for her child) than in the Reggio-specific elements.

Three parents at Malaguzzi and two parents at Woodlawn reported having no knowledge of the program’s curriculum or philosophy. Malaguzzi parents who did feel they knew something about the program reported that the program built self-esteem, was hands-on, included individualization and a wide variety of activities, and included a structured day. Woodlawn parents reported that their program included repetition, stories, learning through play, individualization, and teaching the basics. Parent analyses of both programs were supported to varying degrees by my observations. However, while the programs that I observed were very different, the parents’ view of the programs was fairly similar. Parents at both sites referenced both teacher-directed and child-led elements.

I know they just, they have different areas for them. They open up different areas. They have reading time, or story time. I know they sing, I know they dance. They do a lot of painting. They give them the choice to do what they want. They ask them, “What area do you want to work on today?”

It helps them with their self-esteem

*Malaguzzi Parents*

I want to say they learn at home first and just…for what I can see here, they read to them a lot. It’s more of a one-on-one with certain students. I noticed since I’ve been here. That seems to be working good for them.
I hear that how the teachers are teaching the children and I’m hearing the response from them. I also hear how much fun. They are very excited and playful. It’s a lot of things that I see that I really cannot explain, but knowing and seeing and listening what other children besides my own respond. It’s a good program.

_Woodlawn Parents_

In discussing their own beliefs about teaching young children, Woodlawn parents stressed individualization more than Malaguzzi parents. This was important to four parents at Woodlawn, but only one at Malaguzzi. Two parents at Malaguzzi suggested that children be taught directly and one stated that children learn best in a classroom. Two more Malaguzzi parents believed that structure was the key to early childhood education. Woodlawn parents favored talking to and explaining things to children, and one Woodlawn parent discussed the importance of keeping the child’s interest.

I think in a classroom environment. It has to be that, and the way they structure, the day, I really like it as well. They have time for everything

I think they learn best in a day-to-day routine. Just observing. Pretty much just observation, they observe others and repetitive, just something that’s repetitive. A repetitive environment.

_Malaguzzi Parents_

Well, I think it’s different for each child, just the same as it is for each adult. Some visual… I think, as far as my daughter, she learns well as far as hands-on.

Just by keeping their interest. They do a lot of activities and stuff with the kids. Learning activities to make them want to learn.

_Woodlawn Parents_

This was the opposite result of what was expected. In this group of parents, it was the parents at the Reggio-inspired school that believed in a more structured program, while the parents in the more structured program tended to have more progressive beliefs about early childhood education. Given parent beliefs about teaching young children and the apparent lack of interest in the program curriculum prior to child enrollment, the Reggio philosophy at Malaguzzi seemed to have little impact in the decision to enroll children in the program.
However, home reinforcement seemed to be more related to program philosophies. Half of the parents from Malaguzzi reported reading with their children, while no parents from Woodlawn mentioned reading as a reinforcement activity. Other home reinforcement activities discussed by Malaguzzi parents were work with a home computer, singing songs, and explaining new ideas to the child. Half of the parents from Woodlawn talked about having children work on workbooks or worksheets at home. Two parents from Malaguzzi reported the same. Other home activities for Woodlawn children included watching educational television programs or generally “working with” children. While there was some directed teaching in the homes of children from both schools, these answers suggest that Malaguzzi parents might be more likely to engage in more weakly classified and weakly framed activities. Whether this was a result of their child’s enrollment in the program or a natural parenting style is unclear. However, parents in both programs reported that they talked to their children’s teachers for ideas for work at home.

Parents seemed to be largely satisfied with both programs.\(^\text{15}\) None of the parents completely disagreed with the teaching methods at either site. The only complaint was that the methods could possibly be even better (two Woodlawn parents). All parents but one were happy with their child’s progress.\(^\text{16}\) None of the parents believed that their program was not preparing children for kindergarten.

\(^{15}\) There was one parent at Malaguzzi who was unhappy with the program. However, the parent had already changed programs three times in the past year. It is likely that she would be unhappy with any program.

\(^{16}\) The one parent who stated that she had not noticed progress was the sole parent dissatisfied with her child’s program. Interestingly, I found through my own observations and screenings that her son had progressed a great deal.
Parents at both sites valued the cooperative relationship that they shared with their children’s teachers. Fifteen of sixteen parents reported feeling welcome in the center.\textsuperscript{17} Parents at Woodlawn stressed the general friendliness of teachers and staff, while Malaguzzi parents particularly liked the verbal greeting that they received upon entering their children’s classrooms. Several parents referred to the center as being like a second home and the program staff as a second family.

Everybody, you see, they’ll say “hi” and they’ll put their smile. It’s something I like because even if they don’t know you—well, they already know me because I’ve been here for a year—but when I first come here, they would try to make you feel comfortable.

To me, everybody’s been polite, and the fact that my son likes coming here and he doesn’t complain about anything. It makes me feel comfortable bringing him here. As well as, every morning, I come, in the teachers greet me, “Good morning” they say good morning to him. Very nice environment.

\textit{Malaguzzi Parents}

I like the attitude of it is welcoming. The connection that they have with your child is comforting. It’s not like a school zone—well, it is—but it feels more like you’ve known them for years and you can talk about what your child is doing and what y’all can do together. Like the communication in the school is good, as far as the teachers is concerned.

They all tell you you’re more than welcome to stay with your child anytime you want. They friendly. Everybody.

\textit{Woodlawn Parents}

All parents felt that they were kept adequately up-to-date about their children’s progress. Most of the parents at both sites reported talking to teachers when they picked up their child from school. Parents from both sites also discussed having received a progress report on a regular basis from their children’s teachers. Additionally, parents at Malaguzzi mentioned home visits made by the teachers, while Woodlawn parents talked about parent meetings.

When parents discussed what they liked about their children’s programs, answers varied somewhat between Malaguzzi and Woodlawn. At Woodlawn, what parents liked

\textsuperscript{17} Again, the one that did not was one dissatisfied parent.
the most were things that made the children happy. Child happiness was mentioned specifically by two parents. Other parents discussed the variety of materials and activities and how much their children enjoyed these things. Malaguzzi parents talked about their children’s growth. Parents liked that the program encouraged independence and that they noticed significant growth in areas such as speech and social/emotional skills. When addressing what they did not like, parents at both sites cited things that they knew teachers could not control (such as the length of the school day at Malaguzzi or the neighborhood surrounding Woodlawn) or nothing at all.

Most of the parents whose children attended Malaguzzi liked that the center welcomed the entire family, not just the enrolled child. Two Malaguzzi parents also stated specifically that they liked how the teachers taught. Throughout the interview, Malaguzzi parents stressed growth that they had seen in their children since enrolling them in the program. In some cases, the center had helped parents to overcome issues with children that parents had not been able to fully address without help. In other cases, parents talked about working with teachers to further their children’s academic growth.

I like the way they teach because my daughter, she had a really hard time speaking in the beginning. She wouldn’t be able to pronounce the words. So I had to guess what she wanted to say. Since I started coming here, her vocabulary and everything else started fluently. So, it was good...she used to miss a lot of words between what she was trying to say. It was hard for me to understand and I thought she would have to have counseling or therapy, speech therapy.

Classroom 1 Parent
5-year-old daughter

I’ve seen him kind of grow. When he originally come into the program, he was around the time where kids start having the temper tantrums and all that. Whatever it is that they teach here, they kind of work with the parents, so we work hand-in-hand, and he outgrew the temper tantrums, like throwing himself on the floor, almost right away. I would even say within two month.

Classroom 2 Parent
4-year-old son

They would ask me, “What do you want your daughter to learn?” I told them, “Well, can you help her” for instance, I told them, “I want her to write her name.” And she did. They saw her writing her name, and she writes her name. They asked me, after she
accomplished that, the next thing was, “What do you want her to do now?” “I want her to read. I’m working with her at home reading, maybe you guys can help her more.” She is.

*Classroom 1 Parent*
*4-year-old daughter*

He’s really smart. Even though he does have listening problems at some times. Like, they’ll teach him a song and he’ll sing it all day. I actually talk to the teachers, and if they tell me, “Oh, he needs help with this. And you should do this.” I’ll go home and I’ll help him with stuff and make sure he’s listening.

*Classroom 2 Parent*
*3-year-old son*

Most of the Woodlawn parents were primarily interested in how much their child enjoyed the center; there was really very little discussion of child growth. The parents believed that the children were learning, especially as several had seen the teachers’ directed methods. Examples of growth had more to do with knowledge of letters, numbers, and shapes than the language, literacy, and social/emotional growth reported above.

She’s doing excellent…[l]ike her ABCs, 1-50, spelling her name, writing her name.

*Classroom 3 Parent*
*4-year-old daughter*

He doing better than what he was. When he was in [another teacher]’s class, he didn’t want to do nothing. He didn’t want to write his name. Now that he in [Classroom 4], he like doing it. He writing his name, tracing his numbers, saying his ABCs more, counting 1-5. All that.

*Classroom 4 Parent*
*3-year-old son*

A final and unexpected finding from the parent interviews regards the loquaciousness of the parents. Malaguzzi parents were significantly more talkative than Woodlawn parents. The average interview length of a Malaguzzi parent was nearly five minutes longer than that of a Woodlawn parent. Given that the longest interviews were around fifteen minutes in length, this is a significant difference. In several interviews of Woodlawn parents, answers were supplied in a few words or short sentences, while Malaguzzi parents gave much more elaborate answers to the same questions.
There were two objectives for interviewing the parents of children included in the study. The first was to evaluate the effectiveness of the two programs based on parental impressions. In this, both programs did very well. Parents at both sites were happy with the programs, the program curriculum (what they knew of it), their children’s progress, and their relationships with their children’s teachers. Every parent I interviewed reported that they would recommend or had recommended the program to a friend. Regardless of any other study findings, it is clear that both programs are meeting the needs of children as perceived by the parents.

The second objective was to determine whether there was a difference between the two groups of parents that might cause one group to choose a progressive Reggio-inspired program for their children. There did not seem to be a difference in parents’ criteria for site selection, and parent beliefs about how children learned were actually more progressive at Woodlawn, the more traditional site. While Malaguzzi parents used more progressive techniques for home reinforcement, it is possible that this was simply the result having a child in the program, as parents at both sites reported talking to teachers to get ideas for working with children at home. The largest difference between the two groups of parents, and one that might influence child progress, was the average length of parent answers to interview questions. Differences in verbal ability between children at the two schools could be, in part, due to loquaciousness of the parents.
CHAPTER EIGHT:
ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

Classification and Framing

The observational notes from each of the four classrooms were coded for classification and framing based on a coding scheme\(^1\) that I developed based on the work of Neves and Morais in Portugal. The scheme draws on Bernsteinian pedagogical theory, as described in chapters 2 and 3. Notes were coded at the end of each month. Codes were tallied to demonstrate the levels of classification and framing in each classroom.

It is unlikely that any classroom could have very weak or very strong classification or framing all of the time. A classroom with weak classification is characterized by overlapping of subjects and activities. However, there are times, such as gross motor period, that this is not possible. Strong framing in a classroom is characterized by explicit instruction and clear directives. But as children gain a base of knowledge and learn behavioral expectations, teachers may find that not all information must be explicitly given.

The following tables show results from coding of observational notes and teacher interviews:

\(^1\) Appendix A
Table 1: Classification in Classroom 1, Malaguzzi

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n=893

Table 2: Classification in Classroom 2, Malaguzzi

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n=786

Table 3: Classification in Classroom 3, Woodlawn

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<td>C+ 42%</td>
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n=693

Table 4: Classification in Classroom 4, Woodlawn

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<td>27%</td>
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<td>C+ 28%</td>
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n=579
Table 5: Malaguzzi teachers, classification

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<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
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n=133

Table 6: Woodlawn teachers, classification

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<td>C-</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C--</td>
<td>37%</td>
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</table>

n=82

All four classrooms had weak to mixed classification, ranging from Classroom 1 at Malaguzzi to Classroom 3 at Woodlawn. No classroom had strong or very strong classification.

The mixing of disciplines present in classrooms with weak or very weak classification is considered an element of progressivism. This method of pedagogy was recommended by Dewey and is very common in progressive schools. However, contemporary play-based curriculums in early childhood education require some mixing of disciplines.

All four classrooms used Teaching Strategies Gold as a classroom curriculum model to some extent. Malaguzzi largely ignored recommendations from the curriculum when designing classroom activities, but Woodlawn depended heavily on it. The curriculum is described by the Institute of Education Sciences (2010) as a comprehensive preschool curriculum for children ages three to five that requires the physical space of the classroom to be structured into ten interest areas (blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, and computers).
The classrooms at Malaguzzi were designed to facilitate exploration and were divided into learning centers based on the school’s Reggio philosophy. The classrooms at Woodlawn were divided into learning centers as required by the Teaching Strategies Gold curriculum model. Thus, classrooms at both schools had very similar learning centers, and classrooms at both schools had a period of “free choice”\(^2\) during the instructional day.

Differences in classification between Classroom 1 and the two classrooms at Woodlawn are primarily due to the use of whole group instruction or “morning circle time.” Classroom 1 (and Classroom 2) largely extended weak or very weak classification to whole group instruction, while Classrooms 3 and 4 used whole group time to work with specific skills. This was most prevalent in Classroom 3. This room had the longest circle time of the four and used the period to focus heavily on pre-reading skills.\(^3\) Classroom 4’s circle time was shorter, leading to weaker classification in the room on average.

Differences in classification between Classrooms 1 and 2 are more strongly related to the use of free choice time. Classroom 1’s free choice time allowed for free exploration of the classroom with few restrictions. Classroom 2 used part of the period for small group and kindergarten preparation, especially later in the study (as is reflected in the classification changes over time).

Classification in all classrooms except Classroom 2 weakened over the course of the data collection period. It is likely that in the early months of the school year the

\(^2\) This period is sometime referred to as “free play”. The terms are synonymous.

\(^3\) Classification during this period was so strong that later analysis will refer to Classroom 3 as having strong classification. This distinction is in contrast to the other three classrooms and based upon the teachers’ interpretation of center pedagogy.
teachers required more structured whole group instruction and free play as the children acclimated to school.

Teacher interviews from Woodlawn indicate that teacher beliefs regarding separation of disciplines are fairly close to what is reflected in Classroom 3 and stronger than that seen in Classroom 4. This is not surprising. The head teachers in both classrooms had some reservations about Teaching Strategies Gold and would have preferred a more structured curriculum. Teacher interviews from Malaguzzi show attitudes about separation of disciplines to be stronger than the classification reflected in Classroom 1 but weaker than that in Classroom 2. This is fundamentally in line with the Reggio philosophies that all Malaguzzi teachers touted in their interviews.

The following tables show results from coding of observational notes and teacher interviews:

| Table 7: Framing in Classroom 1, Malaguzzi |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                 | F++   | F+    | F-    | F--   |
| September       | 1%    | 27%   | 37%   | 35%   |
| October         | 0%    | 21%   | 28%   | 51%   |
| November        | 0%    | 19%   | 35%   | 46%   |
| December        | 0%    | 15%   | 29%   | 56%   |
| January         | 1%    | 18%   | 45%   | 36%   |
| Overall         | 0%    | 19%   | 33%   | 48%   |
|                 |       |       | **F+ 19%** | **F- 81%** |
| n=637           |       |       |         |         |

| Table 8: Framing in Classroom 2, Malaguzzi |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                 | F++   | F+    | F-    | F--   |
| September       | 20%   | 23%   | 32%   | 25%   |
| October         | 7%    | 28%   | 37%   | 28%   |
| November        | 6%    | 18%   | 36%   | 40%   |
| December        | 1%    | 14%   | 35%   | 50%   |
| January         | 1%    | 21%   | 35%   | 43%   |
| Overall         | 6%    | 17%   | 29%   | 48%   |
|                 |       |       | **F+ 23%** | **F- 77%** |
| n=826           |       |       |         |         |
Table 9: Framing in Classroom 3, Woodlawn

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<td>Overall</td>
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<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F+ 71%  F- 29%

n=641

Table 10: Framing in Classroom 4, Woodlawn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F++</th>
<th>F+</th>
<th>F-</th>
<th>F--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F+ 63%  F- 37%

n=620

Table 11: Malaguzzi teachers, framing

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F++</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F+</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F--</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=72

Table 12: Woodlawn teachers, framing

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F++</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F+</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F--</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=44

While the levels of classification between the two schools are somewhat similar, levels of framing are quite different. Classrooms 1 and 2 both show weak framing. Framing in Classroom 1 is very weak while Classroom 2 is more moderate. Very strong framing is rare in Classroom 2 and virtually non-existent in Classroom 1. The Woodlawn
classrooms, however, both show strong framing with Classroom 3 the stronger of the two. In both of these classrooms, very weak framing was uncommon.

While the curriculum model of Woodlawn and the Reggio philosophy of Malaguzzi led to a similar distribution of disciplines, the difference in framing demonstrates that the manner in which the curriculum was taught was very different. Teachers at Malaguzzi largely favored child-driven/teacher-guided learning and implicit instruction. The pedagogy was largely invisible. Woodlawn teachers preferred a teacher-directed pedagogy in which teachers gave explicit instructions and directed, rather than guided, much of the children’s work. Pedagogy in these classrooms was largely visible.

The strength of framing in a classroom is also affected by the methods of classroom management. At Malaguzzi, children were more likely than those at Woodlawn to self-manage behavior, as classroom expectations were implicit and intuitive. Children were allowed to work out issues amongst themselves as much as possible. At Woodlawn, children were more likely to receive commands directing behavior. Teachers intervened quickly to halt potential problems between children. Children at Woodlawn were more harshly punished with frequent time-outs and threats to talk to parents. Malaguzzi children were redirected (sent to play elsewhere) when problems could not be resolved. Time-outs were vary rare and were only used in extreme situations.

Framing weakened in Classrooms 2 and 4, and to a lesser extent in Classrooms 1 and 3, over the course of the data collection period. As with the weakening of classification as the school year progressed, I suspect framing was stronger at the
beginning of the school year so that children might learn what to expect from the school day. Once classroom expectations were in place, framing did not need to be as strong.

Teacher interviews demonstrated that teacher beliefs at both centers reflected weaker framing than was present in their classrooms. In the case of both schools, it is likely that the reality of classroom life strengthened framing. While teachers may in principle prefer a more relaxed approach to both teaching and classroom management, in the moment of action, a more structured approach may seem more appropriate.

**Illinois Early Learning Standards**

In addition to being coded for classification and framing, observational notes were coded for the frequency of individual academic events and their adherence to Illinois Early Learning Standards. Events were classified by a clear change in activity or child. Individual academic events allowed children to approach similar ideas in multiple ways and also added to the richness of the children’s academic experience. I found that classrooms that had more academic events were those that had allowed children to respond to information and exploration in multiple ways.

Additionally, classrooms with more academic events spent less time on transitions and classroom management. While this finding was an unintended consequence of the coding scheme, it does make sense. Teachers have more time for academics when they are not spending large portions of the day in transition or correcting behavior.

The following tables show the number of academic events per classroom per day (on average) and the difference in number of daily events between classrooms:

---

4 Classroom management and transition practices in each of the four classroom will be discussed more fully later in the chapter.
Table 13: Numbers of academic events daily

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classroom 1</th>
<th>Classroom 2</th>
<th>Classroom 3</th>
<th>Classroom 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>31.84</td>
<td>31.03</td>
<td>33.24</td>
<td>22.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>11.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor/Health</td>
<td>16.06</td>
<td>15.52</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>18.29</td>
<td>17.52</td>
<td>13.24</td>
<td>12.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>87.79</strong></td>
<td><strong>71.92</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Differences in number of events between classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classroom 1</th>
<th>Classroom 2</th>
<th>Classroom 3</th>
<th>Classroom 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>20.33</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>35.73</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classrooms at Malaguzzi had a higher number of academic events on average than classrooms at Woodlawn. The smallest difference between classrooms at each school was between Classrooms 2 and 3: 15.87 events. This was 22% of Classroom 3’s academic day. The largest difference was between Classrooms 1 and 4: a difference of 35.75, 63% of Classroom 4’s academic day. Clearly, children at Malaguzzi had a more dense academic day. This is supported by observational timing data, which shows that Malaguzzi classrooms, particularly Classroom 2, had shorter transitions than Woodlawn classrooms. Malaguzzi classrooms also allowed greater variability in child learning and responses to teachers.

This coding system also demonstrates the percentage of instructional time spent on each area. It shows which areas were emphasized in classrooms and which were touched on more rarely.
Table 15: Percentage of time spent in each area, based on academic events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Classroom 1</th>
<th>Classroom 2</th>
<th>Classroom 3</th>
<th>Classroom 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor/Health</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=92.25</td>
<td>n=87.79</td>
<td>n=71.92</td>
<td>n=56.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign language work shows very low numbers of academic incidents. However, this is not to say that children were not speaking Spanish. In fact, children in Classroom 1 spoke Spanish to each other frequently.\(^5\) As the standards for foreign language work in early childhood education specify creating a transferable language for language and literacy skills, I defined academic events in foreign language as events in which children were asked specifically to translate from either English to Spanish or Spanish to English or events in which a teacher used both languages when speaking to children. Instances of children speaking to each other in Spanish or teachers speaking to children using only Spanish were defined as language development. Given this criteria, it is unsurprising that the foreign language code appeared rarely.

The code for social studies also appeared rarely. Many of these events were discussions of the differences in skin between children, between teachers and children, or between children in pictures or in a book about diversity. Science appeared a bit more frequently. These events were largely work in science learning areas or the sensory table.

---

\(^5\) Some children in Classroom 2 spoke Spanish to each other, but it was much less frequent than in Classroom 1.
While these areas were used fairly frequently, particularly in Malaguzzi, much of the work done in these areas were a long and sustained events.

In all four classrooms, language and literacy was the most frequent code. It had the highest relative frequency in Classroom 3, where letter recognition was drilled during whole group instruction. However, this code does show a limitation of the Learning Standards. Classroom 3 and Classroom 4 show a high percentage of work with language. Classroom 1 and Classroom 2 also show a high percentage of work with language. However, the work is very different. Classrooms 3 and 4 achieved this standard by drilling letters during whole group instruction. Classrooms 1 and 2 attained the standard by conversing with the children and allowing them to naturally develop language skills.\(^6\)

Another limitation of this coding system is that it was impossible for me, as a single observer, to view every academic event happening in the classroom at once, particularly during whole group play. However, I observed multiple areas during free play, usually in a different order each day. While the numbers above are averages, daily tallies of academic events showed little difference from day to day.

**Assessments of Child Growth**

There were two forms of child assessment in this study. Children were tested in September and in February using the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement. Children were also observed in their classrooms by me four days per month from the beginning of September to the end of January. Testing and observational results both show growth among children in both sites, but more consistently among children at

\[\text{-------------------------}\]
Malaguzzi. Children at Malaguzzi were also found to have grown in more developmental areas than children at Woodlawn.

A total of fifty-one children were included in classroom observations for the entire five month observational period: seventeen in Classroom 1, nine in Classroom 2, ten in Classroom 3, and fifteen in Classroom 4. Actual enrollment in each classroom was as follows: Classroom 1, twenty; Classroom 2, twenty; Classroom 3, fifteen; and Classroom 4, twenty. Woodlawn had higher student mobility than Malaguzzi. Four children from Malaguzzi were dropped from the project after leaving the school, as were three from Classroom 3 and one from Classroom 4. In Classroom 2, the low number of included children was due entirely to lack of parent interest in the project.

Not all children included in the study were screened. As the time available to screen, particularly in September, was limited, screenings were only available to children who were present on screening days, with numbers of screenings limited to the number that could be completed in the time allowed. Thirty-seven children were screened in both September and January. All children who were still at the schools who were screened in September were screened in January, save two. One child in Classroom 3 was on vacation during the post test and was gone long enough to affect his age and thus his expected age score. One child in Classroom 4 left the center in February, so she was included fully in the observational analysis, but not in the screening. Numbers of children screened in each classroom were as follows: Classroom 1, 14; Classroom 2, 7; Classroom 3, 9; and Classroom 4, 7. While these numbers do not include the entire class and, in the cases of Classrooms 2 and 4, include less than half of the enrolled children, I was able to get a fairly even distribution of abilities, according to teachers’ assessments
of development and abilities. In each group, I have the highest and lowest performing children in each class, as well as the oldest and the youngest.

**Woodcock Johnson**

I administered five tests from the Woodcock Johnson battery: Letter-Word Identification, Story Recall, Understanding Directions, Spelling, and Applied Problems.\(^7\) Test length varied, as the tests are designed to give more questions when children are performing well and to end when children are having difficulty. Administering the full battery took between fifteen and forty-five minutes, depending on child performance. In both schools, I was provided with a quiet space outside of the classrooms where the children and I could work without interruption.

To the children, the test battery was pitched by teachers in all four classrooms as “playing games.” The children actually did enjoy the tests and liked the one-on-one attention. I had only one child refuse the test. Occasionally, children became tired or bored with the test, requiring that we try to finish more quickly. This was especially true with high-performing children, who tested for much longer than lower performing children. Other testing issues included one child deciding after beginning that he wanted to stop and one child becoming sick during testing. In both cases, the test was stopped until the children were ready to finish.

Test results were normed by age, in order to show the difference between the child’s performance and the expected performance of a child of the same age. Older children were expected to test better than younger children, as they were more developmentally advanced and had more experience with all material provided. Because the test was normed by age, growth could be calculated as months or years gained rather

---

\(^7\) Tests one, three, four, six, and ten
than number of answers correct. Considering that I tested children in September and February, I expected to see about five months of growth in the children.

Test 1, Letter-Word Identification, is intended to test children in broad reading and academic skills. The test begins, for preschool-aged children, with simple letter identification. The first question requires children to match a letter to one given by the tester. The second asks children to identify a letter amongst a series of three numbers and shapes. After some questions involving more difficult letter identification, including choosing letters out of a group of letters and naming a series of letters, children are asked to start to read some simple words. Words become increasingly difficult, reaching levels designated by testers to be of high school and adult difficulty. Most of the children tested in this study did not make it past letter identification, though a few could read some words. Results are as follows:

Table 16: Letter-Word Identification Results by Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Age at Testing</th>
<th>Test 1--Letter-Word Identification</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>n=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Post Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.05/-0.10</td>
<td>4.05/-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.04/-0.01</td>
<td>5.03/+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.07/+0.02</td>
<td>4.09/-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>3.11/-0.09</td>
<td>4.06/-0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age is expressed in years and months. In Classroom 1, the average age at pretesting was four years and three months. This is expressed as 4.03. In the Test 1 table, the pretest and post test columns show the average test score per child and the difference (positive or negative) between the average score and the average age. Scores in red indicate the largest negative difference or smallest positive difference (the worst scores) while blue scores show the largest positive difference or smallest negative difference (the best scores).
For this test, Classroom 3 at Woodlawn had the highest pretest score. It was the only class to test above age in September. Classroom 1 had the lowest pretest score; this was possibly because several children in that class spoke only Spanish at the start of the school year—a serious limitation as I was only able to give the test in English.

All classrooms demonstrated some growth over the data collection period. However, Classroom 3, the room that showed the best scores in September, showed the least growth. None of the children in Classroom 3 were able to move past letter identification and into simple reading. Classroom 4 had the lowest scores in February, though the class did show more than five months of growth. Classroom 1 was still performing below age-level, but similarly showed more than five months of growth. Classroom 2, which had the highest post test scores, also showed the most growth: nearly a full year. This classroom was the only one to test above age level on average in February.

In Classroom 1, the highest performing child scored over two years above age level.\(^8\) She went several questions into the reading portion. In Classroom 2, the highest performing child scored three years and ten months above age level.\(^9\) She was able to read words designated as third grade difficulty.\(^10\) The highest performing child in Classroom 3 scored one year and nine months above her age level.\(^11\) She did not go into the reading portion. Two children tied for the highest score in Classroom 4. One scored

\(^8\) Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Seven years, one month.

\(^9\) Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Eight years, nine months

\(^10\) While this child’s scores were very high on this and the other tests, her growth was actually quite low when compared to her classmates. On this test, her growth was exactly five months. Consequently, her high score had little effect on the high level of growth shown by the class average.

\(^11\) Age: Four years, four months. Score: Six years, one month.
five months above his age level, while the other was nine months above her age level with the same raw score. Neither went into the reading portion.

In Classroom 1, the largest individual gain was two years and seven months. The smallest was a loss of four months. The largest individual gain in Classroom 2 was two years and five months, while the smallest was four months. In Classroom 3, the largest individual gain was two years and seven months, and the smallest was a loss of nine months. The largest individual gain in Classroom 4 was one year and eleven months, and the smallest was a loss of one month.

Table 17: Highest and Lowest Individual Gains Per Classroom, Letter-Word Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Highest individual gain</th>
<th>Lowest individual gain</th>
<th>Highest loss/Highest gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>+2.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>+2.05</td>
<td>+0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>+2.07</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>+1.11</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test 3, Story Recall, is designed to test both standard and extended oral language and oral expression. In this test, children are orally given a brief story (two sentences) and asked to repeat the story to the tester. Children are graded on how much of the story they are able to repeat. Stories become longer and more complicated as the test continues. The primary difficulty of this test for the children who I tested was understanding exactly how the test worked. I found that several children who understood the instructions did extremely well, while children who were unsure of what story retelling was did quite poorly. Consequently, there was a great deal of variation in scores for this test in the classrooms. Classroom results are as follows:

---

12 Child One: Age: Five years, four months. Score: Five years, nine months. Child Two: Age: Five years. Score: Five years, nine months.
13 None of the children showing highest individual growth were the highest scoring child in their class.
Table 18: Story Recall Results by Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Testing</th>
<th>Test 3--Story Recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest Post test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest Post test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>4.03 4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.05 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>4.05 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>4.08 5.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All classrooms scored below average age level on the pretest. Classroom 2 had the highest score, and scored closest to its age average, while Classroom 4 scored well below age average. Post test scores showed growth in all four classrooms. However, only Classroom 2 scored above average age on the post test. Classroom 2 also had the highest overall growth. The other three classrooms showed equal growth. While these classrooms did not catch up to their average age score, all three showed more than five months of growth. However, Classroom 4 was still nearly two years behind its average age score.

In Classroom 1, the highest raw score was one year and ten months above age level, with the second highest score being one year and seven months above age level.\footnote{Highest, Age: Five years, two months. Score: Seven years, seven months. Second highest, Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Seven years, one month.}

The highest score in Classroom 2 was a tie between two children, one scoring three years and nine months above age level and the other scoring four years and three months above age level.\footnote{Child one, Age: Five years, five months. Score: Nine years, two months. Child two, Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Nine years, two months.} In Classroom 3, the highest scoring child scored one year and eleven months above age level, while the second highest score was two years and four months above age level.\footnote{Highest, Age: Five years, three months. Score, Seven years, two months. Second highest, Age: Four years, three months. Score: Six years, nine months.}

In Classroom 4, the highest achieving children (again a tie) both scored below
their age level, with one scoring eleven months below and the other scoring eight months below.\textsuperscript{17} No child in Classroom 4 scored at their age level or above on the post test.

The highest individual growth in Classroom 1 was two years and five months. The lowest individual growth was a loss of a year and five months. The highest individual growth in Classroom 2 was three years, eleven months; the lowest was zero months. In Classroom 3, the highest individual growth was four years, while the lowest was a loss of nine months. The highest individual growth in Classroom 4 was two years and four months, and the lowest was a loss of four months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 19: Highest and Lowest Individual Gains per Classroom, Story Recall\textsuperscript{18}</th>
<th>Highest individual gain</th>
<th>Lowest individual gain/Highest loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>+2.05</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>+3.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>+4.00</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>+2.04</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test 4, Understanding Directions, is designed to test both standard and extended oral language, as well as listening comprehension. In this test, children are shown a picture of a recognizable scene (a farm, a school, a beach, etc.). The tester asks the child to point out certain items in the picture. Instructions start simply, with children pointing out one recognizable item. Difficulty increases as children are asked to point out several items in order or to choose an item based on a description rather than the item’s name. More difficult questions use directional language such as over/under and left/right.

Children at both schools liked this test very much and enjoyed looking at the pictures.

\textsuperscript{17} Child one, Age: Five years and four months. Score: Four years and five months. Child two, Age: Five years and one month. Score: Four years and five months.

\textsuperscript{18} The child showing the most growth in Classroom 2 was not one of the highest scoring children in his class.
Given the interesting visual component, this was the most engaging test in the battery.

Classroom results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 20: Understanding Directions Results by Classroom</th>
<th>Test 4--Understanding Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age at Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.11/-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8/+0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.9/+0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.0/-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the post test for Test 4, every classroom showed growth of more than five months. Additionally, every classroom was at average age level or above by February. Classroom 4 had the lowest average pretest score on this test. Classrooms 2 and 3 were above age level on the pretest. However, Classroom 2 was able to achieve the highest growth of the four classrooms, even though they were already above age level, while Classroom 3, with both the highest score and the highest age difference on the pretest, showed the least growth on the post test.

The highest score in Classroom 1 was one year and five months above the child’s age.\(^{19}\) In Classroom 2, the highest score was three years and five months above the child’s age.\(^{20}\) This child came very close to completing the entire test. The highest scoring child in Classroom 3 scored one year and seven months above her age.\(^{21}\) In Classroom 4, the highest performing child scored nine months above his leveled score.\(^{22}\)

\(^{19}\) Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Six years, four months

\(^{20}\) Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Eight years, four months.

\(^{21}\) Age: Five years, two months. Score: Six years, nine months.

\(^{22}\) Age: Five years, four months. Score, Six years, one month.
The highest individual gain in Classroom 1 was two years and five months. The lowest was a loss of two months. In Classroom 2, the highest individual gain was three years and six months, while the lowest was a loss of two months. The largest gain in Classroom 3 was one year and three months, with the lowest being a loss of one month. The highest individual gain in Classroom 4 was two years and seven months, while the lowest was a gain of two months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Highest individual gain</th>
<th>Lowest individual gain</th>
<th>Highest loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>+2.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>+3.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>+1.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>+2.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test 7, Spelling, is designed to test children in broad written language, basic writing skills, and general academic skills. In this test, children are given a worksheet and pencil. Early questions ask children to make simple marks on their paper and then to trace letter forms. Children are then asked to write letters given to them orally. If children make it past this stage, the tester begins to give them words to write. Among the children I tested, most who reached the stage of receiving full words refused to try to write them. Two children successfully wrote full words: one in Classroom 1 and one in Classroom 2. Several other children attempted to write words in these two classes. Unfortunately, I could not give credit for inventive spelling. None of the children from Woodlawn attempted to write words. Classroom results are as follows:

23 None of the children with the highest levels of individual growth were the highest scoring child in their class.
Table 22: Spelling Results By Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Testing Post test</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Test 7--Spelling</th>
<th>Post test</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>n=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.01/-1.02</td>
<td>4.10/+0.02</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.04/-0.01</td>
<td>5.00/+0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.08/-0.09</td>
<td>4.09/-0.01</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>4.07/-0.01</td>
<td>5.00/-0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On this test, all four classrooms showed growth, though Classroom 4’s growth was exactly five months. Classroom 1 went from being the class performing the farthest below average age to being one of the classes performing the highest above average age. Classroom 2 was also performing slightly above its average age score by February. While Classrooms 3 and 4 were still performing slightly below age level on average, they were both very close to catching up.

The highest performing child in Classroom 1 scored one year and ten months above her expected age score. However, this child showed no growth on this test from September to February. In Classroom 2, the highest scoring child was two years and one month above her expected age score. In Classroom 3, two children tied for the highest score in the class: one year and two months above one child’s expected score and one year and one month above the other’s. The highest scoring child in Classroom 4 scored eleven months above her expected age score.

The score showing the most individual growth in Classroom 1 was one year and ten months above the pretest score. Two children in Classroom 1 showed no growth,

---
24 Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Six years, five months.

25 Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Seven years.

26 Child One: Age: Four years, four months. Score: Five years, six months. Child Two: Age: Four years, five months. Score: Five years, six months.

27 Age: Five years. Score: Five years, eleven months.
giving them the lowest growth scores in the class. In Classroom 2, the highest growth score was one year and two months, while the lowest belonged to two children who each showed four months of growth. The highest growth score in Classroom 3 was three years and one month, and the lowest was three months. In Classroom 4, the highest growth score was two years and four months, while the two children with the lowest growth scores showed no growth or loss.

Table 23: Highest and Lowest Individual Gains Per Classroom, Spelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Highest individual gain</th>
<th>Lowest individual gain/Highest loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>+1.10</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>+1.02</td>
<td>+0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>+3.01</td>
<td>+0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>+2.04</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final test I included in my assessments, Test 10: Applied Problems, is designed to assess broad math, math reasoning, and academic applications. The test begins with simple counting of objects in the test book. As the test continues, children are asked to reason through simple addition and subtraction problems (“If you took away two balloons, how many balloons would you have?”) of increasing difficulty. Later questions involve telling time and counting money. Few of the children in this study progressed that far, and none of the children tested answered time or money questions correctly. I found this test to be the least forgiving of the battery. In earlier tests, children might miss a question or two testing knowledge that they did not have, while continuing the test and still getting to more difficult questions. In this test, many questions were similar but of increasing difficulty. If a child did not understand adding and taking away from a quantity, particularly in the abstract, the test ended rather

---

28 None of the children showing the largest gains had the highest scores in their classrooms. However, one of the children in Classroom 1 showing no gain did have the highest score in the class.
quickly. Consequently, this test had the lowest scores across the board. Classroom results are as follows:

### Table 24: Applied Problems Results by Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Testing</th>
<th>Test 10--Applied Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was less overall growth on this test than on the others. Only two classrooms of the four showed growth of more than five months. Classroom 2 was the highest performing of the four in both the pretest and post test, even though growth was only an average of three months. Classroom 1 had the most growth, showing a year of gains on average over the five-month period. Classroom 4 ended as the lowest performing class even though it showed six months of growth over the five month period.

The highest performing child in Classroom 1 scored ten months above her expected age score. In Classroom 2, the highest performing child scored one year and six months above her age. In Classroom 3, the highest performing child scored one month below her expected age score. The highest performing child in Classroom 4 also performed below his age score, in his case by two months.

Two children showed the largest gains on this test in Classroom 1. Both demonstrated eleven months of growth over the five month period. The smallest gain in Classroom 1 was a loss of one year and eight months. In Classroom 2, the biggest gain

---

29 Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Five years, nine months.
30 Age: Four years, eleven months. Score: Six years, two months.
31 Age: Five years, two months. Score: Five years, one month.
32 Age: Four years, nine months. Score: Four years, seven months.
was one year and four months, while the smallest was a loss of three months. The highest growth score in Classroom 3 was seven months, and the lowest was a seven month loss. In Classroom 4, two children both showed the highest growth score, with a gain of ten months over the data collection period. The lowest growth score was a gain of two months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest individual gain</th>
<th>Lowest individual gain/Highest loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>+0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>+1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>+0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>+0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table shows how well classrooms demonstrated growth on each test when compared with each other. The first ranking goes to the classroom with the highest average growth on each test. Subsequent rankings show the classrooms in order of performance and the difference in months of growth between each classroom and the top-ranked classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test 1, Letter-Word Identification</th>
<th>Test 3, Story Recall</th>
<th>Test 4, Understanding Directions</th>
<th>Test 7, Spelling</th>
<th>Test 10, Applied Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (-3 months)</td>
<td>1 (-1 year, 1 month)</td>
<td>4 (-2 months)</td>
<td>3 (-8 months)</td>
<td>4 (-6 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (-4 months)</td>
<td>3 (-1 year, 1 month)</td>
<td>1 (-7 months)</td>
<td>2 (-1 year, 1 month)</td>
<td>2 (-9 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (-9 months)</td>
<td>4 (-1 year, 1 month)</td>
<td>3 (-10 months)</td>
<td>4 (1 year, 4 months)</td>
<td>3 (-10 months)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On every test, the lowest ranked classroom showed growth over the five month period of at least nine months less than the top ranked classroom. Classroom 2 was the

---

33 None of the children showing the highest growth scores were the highest achieving children in their classes.
top-ranked class in three of the five tests. Children from this classroom showed, on average, over a year more of growth in Story Recall beyond children from any other classroom. However, Classroom 2 was more than a year behind the top-ranked classroom in growth in Spelling and nine months behind the top-ranked room in Applied Problems. Average growth on all tests for Classroom 2 was ten months.

Classroom 1 held the top-ranked spots in Spelling and Applied Problems, showing more than five months of growth beyond the next ranked classroom on both tests. Classroom 1 was also the second-ranked classroom on two other tests. Average growth on all tests for Classroom 1 was equal to that for Classroom 2: 10 months. Classroom 4 ranked second in growth on two tests, third on one, and last on two. Classroom 4 children showed little growth in Spelling and had the most trouble with Story Recall. Their average growth score for all five tests was 8 months. Classroom 3 ranked second in one test, third on one, and last on three. Children in this classroom were not able to move into the more difficult material on the Letter-Word Identification, Understanding Directions, and Applied Problems tests. The average growth score for all five tests in this classroom was 6 months. This was four months less than the average growth scores in both Malaguzzi classrooms, but still more than the expected five months of growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Average Growth Score for All Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, because all classrooms had a fairly small sample of tested children, it is possible that the high scores of one or two children could pull up the scores of an otherwise low-performing class or a low performing child pulling otherwise high scores down. Consequently, it is necessary to look at how individual children performed. The following table shows the percentage of children in each classroom who showed at least five months of growth for each test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83% n=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>43% n=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>33% n=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43% n=7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a comparison, the following table combines previous tables to show average growth per classroom for each test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Test 1--Letter-Word Identification</th>
<th>Test 3--Story Recall</th>
<th>Test 4--Understanding Directions</th>
<th>Test 7--Spelling</th>
<th>Test 10--Applied Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1 n=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03 n=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.02 n=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06 n=7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at individual achievements as well as class averages, it is apparent that in no classroom did the high scores of one or two students greatly affect the overall classroom average, with the exception of the Story Recall score for Classroom 3. In this test, one child demonstrated four years of growth, but only four children of the nine tested showed any growth at all. For all other tests, high percentages of children
demonstrating five months of growth or more corresponded with higher than expected growth in the aggregate.

**Observed Growth**

I observed children in their classrooms four days per month for five months. Not all children in the classrooms were observed. I was only able to take detailed observational notes for those children whose parents agreed to their participation in the project and those children who were enrolled in the class when I began observations in September. Any child who joined the classroom after the initial September observation was not given the option to participate in the project. Children who left the center mid-year were also dropped from the project, unless they remained at the site long enough for me to observe them in January.

Observations of children and assessments of growth were guided by the Illinois Early Learning Standards (IELS) and Teaching Standards Gold (the same assessment tool used by teachers in all four classrooms). IELS gives lists of benchmarks in several different learning areas. Teaching Standards Gold provides a checklist of skills, each with four levels. Children are expected to advance one to two levels per year. I assessed the children’s growth in four main areas: literacy and language development; math and cognitive skills; social and emotional skills; and arts and self expression. Teaching Standards Gold focuses heavily on the first two areas, with less attention given to the latter. For those, I added benchmarks from IELS to the Teaching Standards Gold assessment. I did not assess fine or gross motor development, as physical development periods differed so greatly between the schools.

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34 There were two exceptions to this: two children from Classroom 4 were transferred to Classroom 3 in mid-November. As I had observations from Classroom 4 beginning in September, I continued to observe the children in their new classroom.
Both Teaching Standards Gold and IELS, like most tools for assessing development in early childhood, are very subjective. As I have been assessing young children through observations for nearly ten years, I relied heavily on my own experience and my expertise in the field. Additionally, each of the four head teachers provided me with their own observations of four included children in their classroom. Through this comparison, I could evaluate how my interpretation of child behavior compared to that of another early childhood education professional, one who knew the child much better than I. In all cases I found my interpretations of child behavior and growth to be in line with the teachers’. In several observations, the head teacher and I observed the same event, making it very clear how our interpretations compared. I am confident that my assessments of growth are as accurate as possible.

I determined that children demonstrating perceptible growth of up to one level in an area showed “significant growth,” while those demonstrating growth of more than one level showed “exceptional growth.” As children were expected to grow one to two levels in a full year, two levels in five months was unusual. The following table shows the percentage of observed children in each classroom who showed at least significant growth over the data collection period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Arts and Self Expression</th>
<th>Social/Emotional</th>
<th>Math/Problem Solving</th>
<th>Literacy and Language Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaguzzi</td>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlawn</td>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom 2 had the highest percentage of children demonstrating significant growth in all areas except literacy and language development. Classroom 1 had the
second highest levels in all areas except literacy and language development. Classroom 3 ranked highest in this area and showed levels very close to Classroom 1 in social and emotional development. However, the class showed little growth in art or math.

Classroom 4 showed very low percentages of child growth in all areas.

Exceptional growth in any area was rare. Children who showed exceptional growth were usually those who started the school year at a disadvantage. In most cases, these were the same children who showed the most growth in the Woodcock Johnson assessments. Percentages of exceptional growth per classroom were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Arts and Self Expression</th>
<th>Social Emotional</th>
<th>Math/Problem Solving</th>
<th>Literacy and Language Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaguzzi</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlawn</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Classroom 1 had only the third highest percentage of literacy and language growth overall, the class had the highest level of children who showed exceptional growth. This classroom also had the highest percentage of children showing exceptional growth in math and arts. Classroom 2 had the highest percentage of children showing exceptional growth in social and emotional skills. Classrooms 3 and 4 had fewer children showing exceptional growth in any area.

Early childhood development does not always show forward progression. It is not uncommon for children to regress in an area. The following table shows percentages of children in each classroom with observed regressions in developmental areas.
Table 32: Children Showing Regression in Each Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art and Self Expression</th>
<th>Social Emotional</th>
<th>Math/Problem Solving</th>
<th>Literacy and Language Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaguzzi</td>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlawn</td>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there was some fluctuation in growth in Classroom 2 children, none were below where they had been in September at the end of observation in January. Two children in Classroom 1 showed some regression in social and emotional skills, as did one child in Classroom 3 and two in Classroom 4.

As with the Woodcock Johnson, I expected to see some growth in all children over the data collection period. In the Woodcock Johnson, because I took a classroom average, all classrooms passed the expected level of five months of growth. For observations, I expected to see perceptible growth (significant growth) in each child in one or two developmental areas. I compared the percentage of children in each classroom showing significant or exceptional growth in at least one area. Results are as follows:

Table 18: Percentage of Children Showing Growth in Any Area, by Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At least 1 area</th>
<th>At least 2 areas</th>
<th>At least 3 areas</th>
<th>At least 4 areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaguzzi</td>
<td>Classroom 2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom 3</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlawn</td>
<td>Classroom 4</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60% of the children in Classroom 4 had no observable growth in any area. This was a total of six children in that classroom. One child in Classroom 3 also showed no
growth. Conversely, 100% of Malaguzzi children showed growth in at least one area, with the vast majority (all but one) showing growth in at least two. The child who showed growth in only one area had very inconsistent attendance. The same cannot be said for the Woodlawn children who showed no growth in any area. Most of the children in Classroom 2 showed significant growth in at least three areas, while only one child from Woodlawn did the same. In both Classrooms 1 and 2, two children showed at least significant growth in all four areas.

**Growth Among Special Needs Children**

Children with academic special needs are those whose language or cognitive development is outside the typical range of development for children of that age. Children may be either above or below the expected range. When teachers identify children for whom they have concerns, steps are taken to evaluate the children and eventually provide additional services to help the children work within their developmental level. Two classrooms in this study included children with diagnosed special needs. For these children, needs had been identified, and an early childhood professional (other than the children’s teachers) had assessed the children and diagnosed them with a developmental concern. Classroom 1 had a three-year-old boy who was diagnosed with autism in October. Classroom 4 had a five-year-old boy who had a generalized developmental delay. One child in Classroom 3 was in the process of receiving a speech evaluation and would likely begin to receive services soon for his speech and language delay. In his case, his teachers had identified a concern, but there had not yet been a diagnosis. Additionally, there was a child in Classroom 2 who was

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35 There was also a child with a diagnosed special need in Classroom 2, but he was not included in the study, as he did not join the class until October.
very intelligent, enough so that the teachers were working with her parents to find an enrichment kindergarten program for her. In this case, there was not an intervention plan available at the preschool level, but the public school system did have an enrichment program available starting in kindergarten.

Working with a group of children within range of typical development can be difficult for teachers, as typical development includes a wide range of skills. This, coupled with the two year age range in most preschool classrooms, creates the need for a great deal of individualized instruction. However, when a child who is outside of the range of typical development is added into the classroom, addressing the needs of this student, as well as those all of the others, can be extraordinarily hard. Teachers must address the needs of the special needs child, often with little training to do so, without compromising the program for other children by changing the curriculum or by spending all of their time with the special needs child.

When J. entered Classroom 1, he had not yet been diagnosed as autistic. It was clear, however, that J. did not understand what was happening in the classroom, how he should behave, or why the other children were behaving as they were. In my earliest observations of J., he tended to run away from teachers, snatch toys from other children, and pull out toys randomly. Screaming fits were frequent. However, from the beginning, J. was fully included in classroom activities. J. became very excited watching the other children run (and ran himself) during a gross motor game, so the teachers encouraged the

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36 Appendix G., Photo 1
other children to make sure that he had a turn. Older children followed the teachers’ lead, watching over and helping J. whenever they could.37

After J.’s diagnosis in October, the teachers used this information when choosing how best to deal with his behaviors. J. developed an interest in art. However, he screamed whenever the teachers put a plastic paint smock on him. Thus, J. was allowed to paint without a smock. J. liked to draw with crayons, but did not like the wrappers, so he was allowed to peel the classroom crayons. When J. had screaming fits and began to hit or throw things, teachers gave him pillows to hit and throw rather than trying to stop the behavior. Teachers gave him a great deal of one-on-one attention, but also let him work independently when engaged.

As the school year progressed, J. became more active in classroom routines, sitting quietly at circle time, getting out and putting away toys, and even participating in play with other children. While most of J.’s play was parallel (that is beside other children, but with minimal interaction), in December and January I observed J. interacting with other children while block building.38 Twice children followed his lead and incorporated his ideas fully into their structures.

Over the course of the study, J. showed significant growth in language. He was nearly non-verbal in September. By January, he had taken to parroting the children’s responses to questions or conversations and talking to himself quietly when playing. While he could not use language to communicate as freely as his classmates, this was substantial growth. J. also showed exceptional growth in both art and self expression and in social and emotional skills. He went from scribbling absentmindedly in September to

37 Appendix G, Photo 2
38 Appendix G, Photos 3 and 4
drawing the same ladybug or flower, or tracing a truck over and over by January. His drawings were not as diverse as some of the other children’s, but he took pride in them, showing them to his teachers and to other children. J.’s screaming fits also stopped almost entirely. He was much more apt to listen to teachers when they called or made a request of him.

J. began to receive services from Chicago Public Schools for his autism in early January. While this was necessary to address his needs more fully, J. had already made considerable progress in Classroom 1.

M., a five-year-old boy in Classroom 4, had less obvious concerns. M. was very quiet: no tantrums, no wandering off. He was very aware of classroom rules and routines, and he followed them dutifully. M. had a twin brother in the classroom who was one of the highest achieving children in the class. As M. played with his brother K. most of the time, his delays were largely hidden.

I became aware of M.’s difficulties during the pretest of the Woodcock Johnson. While K. had some of the highest scores in the class, M.’s scores were among the lowest. It must have become evident to the teachers as well through their own observations and screenings (using the Early Screening Inventory, Revised), because M. began receiving services from Chicago Public Schools in January (about the same time that J. in Classroom 1 did).

Prior to M.’s placement in a special needs program, I observed no attempt by teachers in Classroom 4 to individualize instruction to meet his needs. M. did the same

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39 Appendix G, Photo 5
40 Appendix G, Photo 6
41 Appendix G, Photo 7
things that everyone else did. Because he was so quiet and compliant, he had little interaction with teachers. This lack of extra attention and individualization is likely the reason that M. had no observable growth in any observed developmental area. On the Woodcock Johnson, M. showed one year and two months growth in Test 4—Understanding Directions, but less than five months of growth, or no growth at all, on other tests.

S., a four-year-old boy in Classroom 3, was awaiting his speech evaluation when observations ended in January. S. was one of the two children who started the school year in Classroom 4 but was moved to Classroom 3 in October. The official reason for this was to even out gender distribution in Classroom 4 (which was nearly ¾ male). However, the two boys who were transferred had both been dubbed problematic by Classroom 4 teachers. My observations of S. in September and October were nearly all discipline related. There was a lot of hitting, snatching, and crying. As of the end of October, I had yet to record speech.

S.’s behavior changed when he was moved to Classroom 3. The smaller class size allowed teachers to work with S. individually much more than Classroom 4 teachers had. Classroom 3 teachers were also interested in finding the reason behind S.’s behavior. They started to hypothesize that S. was lashing out because language delays made it difficult for him to communicate easily. While the teachers did punish inappropriate behavior with time-outs, they also worked with S. to find alternative methods for channeling his frustrations. Additionally, they clearly explained classroom rules and the reasons for the rules, and they praised S. greatly in areas where he did excel.
S. had very good fine motor skills and was able to cut, draw, and write quite well. The teachers were very generous with their praise in these skills.

S. did well with the explicit instruction in Classroom 3. Within a month of changing classes, his skills in letter recognition and puzzles had both improved. By January, he was much better able to play appropriately with other children than he had been in September. Additionally, there were noticeable improvements in his verbal language. Over the five month period, S. showed significant growth both in social and emotional skills and in language development. On the Woodcock Johnson, S. showed no growth in Story Recall (not surprising, as it requires verbal language) and Applied Problems. However, he showed seven months of growth in Spelling, a full year in Understanding Directions, and two years and seven months in Letter-Word Identification—the largest jump in his class.

A special needs child is one who is outside the range of typical development. J., M., and S. were all below the range of what would be considered typical. However, A., a four-year-old girl in Classroom 2, was above that range. A. was a very bright child, demonstrating not only those skills expected for her age, but also an understanding of abstract concepts beyond what is typical for a four-year-old child. When data collection ended in January, the teachers in Classroom 2 were working with A.’s parents to secure placement in a “gifted” kindergarten, one that would offer enrichment for bright children such as A.

Because A. was not behind and did not need to be caught up so that she would be ready for kindergarten, teachers could have easily left her to her own devices. However,
while A. was cognitively advanced, her social and emotional skills were more typical for her age. A. became disruptive when bored and cried (for a long time) when frustrated. Even if this was not the case, the teachers in Classroom 2 seemed to feel an obligation to push children beyond where they had been when they entered the room. So, while other children were learning to write letters, A. was encouraged to write words, and then stories. A. also worked with teachers and high achieving children in her class on more difficult math games. She was given the freedom to leave journal writing and work on her own writing when the lesson was too easy. She was called upon to help other children frequently.

Over the course of the data collection period, A showed significant growth in arts and self expression and in social and emotional skills. Additionally, she showed exceptional growth in literacy and language development. A. also showed over a year of growth on the Woodcock Johnson in both Story Recall and Understanding Directions. She showed ten months of growth in Spelling, five in Letter-Word Identification, and only two in Applied Problems—though her score in that area was over a year above her expected age score.

**Summary of Findings**

While all four classrooms showed growth on the Woodcock Johnson beyond the expected five months of growth, both Malaguzzi schools showed growth of twice the expected. Given achievement gap that exists between affluent white and low-income minority students upon entry to kindergarten, faster academic growth in preschool has the positional to lessen that gap. If Head Start is to be an academically compensatory

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44 Appendix G, drawing and story
45 This would have likely been higher, but I had to stop the test when A., who had spent nearly forty-five minutes on the battery, began to get tired.
program for low-income children, than it would stand to reason that faster growth to
catch children up to their affluent peers would be the goal. Interestingly, this idea was
suggested by Bereiter and Engelmann in 1966. They recommended a highly directed
program to meet the goal. However, in this study, it was the progressive program that
facilitated faster growth.

Malaguzzi classrooms also showed superior observed growth. Nearly every child
observed showed significant growth in at least two areas. Additionally, Classrooms 1
and 2 showed more consistent growth among most children in both imagination and
problem solving than either Woodlawn classroom. While Woodlawn children may enter
kindergarten able to recognize letters and numbers and write their names, more
Malaguzzi children show growth in areas that will lead to better academic performance in
the long-term. Skills such as imagination and problem solving will serve the students
well in later elementary when concepts in mathematics, science, and literature become
more abstract.

Finally, both Malaguzzi classrooms were able to work with their special needs
children in such a way as to meet the child’s needs while not taking away from
instruction of other children. In neither case did the teachers decide that there was
nothing they could do, that there was nothing to do, that someone else would take care of
special needs services eventually, or that the child was a “problem.” While their needs
were very different, both children were challenged and supported by their teachers.

The special needs children at Woodlawn were not so fortunate. S.’s Classroom 3
teachers did show some awareness his difficulties and how they might affect behavior
and cognition. There was some challenge for him in classroom work. However, he did
not receive the level of individualized instruction that either J. or A. had at Malaguzzi. Also, he was considered a problem child. While this was less true in Classroom 3 than when he was in Classroom 4, teachers treated S. as if they were almost constantly preventing or punishing misbehavior.

M. in Classroom 4 seemed to be nearly forgotten by his teachers. Because he was not a problem, there was little attention paid to him. Thus, there was no observed attempt at one-on-one work with M. Teachers chose instead to focus attention on the behavior problems in the classroom.

The Woodcock Johnson and observational results tell a whole group story. Malaguzzi children showed better growth than Woodlawn children. The examples of each classroom’s special needs child shows much of why this is the case. The classroom pedagogy, as described in Chapter 4, allows for close individualized instruction, support, and necessary modifications. At the level of the child, growth is more closely monitored and facilitated. The strong framing of the Woodlawn classrooms makes this difficult. Teachers were so engaged explicit teaching and promoting appropriate Woodlawn behavior, that it became more difficult to individualize instruction quite so fully. Thus, Woodlawn children showed growth, but not as consistently as Malaguzzi children.
CHAPTER NINE: DISCUSSION

This study examined the pedagogical approach in schools serving children of the same socio-economic level, living in comparable communities with similar social problems. The parents of these children had comparable views of education and chose the schools in the study for nearly the same reasons. While the children at the two schools were not of the same race, both were of a racial minority that has traditionally struggled with discrimination. In schools such as these, where the students are poor and of a minority background, children are often taught in a teacher-directed manor, using strong classification and framing.

This was not the case for children in Malaguzzi. Classification and framing was weak for both classrooms. Classrooms at Woodlawn were more traditional. While both classrooms had weaker classification than expected, due to required classroom curriculums, both had strong framing. There was some variation within the schools: Classroom 1 had weaker classification and framing than Classroom 2. While Classroom 1 was $C^{-} F^{-}$, Classroom 2 was closer to being $C^{+} F^{-}$. Classroom 4 was weaker in both classification and framing than Classroom 3, but especially in classification. Classroom 3 was close to $C^{+} F^{++}$, while Classroom 4 was $C^{-} F^{+}$. Classroom 4 was the only room that was strong in one area while weak in the other.
Both Malaguzzi classrooms had weakly classified whole group periods, while whole group periods in Woodlawn classrooms tended to have stronger classification. Free play periods were weakly classified in all classrooms except Classroom 2, which tended to have stronger classification through small group work. Both Malaguzzi classrooms had weak framing throughout the day, while framing in Woodlawn classrooms was nearly always strong.

Malaguzzi children had better outcomes, both on the Woodcock Johnson battery of tests and in observational data. Both Malaguzzi classrooms had an average growth on all tests of ten months over a five-month period. Classroom 3 showed six months of growth, while Classroom 4 showed eight months. While children’s skills grew, on average, more than the expected five months, children in Malaguzzi achieved twice the expected amount of growth. Given the disparity in preparation amongst children entering kindergarten, this alone is a compelling argument for further investigation of progressive pedagogy with low-income minority children.

Malaguzzi classrooms also had more children show significant growth in three of the four areas observed, the exception being literacy and language development. In this area, Classroom 3 showed the highest percentage of growth among children (though they were only 1% above Classroom 2). However, evaluation of this developmental area included development in spoken language and pre-literacy skills such as letter recognition, letter writing, and story writing. In both Malaguzzi classrooms, the growth was in language development and, to an extent, story writing. In Classroom 3, most of the growth was in letter recognition and letter writing. Thus, while Classroom 3 children
showed growth in this area, it was largely growth in rote skills rather than applied language skills.

All children observed at Malaguzzi showed significant growth in at least one developmental area, with all but one child at the school showing significant growth in at least two areas. In neither Woodlawn classroom did all children show growth. Only one child at Woodlawn showed growth in three areas, while none showed growth in all four. Classroom 3 focused heavily on behavior and language development and consequently saw the most growth in those areas. Classrooms 1 and 2 had a broader instructional focus and thus had more growth in more areas.

Classroom 4 showed the worst outcomes in the observational analysis. According to the observational data, 40% of the children in Classroom 4 showed no growth in any area over the five-month period. While there was child growth in Classroom 4, it ended the study behind both Malaguzzi classrooms and behind Classroom 3.

Classroom 4 was the only classroom to be strong in framing while weak in classification. While Classroom 3 did have weak classification at times, the teacher-directed and strongly classified whole group and art periods strengthened the overall classification of the classroom. In Classroom 4, the whole group period was inconsistent, weakening the overall classification. The teachers had fewer instances of an extended whole group less. However, when the teachers had a lesson, it was strongly classified.

Thus, while the class was strongly framed, the children did not have the strongly directed and explicit instruction typical of a strongly framed classroom. This created inconsistency in a classroom in which children were supposed to behave in a specific manner and which included punishment for noncompliance. While Classroom 3 was
even more strongly framed than Classroom 4, the strong classification provided structure, allowing children to maintain behavior and routines through a predicable school day. Classroom 3 children not only showed more growth than Classroom 4 children, but the class, on the whole, was better behaved. Children in Classroom 3 were more likely to adhere to the strict behavioral guidelines required by hierarchical framing.

This may be best illustrated by the two children who were moved from Classroom 4 to Classroom 3 in November. Both children had behavioral issues while in Classroom 4 and were punished on a regular basis. Because Classroom 4 was so hectic, these two children were sent to Classroom 3 in an attempt to even out the classes (officially for gender). Neither child ceased to have behavioral issues after the transition, but both had remarkably better behavior in the months following. Both were less apt to resort to physical violence or crying and more likely to follow classroom rules by January. Additionally, both boys showed significant growth in literacy and language development, not just from September, but from the date of their transition into Classroom 3.

Classroom 3’s student outcomes support Sadovink’s (2007) assessment of North Star School and KIPP Academy. These schools, both serving older children, have a strongly classified and strongly framed curriculum, and both are very successful. Sadovnik suggested that these schools are successful because they include both a caring environment and high expectations. Classroom 3 was certainly a caring environment, and teachers did have high expectations. However, the comparison to Classroom 4 further illustrates why this classroom was more successful. In Classroom 3, rather than give children high standards for a behavior and then an inconstant curriculum, as in Classroom 4, both behavioral standards and curriculum were strict. The use of both
strong classification and strong framing allowed children to anticipate classroom activities or whole group lessons. Consequently, student expectations were more clear.

However, Classroom 3 had the weakest showing on the Woodcock Johnson. Interestingly, the class showed the least growth of the four on three tests in which the children scored the highest, or nearly highest, of the four on the pretest. It seemed that on these tests, Letter-Word Identification, Understanding Directions, and Applied Problems, the class hit a testing ceiling. For example, on Letter-Word Identification, children were able to identify letters, but were unwilling to attempt to sound out words. Instead, the children declared that they could not read and the test ending. There was a similar reaction to the more difficult questions in the other tests. Conversely, Malaguzzi children, even those who were not yet reading, were willing to try to sound out words (or attempt more difficult questions), allowing some children to test further.

Classroom observations also demonstrated that Classroom 1 at Malaguzzi also had a stronger showing in arts and self expression and in math and problem solving. While both classrooms did well in social and emotional skills and literacy and language development, it is the growth in the other two areas that sets Classroom 1 apart from Classroom 3. Classroom 3 children focused heavily on letter recognition and proper behavior. These things were not ignored in Classroom 1, but the teachers’ broader and more child-centered focus allowed for greater growth in problem solving and in self expression, especially in imagination. Because mastery of these skills will later allow children to perform schoolwork that requires abstract thinking, growth in these areas will likely lead to long-term school success.
Classrooms 1 and 2 showed very similar classroom averages on the Woodcock Johnson. However Classroom 2 was observed to have higher levels of child growth. Classroom 2 was the highest of all classrooms in three of four developmental areas. In the case of the fourth (literacy and language development), Classroom 2 demonstrated growth in language and story writing while Classroom 3’s growth was primarily in letter recognition. Classroom 2 had the highest percentage of children to show gains in either three of four areas and was the only classroom not to have a child show regression in any area.

The differences between Classrooms 1 and 2 were few. The largest observed difference was the more strongly classified small group periods in Classroom 2. While the framing in these periods remained weak, children did work on specific skills on certain days. Another difference was in the framing of Classroom 2. While children were never pushed, teachers were, at times, more explicit in instruction and classroom management than teachers in Classroom 1. While it has been noted that there was a significant difference in child behavior between Classrooms 4 and 3, there was no difference in child behavior between the two Malaguzzi classrooms. Children in both classrooms showed a better internalization of classroom rules and better behavior than children in Classroom 3, and remarkably better behavior than children in Classroom 4.

Behavioral differences and internalization of rules are best illustrated in the observations of field trips, when children were required to apply school behavior to non-school situations. Classroom 2 children were exceptionally well behaved during their trip to Macy’s for the Breakfast with Santa. They followed the instructions of both teachers and Macy’s employees. There were no tantrums when children became tired, and there
was no drama when balloons popped. Though the children were required to walk through several floors of the store, no one ran away from the group, nor did any of the children touch any store merchandise. When Classroom 4 visited the Harold Washington library, children were terribly behaved. They ran from the group, did not follow instructions, and were disruptive to others. Several threw tantrums. Classroom 2 children had internalized acceptable behavior and behaved on the field trip just as they always did. Classroom 4 children were used to explicit commands and specific behaviors for specific situations. They were thus unable to apply classroom behavior to a non-classroom situation.

Differences between Malaguzzi classrooms and Classroom 3 in academic performance supports assertions by Sadovnik (2007) and Meier (2002) that a progressive pedagogy does work with low-income children. Classrooms at Malaguzzi clearly outperformed Classroom 3, though Classroom 3 was the more successful of the two Woodlawn classrooms. Bernstein (as cited in Sadovnik, 2007) suggested that progressive pedagogic practices could be successful for low-income children if four conditions were met:

1) Careful selection of teachers.
2) Adequate preparation time for teachers.
3) Time to construct lessons that allow students to recognize themselves.
4) Regular parent-school meetings. (Sadovnik, 2007)

All of these were present in both Malaguzzi classrooms. Both head teachers involved in this study had been specifically trained in Reggio Emilia (including training in Italy). Both were actively continuing to educate themselves about early childhood
pedagogy and child development. Other teachers that I spoke to in the program, including assistant teachers and teacher aides, described the hiring process at the site as being explicitly clear about the agency’s philosophies. All teachers in the study from Malaguzzi were very vocal about their commitment to the agency’s child-centered approach and their belief in Reggio philosophies.

Like most early childhood education programs, teachers at Malaguzzi had two hours of time in the afternoon that could be spent on planning and preparation as children slept. In addition, the classrooms both had defined “team meeting” times during which all three classroom teachers would meet to discuss classroom activities and necessary preparation work. Head teachers also had weekly “Reggio meetings,” in which they would meet with other head teachers, the school-level education coordinator, and the agency education coordinator to discuss the children’s observed interest and how to extend interests into an exploration.

Teachers had scheduled meetings with parents, often in the form of bi-annual home visits. However, teachers also spoke to parents at drop-off and pick-up and occasionally by phone. Teachers were observed to have good relationships with parents, and most parents included in the study felt that teachers kept them well-informed about their children’s progress.

While Bernstein suggests criteria for successful progressive programs for low-income populations, there has been disagreement among Bernsteinian scholars regarding the effectiveness of programs with weak classification and framing for these groups. This study and the superior performance of Malaguzzi in relation to Woodlawn supports both Sadovnik’s (2007) assessment of progressive programs for low-income students,
such as Central Park East Secondary School in New York City as well as research of Dooley et al. (2000) of the creation and success of weakly classified programs for Samoan students in the Queensland region of Australia. This raises questions about the conclusions of Morais and Neves (2001) and their assessment of science programs for low-income children in Portugal. With regard to the application of Bernsteinian pedagogic theory to programs for low-income populations, this study strengthens the argument that weakly framed and classified pedagogies allow for the internalization of middle class codes while effectively teaching academic skills, and thus legitimizing the culture of the family and failing to reproduce class inequalities within schools. Though, the success, though to a lesser extent, of Woodlawn, does suggest that strongly classified and strongly framed models can be effective for low-income children. This supports Sadovnik’s (2007) argument that both pedagogic forms may be effective, if implemented successfully.

The success of Malaguzzi’s progressive program for low-income minority children provides evidence against Delpit’s (2003) argument that low-income children, particularly children of color, need a more directed program. Malaguzzi was able to successfully impart middle-class codes to low-income children. Teachers were implicit in both their instruction and their classroom management. Questioning was a primary mode of re-directing misbehavior and children were able to internalize authority. Children thought through problems creatively. Those children with well-developed speech spoke using elaborated codes. Woodlawn classrooms also attempted to teach middle-class codes, but their aim was to do so explicitly, as Delpit suggested. Yet Woodlawn children showed less evidence of having internalized middle-class codes.
However, Malaguzzi does support Delipt’s assertion that the culture of low-income and children of color should be present in the school culture. Malaguzzi teachers used Spanish when speaking to children with little or no English. Children were not required at any time to speak to their teachers in English. Teachers taught children Standard English, in part, through their support of Spanish language in the classroom.

However, Bernstein (1975) states that it is invisible pedagogy, like that used in Malaguzzi, that legitimizes than rejects the class and culture of the family. While home culture can be supported, as Delipt suggests, by allowing home culture to be part of the classroom, directed instruction, or visible pedagogy may undermine good intentions. In directed programs, children might be required to set aside home culture to keep up with strong classification or strong pacing. Thus, home culture may not be as strongly supported in directed programs than in more flexible progressive programs.

Woodlawn supports Delipt in different ways than Malaguzzi. Classroom 3 at Woodlawn had good outcomes by teaching children basic skills explicitly. This classroom had the strongest classification and framing and consequently the most visible pedagogy. Also, while Malaguzzi parents were pleased with their children’s outcomes, Classroom 3 (and Classroom 4) parents better understood the program curriculum. The curriculum and pedagogy of Woodlawn was more in-line with beliefs about teaching young children reported by parents at both sites. Thus, while home culture might be better supported in a school like Malaguzzi, parents might have a better understanding of and are more comfortable with a program like Woodlawn.

The explicit teaching of middle class codes, as suggested by Delpit, was not successful. However, teachers at Woodlawn tended to move past explicit and into
authoritarian teaching, particularly with regard to teaching and controlling behavior. I doubt that Delpit would advocate this type of authoritarian teaching. Teachers at Woodlawn actively corrected children’s language and habits, expecting them to conform to a school model rather than to maintain what they had been taught at home. This was not cultural deficit theory applied to the extreme of Bereiter and Engelmann in the 1960s. But, it is closer to Bereiter and Engelmann than to Delpit’s vision of cultural acceptance. Observed interactions between teachers and students demonstrated that the program was primarily compensatory with children learning, at times, in opposition to home culture. Interestingly, most of the teachers had a similar cultural background to the students.

The findings of this study do suggest that a highly progressive program, i.e. one having invisible pedagogy, can be successful with low-income minority children—perhaps even more successful than a program utilizing a more traditional approach. The case of Central Park East in Harlem provides a precedent for this study, as Meier’s school was very successful with a similar, albeit older, population. This study does not generate enough data to say definitively that progressive pedagogies are more effective for low-income populations, but the evidence is compelling enough to put forth as series of hypotheses:

1) Children in progressive early childhood education programs are more academically successful than children in traditional programs.

2) Children in progressive early childhood programs show growth in more developmental areas than children in traditional programs.
3) Children in progressive early childhood programs better internalize classroom behavioral expectations than children in traditional programs.

4) Children in progressive early childhood programs better internalize middle-class codes than children in traditional programs.

The findings from the study were not limited to the effectiveness of progressive early childhood programs. The following hypotheses regarding traditional programs are also put forth:

1) Children show better outcomes when both classification and framing are strong than when classification is weak but framing is strong.

2) Explicit teaching promotes more growth of skills in number and letter recognition than implicit teaching.

3) High levels of classroom structure can positively influence child behavior.

The philosophies of the schools and teachers seemed to drive the differences between the two programs. While teachers at both schools expressed a need to individualize instruction, the curriculum and pedagogy of both Malaguzzi classrooms was tailored specifically to the children. The full-year class exploration came directly from the children’s interests, as did any changes to the exploration. While classroom rules were universal, implementation and enforcement of rules was based on children’s development, non-school environment, personality, and the exact circumstances of non-compliance. Teachers at Malaguzzi followed the Reggio principle concerning children’s relationships and interactions: The child should be considered in relation to other children, family, teachers, the environment of the school, and society.
The program philosophy was ingrained in nearly everything that happened at Malaguzzi. The philosophy was understood and shared by teachers, administrators, social workers, cooks, and custodial staff. Implementation of Reggio Emilia and what that means to school and classroom communities is the topic of weekly teachers’ meetings, agency-wide staff trainings, parent meetings, and classroom discussions.

Woodlawn teachers understood the need to differentiate instruction for developmental differences, but otherwise saw no reason to change instruction or interaction based on specific children. Both head teachers followed a general curriculum focusing heavily on drilling letter and number skills. Additionally, both head teachers expressed the desire for a more regimented curriculum. In both classrooms, inappropriate behaviors were punished, regardless of circumstances or child-specific concerns.

However, there was no clear universally accepted program philosophy at Woodlawn. All teachers had a personal philosophy of teaching young children, but there was not the cohesiveness that was present at Malaguzzi. At Woodlawn, teachers planned each week without the input of an education coordinator. Staff development dealt with Head Start issues and was not specific to any mission of the agency or teachers.

It is possible, given the strength of the program philosophy at Malaguzzi, that it is not progressivism that works, it is having a staff unified by a single strong program philosophy. Teachers at Malaguzzi had a dedication to the program and to the site that was not present among teachers at Woodlawn. While Woodlawn teachers were concerned with the effectiveness of their individual teaching, Malaguzzi were concerned with the effectiveness of the program.
Malaguzzi teachers were able to implement a very difficult pedagogic method. Progressivism is a great deal of work for a teacher. Malaguzzi teachers were constantly taking notes, discussing children, making environmental changes, overseeing messy child-driven projects, individualizing curriculum, and assessing child growth. It would have been much easier to simply create teacher-directed lessons or teach all of the children to sit still at all times. It is possible that the teachers in Classrooms 1 and 2 were able to build nurturing Reggio classrooms because the entire site—the entire agency, for that matter—was available to offer support and guidance to teachers. Because the entire agency had a common philosophy, it gave classroom teachers the support to more fully act upon their beliefs about how young children learn. This further supports Bernstein’s (1995) argument about the necessity of teacher education for progressive education to work. Professional development, though not explicitly mentioned by Bernstein, is central to the process.

Woodlawn teachers did not have this kind of support. While all of the teachers interviewed had specific pedagogic beliefs and philosophies of education, few elements were shared between all teachers. Some teachers did have strong progressive leanings. In fact, the assistant teacher in Classroom 3 was enrolled in a teacher education program with a strong Reggio focus. She attempted to implement some Reggio elements into the classroom, with little success. Several other teachers had educational philosophies more progressive than what was present in the classroom. However, without the level of support present at Malaguzzi, they were unable to create classrooms that matched their beliefs.
While teachers at Malaguzzi had a progressive program and some Woodlawn teachers had progressive leanings, the creation of a progressive program may not be the key to a strong program. While Malaguzzi was progressive, it is very likely that much of the strength of the program came from the cohesiveness, rather than the pedagogy. Had Woodlawn had a strong teacher-directed philosophy shared by all teachers and supported by the agency, Woodlawn’s results, both in child growth and classroom management, might have been very different.

This suggests additional hypotheses:

1) Teaching is more effective when the school has a clear and widely shared and explicit program philosophy.

2) Progressive education is more likely to be implemented fully when the entire school shares a progressive vision.

3) Any pedagogic model is more successful when it is part of a strong school philosophy.

Given the possibility that it is not the pedagogy but the level of school-wide buy-in that is important, and given the successes of both programs, a mixed pedagogy might be most appropriate for low-income minority children. Through the progressive program at Malaguzzi, children were able to internalize authority, use elaborated language, and speak in Standard English as middle class children do. Additionally, the children were learning to seek out knowledge, experiment with what they had learned, and draw conclusions on their own. They were stronger than Woodlawn in abstract thinking and problem solving—skills that will serve them in intermediate grades. However, Woodlawn children were explicitly taught the basic skills that would be most needed in
kindergarten. They knew letters, numbers, colors, and shapes quite well. The Woodlawn
will be better able to navigate the public school environment than Malaguzzi children.
They know what is expected of them from teacher in a classroom with strong hierarchical
framing.

Limitations of this study include the small sample size, the specificity of both
agencies, the lack of racial matching between populations, the lack of consideration of
immigrant status, and the subjective nature of observational evaluation instruments. This
study included only fifty-one children in four classrooms. While these children
represented the populations of both their classrooms and schools as much as possible,
there were many children in each of the classrooms who were not a part of the study.
Growth patterns among these children might have been very different from those children
who were included in the study. Additionally, a study of fifty-one children cannot
produce data that is applicable to larger populations of children. Not all of the variables
that led to the results in this study are known. There may be something specific to one or
both of these two populations of children that was not accounted for, but led to superior
results for the children at the progressive site.

The agencies were also very specific. In designing this study, I chose to include
Malaguzzi’s agency because of its Reggio Emilia philosophies. This required that the
study take place in Chicago. But the agency was in existence long before it began
incorporating Reggio Emilia into its Head Start program. There was an existing history
and structure to the program that was, and is, unique. Similarity, Woodlawn’s agency
had a long history of social service in Chicago that has influenced every program that
they run, including Head Start. It is very likely that the history and structure of these two
agencies had an effect on the prioritization of early childhood education within the agencies’ programs. Other progressive or traditional programs, even if they used Reggio Emilia and/or Teaching Standards Gold, would likely have a different approach to curriculum and pedagogy by virtue of school or agency structure or history.

Both agencies in this study had grown and evolved from nineteenth century settlement houses. While settlement houses were present in other metropolitan areas, the settlement house movement in Chicago heavily influenced houses in other cities. Additionally, the continued existence of settlement houses functioning as social service agencies is unique to Chicago. Furthermore, the structure of Head Start in this study is Chicago-specific. Head Starts in other cities, such as Newark (where Head Start is managed primarily at the city level), would not have the autonomy that agency-run sites, such as those in Chicago, have to experiment with curriculum and pedagogy. That makes the structure of this study, as well as the results, Chicago-specific.

Because I was assigned to sites by the managing agencies, I was not able to match populations for race as well as socio-economic status. While the populations of both sites are minority groups with a history of discrimination and poor economic mobility, there are cultural differences between African American and Mexican immigrant populations. It is unclear how much cultural difference between the two populations accounts for differences in outcomes. Mexican immigrant populations are currently quite poor but, like many immigrant groups, are more upwardly mobile than poor urban blacks. It is possible that children included in the study who were second or third generation immigrants would have parents who are starting to internalize middle-class codes themselves. This would very much affect the home influences for children at Malaguzzi.
Due to limitations with the parent interview questionnaire and the unavailability of child records, I did not know the immigrant status of the children at Malaguzzi. I knew who started the school year speaking English and who did not, but this is not an indication of the length of time that they, or their families, have been in the United States. Again, due to the upwardly mobile nature of immigrant groups, children that were third or fourth generation immigrants might have had more educated and more affluent parents. At the least, they would be more likely to have English-speaking parents. This could create a population that is not quite as vulnerable as the student population at Woodlawn.

While observational assessment tools were used as accurately as possible, the fact remains that they are by nature highly subjective. This is a large limitation to this study, especially as I was the only researcher. Much of the observational data was subject to my own beliefs about early childhood education, which are highly progressive due to my own training in Reggio Emilia. While there was a constant awareness of researcher-bias throughout the study, a less subjective measure of child progress would have improved the credibility of the results. In addition, a second researcher with whom I could compare results would have been beneficial. However, I was able to use teacher observations to check my conclusions.

While this study had significant limitations, it was intended to raise, rather than to answer, questions about early childhood pedagogy for low-income children. Results of the study do indicate that the both of the included programs showed some child growth. In all cases, average child growth per classroom exceeded expected growth. This makes the case that a well-designed and well-implemented program for young children will
yield positive results. However, results of this study also demonstrate that the progressive site showed better outcomes over the observational period than the traditional site. This may be specific to these two schools and four classrooms of children. However, if high-quality programs using progressive pedagogical techniques result in faster growth and growth in more developmental areas than traditional programs, this raises the possibility of using progressive pedagogical techniques in early childhood programs serving low-income minority children. This may help to close the gap between low- and high-income children entering kindergarten.

Because programs and teachers vary, research should be conducted on a wide number of sites. Malaguzzi was a well-supplied school with well-trained teachers and support staff. The school was designed especially to accommodate the needs of young children and included specialty classrooms. But not all schools working with progressive techniques have these advantages. Research in a variety of schools with different levels of financial support and teacher training should be evaluated in contrast with schools like Malaguzzi. Is Malaguzzi successful because of their commitment to Reggio Emilia or because the agency can afford to retain specialty trained teachers, hire an architect to design a “Reggio Site,” and buy plenty of materials?

Results from Classroom 3 demonstrate that traditional programs can be quite effective with low-income minority populations. This is supported by the success of such highly directed programs such as KIPP and North Star Academy in Newark or Urban Prep in Chicago. While neither Woodlawn classroom performed as well as the classrooms at Malaguzzi, the success of Classroom 3, and Classroom 4 to an extent, begs further study of highly directed early childhood programs. At Woodlawn, the teachers
were less experienced than their counterparts at Malaguzzi, and they lacked extensive teaching supplies. A study that better matches center recourses might show that traditional programs are just as effective as progressive programs, if not more so. As would be required for further study of progressive sites, many different types of teacher-directed sites should be studied to more fully ascertain the effectiveness of the pedagogy.

I never felt that this study addressed the issue of parent choice as fully as I would have liked. Parents at both sites gave similar answers about their choice of early childhood program. Parents also had similar ideas about teaching young children. However, the populations as observed did not seem quite the same. Malaguzzi parents seemed to have more study employment, though both teachers and administrators implied that most Malaguzzi parents were underemployed. Malaguzzi parents also seemed to have better access to private transportation. However, as the parent questionnaire was limited to non-personal questions (i.e. not about income or employment), I was not able to address these questions with parents directly. If most Malaguzzi parents had cars while most Woodlawn parents did not, this would allow Malaguzzi parents more choice in their children’s program. Woodlawn parents would be limited to centers that were within easy walking distance or convenient by public transportation, while Malaguzzi parents would be able to choose any site within a comfortable driving distance.

Further research is necessary to address parent demographics and parent choice. In addition to employment and income, further research should address parent education, marital status, immigration statues, number of children at home, and age at birth of first child. As many immigrant communities, including Mexican Americans, are at least somewhat upwardly mobile, research should also include demographic information
regarding the children’s grandparents, including employment, education, immigration status, and family wealth. This information more clearly shows both family class mobility and total family resources than parent income alone, as demonstrated in Caroline Persell’s (2011) work in New York City.

Additionally, future studies working with immigrant populations should consider the immigrant status of the families. Children that of later generations of immigrants could be compared to children that are 1.5 or second generation to assess differences in program effectiveness with regard to immigrant status.

This study addresses the children’s growth over the five-month data collection period. However, the study results do not address how well children from either site will perform in kindergarten or though elementary and secondary school. If children in progressive programs show superior growth while in preschool, but this advantage fades in kindergarten, than the program is not more effective than other programs. The objective of most early childhood programs, including the two included in this study, is to create a foundation for a lifetime of learning. It was the hope of teachers and administrators in both programs that the children would do well in public school. Further study is necessary on these two groups of children. They should be followed through elementary school and into high school to assess whether there is a difference in academic performance in public school between graduates of Malaguzzi and Woodlawn. Graduates of both programs should be compared to other children at their elementary and secondary schools: both those who attended other early childhood education programs and those with no preschool background at all.
While much further research is necessary to assess pedagogical effectiveness with low-income minority children, this study does suggest that parents have a wide variety of options. The parents at Woodlawn were very happy with their children’s program and supported the work that the teachers were doing. While Malaguzzi was very different, the parents were also very happy with their program. The children at both sites showed growth over the data collection period. Further work examining successful early childhood education programs will likely show a variety of pedagogical methods. What is important, for policy making, is that teachers are supported, given adequate time for professional development, and are allowed to create a classroom culture that supports their personal philosophy of education.

Numerous factors contribute to the achievement gap between wealthy and poor children and between white and black or Hispanic children. Many of these factors are structural barriers related more to poverty and racism than to education. However, educators and reformers cannot simply throw up their hands and wait for the Marxist revolution. They can make changes in the achievement of poor minority children relative to their affluent white counterparts. Early childhood education has been shown to make a positive difference in long-term academic achievement. However, rather than implementing early childhood education for all as an attempt to close the achievement gap, it is important to look closely at schools that are performing well and schools that are not. If we are to implement wide-spread preschool education, then it is important to consider first how children in these programs will be taught and whether or not the pedagogy employed best meets the needs of the population served.
APPENDIX A

Classification Codes

Classification
Lesson planning—year
$C^{**} =$ Project themes for the year show clear linear movement which each theme building on knowledge and skills learned in the previous themes.
$C^* =$ Project themes are show some forward movement with some references back to previous themes.
$C^- =$ The necessity for the specific proposed order of classroom themes is less clear. Very few references to previous themes
$C''' =$ There is no clear reasoning for the proposed order of themes. The order could easily be changed. New themes do not refer to older themes.

Classification
Lesson planning—month
$C^{**} =$ Project themes are chosen by an outside source and must be implemented as instructed Most activities are also dictated by an outside source.
$C^* =$ Project themes are suggested by an outside source but teachers have some autonomy in implementation. Teachers select most activities but some are dictated.
$C^- =$ Project themes are selected by teachers with some consideration of child interests. Teachers select most activities but some are suggested by children.
$C''' =$ Project themes emerge from classroom discussions and activities. Children’s interests influence the selection of most activities.

Classification
Daily activities
$C^{**} =$ Teachers select specific times to teach skills for different disciplines.
$C^* =$ Different disciplines are may be taught at the same time but in specific ways or in specific classroom centers (e.g. writing table, science center, etc.)
$C^- =$ Different disciplines are taught at the same time. Teachers are less explicit about specific disciplines and crossover is allowed between classroom centers.
$C''' =$ There is little to no distinction between the teaching of different disciplines.
Framing Codes

Framing
Daily Schedule

$F^{**} =$ The daily schedule is explicit. No deviations from the schedule are permitted.

$F^* =$ The daily schedule is less explicit. Teachers must maintain a clear schedule, but some variations are permitted when necessary.

$F^- =$ The daily schedule is vague. Teachers follow a schedule but there are many variations from day to day.

$F^{--} =$ There is no daily schedule. The order of classroom events each day is different.

Framing
Whole Group instruction

$F^{**} =$ Whole group instruction is explicit. The teacher has specific activities/skills to cover. Activities are directed by the teacher.

$F^* =$ Most of whole group instruction is explicit. There is some time for deviation from teacher-directed activities.

$F^- =$ There is some explicit instruction but most of the time is for child-directed activities.

$F^{--} =$ Whole group instruction is primarily child-directed with teacher guidance.

Framing
Small group/individual instruction

$F^{**} =$ Instruction is explicit. The teacher has specific activities/skills to cover. Activities are directed by the teacher.

$F^* =$ Most instruction is explicit. There is some time for deviation from teacher-directed activities.

$F^- =$ There is some explicit instruction but most of the time is focused on teacher guidance of child-directed activities.

$F^{--} =$ Teachers guide child-directed activities. There is no explicit instruction.

Framing
Rules and behavior

$F^{**} =$ Rules for behavior are explicit. The teacher gives multiple reminders for behavior expectations.

$F^* =$ Rules are largely explicit. The teacher gives some reminders about behavior. Some classroom rules are internalized by children.

$F^- =$ Most classroom rules are internalized. The teacher gives few reminders.

$F^{--} =$ Classroom rules are implicit. Children have internalized acceptable behavior.

Framing
Discipline

$F^{**} =$ Children are punished\(^1\) immediately for inappropriate behavior.

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\(^1\) Defined as yelling at the child, time-outs, removal of playtime (e.g. outdoor play) or other “privilege”, informing parents
\(F^+\) = Children are punished for inappropriate behavior when it escalates.
\(F^-\) = Children are redirected\(^2\) for inappropriate behavior and then punished if necessary.
\(F^{--}\) = Children are redirected for inappropriate behavior. Teachers rarely, if ever, punish.

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\(^2\) Defined as removing child from situation (classroom center, playground area, whole group instruction, etc.) and allowing them to play elsewhere.
Illinois Early Learning Standards Codes

**Language Arts**
Reading, writing, language, draw on previous knowledge

**Mathematics**
Numbers, shapes, direction words, problem solving, sorting

**Science**
Scientific tools, categorizing, comparisons, safety

**Social Science**
Reasons for rules, community helpers, recall information from immediate past, describe places, similarities and differences in people

**Physical development and health**
Gross motor, fine motor, coordination, follow safety rules, endurance, cooperation, healthy living practices, care for hygiene needs, appropriate communication for needs, wants and feelings

**Fine Arts**
Dance, drama, music, visual arts, describe and respond to own and other’s creative work, arts for self-expression

**Foreign language**
Use and maintain native language and use to build transferable language and literacy skills.

**Social/Emotional Development**
Describe self, curiosity, independence, appropriate communication, follow rules, empathy, cooperation
**Parent Interview Codes**

Program curriculum

Comments regarding curriculum, positive and negative

Health and Safety

Concerns regarding health and safety

Child Progress (target child)

Progress of own child since entering the center /positive and negative comments

Program Staff

Comments regarding program staff, including teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Facilities

Comments regarding building, classroom space, and additional facilities such as playground and gross motor room.

Family assistance

This includes discussion of center programs that help families and also discussion of personal assistance gained from the program either through these programs or in other dealings with the center.

Teacher-Parent Communication

Discussion of quality and quantity of teacher communication and what, if anything, has been gained from teacher-parent interaction.

Program outcomes unrelated to a child included in the study, such as older children, relatives, and self.
Interview Questionnaire
Administrator

1. How long have you worked with this program?
2. What are your beliefs about young children?
3. What are your beliefs about early childhood education?

4. What is the age range of children in your program?
5. What curriculum model does your program use? How to you implement?
6. Describe your program’s pedagogical approach.
7. How do teachers typically integrate the interests of the children?
8. How does your program address literacy skills?
9. How does your program address cognitive skills?
10. How does your program address socio-emotional skills?
11. How does your program address physical development?
12. What kinds of trips do centers and classrooms take? How are trips chosen?
13. What are your funding sources?

14. Tell me about the population that (center name) services?
15. How effective is your pedagogical approach for your population?
16. How does your program include families into the curriculum?
17. What are the special needs of the population?
18. How does your program prepare children for kindergarten?
19. How do you think children in this program feel about school?
20. How do you think children in this program will do in school, both short and long term?

21. What would you change about your program?
22. What do you especially like about your program?
23. What do you like about (center name’s) population?
24. What are the challenges of (center name’s) population?
25. How does your program address the agency’s settlement house mission?

Is there anything else about your program that you would like to add?
Interview Questionnaire
Teacher

This is a study of implementation of teacher-directed pedagogy in an early childhood classroom. I am particularly interested in how children are directed in the classroom by the classroom teacher and in how the children respond.

1. How long have you been an early childhood teacher? Have you taught in any other programs?
2. What do you believe is necessary for an effective early childhood program?
3. What would be your ideal classroom? Please consider the environment, class size, and activities.

4. What is the age range of children in your class?
5. What are your beliefs about how children learn?
6. How do you chose lessons for your classroom?
7. What curriculum model does your program use? How to you implement?
8. Describe your personal teaching style.
9. How do you program address literacy skills?
10. How do you program address cognitive skills?
11. How do you program address socio-emotional skills?
12. How do you program address physical development?

13. Do you consider the interests of your class in lesson planning? (If yes, how much?)
14. How do children typically respond to activities you have planned?
15. Tell me about an activity that the children particularly enjoyed.
16. Tell me about an activity that the children did not enjoy.
17. What kinds of trips does your class take? How are trips chosen?

18. Tell me about the population that (center name) services?
19. How effective is the program curriculum for your population?
20. How does your program include families into the curriculum?
21. What are the special needs of the population?
22. How does prepare children for kindergarten?
23. How do you think children in your classroom feel about school?
24. How do you think children in this program will do in school, both short and long term?

25. What would you change about your program?
26. What do you especially like about your program?
27. What do you like about (center name’s) population?
28. What are the challenges of (center name’s) population?
Interview Questionnaire
Parent

1. How old is your child?
2. How long has he/she been in this program?
3. Have you had any other children in this program?
4. How did you learn about this program?
5. Why did you choose this program?
6. How do you believe that children learn best?

7. What do you know about the way that this program teaches children?
8. Do you agree with the methods?
9. What do you think about your child’s progress?
10. How do you reinforce the program’s teaching at home?
11. Do you think that this program teaching children everything that they need to know?
12. Do you think that your child will be ready for kindergarten?

13. Does this program provide opportunities for you to be involved?
14. (If so) What opportunities have you taken advantage of, if any?
15. Does this program provide workshops and events for parents?
16. (If so) Have you attended any of these events? Did you find them useful? Why or why not?
17. Do the teachers keep you up-to-date about your child’s progress? How?
18. Is the staff in this program easy to talk to? Are some people easier to approach than others?
19. Do you feel welcome here? Why or why not

20. What do you like best about this program?
21. What do you not like about this program?
22. Would you recommend this program to a friend? Why or why not?
23. Do you feel this is a good program for your family? Why or why not

Is there anything else about the program that you would like to add?
May 9, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Urban Systems program at Rutgers University, Newark. I am conducting a research project on teaching practices in Head Start. This study will assess how well your child’s school is preparing children for kindergarten as compared to another Head Start site in the Chicago area. I request permission for your child to participate.

The study consists of classroom observations. I will be working in the classroom as a volunteer while observing how children respond to teaching practices. I will be in your child’s classroom four times per month from September 1 through the end of January. I will also be collecting children’s work and taking photographs of their activities. I will be screening all children in September and January with the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement and in October with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. These are very low-stress tests designed for young children to assess vocabulary development and learning growth. Both the observations and the tests are risk-free to your child.

All information from the observations and test is confidential. The research team (myself and my advisor), my dissertation committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for one year.

All of the children in your child’s class have been invited to participate. Three other classrooms will also be part of this study. However, participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect the services normally provided to your child by the Paulo Freire Family Center. Your child’s participation in this study will not lead to the loss of any benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. **If you change your mind about your child’s participation in the study at any time, you are free to withdraw him or her with no penalty.**

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me at 773-308-3481 or ssmit37@pegasus.rutgers.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Alan Sadovnik at sadovnik@andromoda.rutgers.edu. Keep this letter after completing the bottom portion and returning it to your child’s teacher.

If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Sincerely,

Stephanie C. Smith
Urban Systems
Rutgers University, Newark
Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow your child to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning this portion to your child’s teacher. Sign both copies and keep one for your records.

____  I grant permission for my child to participate in Stephanie Smith’s study on Head Start teaching practices.

____  I do not grant permission for my child to participate in Stephanie Smith’s study on Head Start teaching practices.

__________________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian  Printed Parent/Guardian Name

__________________________________________________  ______________________________
Printed Name of Child  Date
Consent form

Staff Interview

This is a case study of two Head Start centers in the City of Chicago. This study is interested in the teaching methods at each center and their effectiveness. This study will include interviews of six staff members at each site. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are part of the education staff at one of the centers. Your participation in this study will aid in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the agency-mandated teaching practices in your center. However, this interview is not an assessment of your teaching specifically.

As a participant, you will be interviewed once by the researcher (Stephanie Smith) regarding the teaching practices and philosophies of (name of center). The interview will be recorded with a digital recorder. The interview will last about forty-five minutes.

Your name, as well as all answers and opinions recorded during the interview will be confidential. The research team (myself and my advisor), my dissertation committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for one year.

Participation in this study is voluntary and will have no bearing on your employment status or performance review. You may choose not to participate at any time, including after the interview has begun, with no penalty.

If you have any questions you may contact me, Stephanie Smith, by phone at 773-308-3481 or email at ssmit37@pegasus.rutgers.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Alan Sadovnik at sadovnik@andromedia.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_________________________________________           ___________________
Name (Printed)                                             Date

__________________________________________
Signature
Consent Form

Parent Interview

This is a study of two Head Start centers in the City of Chicago. This study is interested in the teaching methods at each center and of how well these methods prepare children for kindergarten. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have a child enrolled in one of the centers. Your participation in this study will aid in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching practices in your child’s center. This study will include interviews by 16-24 parents; 4-6 parents per participating classroom.

As a participant, you will be interviewed one time by the researcher (Stephanie Smith) regarding your and your child’s experiences in (name of center). The interview will be recorded with a digital recorder. The interview will last about 45 minutes. Questions will concern how you feel about your child’s school and classroom. There will be no personal questions.

Your name, as well as all answers and opinions recorded during the interview will be confidential. The research team (myself and my advisor), my dissertation committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for one year.

Participation in this study is voluntary and will have no bearing on your child’s education or his or her treatment by center staff. You may choose not to participate at any time, including after the interview has begun, with no penalty.

If you have any questions you may contact me, Stephanie Smith by phone at 773-308-3481 or email at ssmit37@pegasus.rutgers.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Alan Sadovnik at sadovnik@andromedia.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

__________________________________________________
Name (Printed)                                      Date
__________________________________________________
Signature
APPENDIX B

Setting

Photo 1: Industrial complex

Photo 2: Shipping container storage

Photo 3: Malaguzzi exterior

Photo 4: Center entrance

Photo 5: Entryway

Photo 6: Nature room
Photo 7: Classroom 2 documentation panel
Photo 8: Classroom 1 documentation panel

Photo 9: Block area, whole group, Classroom 1
Photo 10: Block area, whole group, Classroom 1

Photo 11: Easel, Classroom 1
Photo 12: Art shelves, Classroom 1

Photo 13: Quiet area and computers, Classroom 1
Photo 14: Dramatic play area
Photo 15: Light table, Classroom 1
Photo 16: Work in Progress board, Classroom 1

Photo 17: Block area/whole group, Classroom 2
Photo 18: Art shelves, Classroom 2

Photo 19: Quiet area, Classroom 2
Photo 20: Dramatic play, Classroom 2
Photo 21: Woodlawn neighborhood

Photo 22: Woodlawn exterior

Photo 23: Whole group/blocks, Classroom 3

Photo 24: Whole group/blocks, Classroom 3

Photo 25: Dramatic play area, Classroom 3

Photo 26: Art area, Classroom 3
Photo 27: Library, Classroom 3

Photo 28: Science area, Classroom 3

Photo 29: Writing area, Classroom 3

Photo 30: Display of student work, Classroom 3

Photo 31: Child work on display, Classroom 3

Photo 32: Whole Group/Blocks, Classroom 4

Photo 33: Dramatic play area, Classroom 4

Photo 34: Art area, Classroom 4
Photo 35: Writing area, Classroom 4  Photo 36: Child work, Classroom 4
APPENDIX C

Classroom 1, room layout
*Not to scale*
Classroom 3, room layout
Not to scale
APPENDIX D

Whole Group

Photo 1: Sitting for circle time, Classroom 1

Photo 2: Music chairs, final round, Classroom 1

Photo 3: Dancing during musical chairs, C1

Photo 4: Playing “Doggie Doggie”, C1

Photo 5: Sitting at circle time, C2

Photo 6: Opening of 3 pigs production, C2
Photo 7: Momma sends pigs into the world, C2

Photo 8: Arrival of the wolf 1, C2

Photo 9: Arrival of the wolf 2, C2

Photo 10: Keeping rhythm with the drum, C2

Photo 11: Froggie in the Middle, C2

Photo 12: Individual singing at circle time, C3
Photo 13: Dancing in Classroom 3

Photo 14: Dancing in Classroom 3

Photo 15: Singing in Classroom 4

Small group and individual

Photo 16: Bug sorting game, C1

Photo 17: Identifying letters with teacher, C2
Photo 18: Story dictation with teacher, C2

Photo 19: Small, medium, large game, C2

Photo 20: Sorting bears by size, C2

Photo 21: Matching quantity to number, C2

Photo 22: Showing of collage hat, C2

Photo 23: Gluing jelly beans into a jar, C3
Photo 24: Cutting out premade picture, C3
Photo 25: Using letter stamp, C4

Photo 26: Decorating ornament, C2
Photo 27: Decorating ornament, C2

Photo 28: Drawing a C picture, C4
Photo 29: Drawing a C picture, C4

Photo 30: Drawing family pictures, C4
Photo 31: Cooking in dramatic play, C1
Photo 32: Serving pizza, C2
Photo 33: Preparing for surgery, C2

Photo 34: Performing surgery, C2
Photo 35: Going into battle

Photo 36: Calling the police about the zombies, C2
Photo 37: Delivering mail, C3

Photo 38: Playing fire chief, C3
Photo 39: Cleaning the classroom
Photo 40: Riding in the car in Sept., C4
Photo 41: Riding in the car in Jan., C4
Photo 42: Building a house, C1
Photo 43: Building a house, C1
Photo 44: Building a castle, C1
Photo 45: Watching TV in the house, C1
Photo 46: Block bed, C1

Photo 47: Building a stage, C1

Photo 48: Walking on the block pile, C1

Photo 49: Walking on block bridge, C1

Photo 50: Trying the block slide, C1

Photo 51: Building a block city, C2

Photo 52: Adding dolls to the city, C2

Photo 53: Dolls and furniture, C2
Photo 54: Lego car on the rug, C2
Photo 55: Wooden trucks, C2

Photo 56: Separate rug activities, C3
Photo 57: Building a stage, C3

Photo 58: Working on a floor puzzle, C3
Photo 59: Working on a floor puzzle, C3
Photo 60: Putting tracks together, C3

Photo 61: Driving the train, C3

Photo 62: Working with a small building set, C4

Photo 63: Playing video games, C4

Photo 64: Lego building, C1

Photo 65: Bug counters battling, C2

Photo 66: Building with unifix cubes, C2

Photo 67: Continuing a small group activity, C2
Photo 68: Legos at the table, C3
Photo 69: Playing memory, C3
Photo 70: Bears in a truck, C4
Photo 71: Playing with the marble run, C4
Photo 72: Exploring color mixing, C1
Photo 73: Painting at the easel
Photo 74: Working with water colors, C1
Photo 75: Getting paint at the easel
Photo 76: Drawing with paint markers

Photo 77: Drawing with oil pastels

Photo 78: Working with collage materials, C4

Photo 79: Drawing a picture

Photo 80: Building with magnet blocks, C1

Photo 81: Magnet blocks at the light table, C2

Photo 82: Matching X-rays to body, C2

Photo 83: Bugs at light table, C2

1 While Classroom 1 used magnet blocks often at the light table, I do not have photos of this.
Photo 84: Magnets at the science table, C3

Photo 85: Sensory bottles and animals, C4

Photo 86: Snow in the sensory table, C1

Photo 87: Sensory with bubbles, C1

Photo 88: Molding sand, C2

Photo 89: Playing "scientistes", C2

Photo 90: Working with putty, C1

Photo 91: Molding playdough, C1
Physical development and health

Photo 92: Working in the sand table, C3
Photo 93: Working in the sand table, C4

Photo 94: Working with playdough, C4
Photo 95: Reading books after breakfast, C2

Photo 96: Reading books after breakfast, C4
Photo 97: Working in journals after lunch, C1

Photo 98: Serving lunch, C1
Photo 99: Serving lunch, C1
Photo 100: Helping to pour milk, C2
Photo 101: Setting the table, C4
Photo 102: Waiting to be served lunch, C3
Photo 103: Classroom 1 on a walk
Photo 104: Looking at leaves, C2
Photo 105: Running on the playground, C2
Photo 106: Imaginary ball, C2
Photo 107: Tricycle in gross motor, C1
Photo 108: Tossing a bean bag, C1

Photo 109: Working with a band, C2

Photo 110: Under the parachute, C2

Photo 111: Going to the bus stop, C3 and C4

Photo 112: Playing London Bridge, C3 and C4

Photo 113: Rolling a hoop, C3
Photo 114: Climbing on mats, C3

Photo 115: Playing football, C3 and C4

Photo 116: Bouncing a ball, C4

Photo 117: Several children sitting out, C3 and C4
APPENDIX E

“Big Bad Wolf”
Work sample 1: S., 5 years old
“Me and my daddy were digging in the snow with shovels and he was so cold that we had to go back into the house because it was so cold outside and I was going to get a fever and a cold.
Work sample 2: J., 5 years old
Work sample 3: A., 3 years old

"I made a dragon."
nice people, they share 12-3-10

Work Sample 4: C., 3 years old
Power Rangers

One Power Ranger as outside and then one guy was outside too with the Power Ranger and then there was two Power Rangers outside. It was one Power Ranger red and then it was one Power Ranger green. It was one Power Ranger yellow and the red Power Ranger in the car. There were more Power Rangers in the car. The bad guy was the pet and the mom and then when the bad guy goes in the house it was something in the pool and then it was a monster. And then when he goes, he drive the car and when he goes, the bad guy was in the house with the mom and the pet. When the bad guy was in the pool, there were more monsters and more Power Rangers. And then, when the red Power Rangers was in the pool when he died, they buried him.

Work Sample 6
R., 5 years old
Dictated to a teacher, 12/16/10

Freshbeat Band

Saturday, Keke and Twist went to go buy food and Barbie went to the show to sing. And she sent around Keke and Twist and went to the show with Hannah Montana. And they hugged and they bought Christmas presents for everybody. Shawn and Keke Marina and the Freshbeat went to the concert and Sunny with Chance and the Freshbeat Band sang together. And they sing with Hannah Montana. And Hannah Montana said, “Wow guys, it was so awesome to sing with you guys.” Keke, Twist, and Marina went to go buy shoes and things and went to dance. Freddy, Sam, and Carly.

Work Sample 7
A, 5 years old
Dictated to a teacher, 1/6/10
APPENDIX F

Photo 1: Balloon reindeer hat, C2

Photo 2: Explore Santa’s area, C2

Photo 3: Looking for Santa, C2

Photo 4: Classroom 2’s visit with Santa

Photo 5: Looking at books in the library, C4

Photo 6: Snack at the library
APPENDIX G

Photo 1: J. confused by classroom game. September

Photo 2: V. helping J. with a game. September

Photo 3: J. sliding down block slide he built January

Photo 4: J. helping to build a castle January

Photo 5: J. using a truck stencil November

Photo 6: M. cleaning up after free play September
Photo 7: M. and K. playing football with friends
September

Photo 8: S. cutting with scissors
November

Photo 9: a. Working on a floor puzzle
December
Me dressed as Millie, walking my puppy Nene. We are walking in the snow. We are ice skating on the ice. By [name]
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