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Emotional Self-Regulation: Voices and Perspectives of Teachers within Diverse Socio-Cultural Contexts

Anna Paula Peixoto Da Silva
University of South Florida, ginpau07@gmail.com

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Cultural Contexts

by

Anna Paula Peixoto da Silva

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to mama. Your unconditional love made me strive to continuously challenge myself. Even without you, the journey continues.

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ABSTRACT

Given the importance of emotional self-regulation to a child's ability to develop social competence and prosocial behavior, and the significant role early childhood teachers play in supporting young children's emotional self-regulation, it is important to explore the concept from the perspective of teachers, or from the socio-cultural context through which they (i.e., teachers) make sense of the world.

This study used an exploratory case study methodology to explore the understandings of emotional self-regulation among three Head Start teachers working with varying socio-cultural contexts and to identify the socio-cultural perspectives that influenced their ability to effectively apply their understandings.

Findings indicate that while the participants' definitions of emotional self-regulation were aligned with those that are commonly used in the field, it was their implementation of strategies that diverged, reflecting the influence of learning goals and varying socio-cultural contexts.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Rationale

Recent research in the areas of biology, neuroscience, and psychology have helped support the long-standing assertion by educational scholars that the early childhood years are critical to a child's success at school and in life (Flores, Curby, Coleman, & Melo, 2016). According to Tominey and McClelland (2011), those initial years are especially important for self-regulation given, among other factors, the development of the brain and increasing demands for children to internalize what were previously external processes (e.g., soothing behaviors).

The first studies published on self-regulation date back to the late 1800s when self-control was mainly attributed to external causes in the form of pleasure seeking or pain avoidance behaviors (Post, Boyer, & Brett, 2006). Since then, perspectives and definitions of self-regulation have continuously evolved from ones focused solely on external behaviors to ones that include internally motivated processes as well. However, its definitions remain controversial (McClelland & Cameron, 2012).

While much of the earlier research on self-regulation occurred within therapeutic contexts and involved researchers teaching study participants to utilize self-regulatory principles to change dysfunctional behaviors (McInerney, 2008), current research focuses more on the application of self-regulatory principles for learning. This shift occurred in part due to a growing understanding of student success as something that encompasses

more than acquisition of isolated knowledge and skills. One critical factor to emerge was the recognition that conceptualizations of human abilities can vary significantly based on one's socio-cultural perspectives (Chiu, Salili, & Hong, 2001). For example, as Lynch and Hanson (2004) point out, research has consistently documented differences in areas ranging from socialization patterns to parenting practices across cultures. This recognition, coupled with the fact that most of the literature on self-regulation originated in the West and is based on normative developmental frameworks makes it plausible that teachers from varying cultural backgrounds working within varying socio-cultural contexts may have different conceptualizations of self-regulation, and specifically of emotional self-regulation. Sternberg's (2001) commentary regarding intelligence tests (IQ) supports this argument. As the author explains, while such tests were developed to measure individual cognitive dispositions, it can be argued that in fact the tests serve as more of a measure of expertise that is highly valued among mainstream, white, middle-class populations.

Statement of the Issue

Emotional self-regulation is argued to be critical to a young child's development (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004). In fact, Dennis (2006) contends it is one of the most crucial capacities for young children to develop. However, the meaning of the multifaceted construct and its underlying components are still controversial (McClelland & Cameron, 2012) given that a majority of its conceptualizations was developed and is bound by mainstream, middle-class white understandings and is thus limited to specific beliefs and values that may or may not be representative of other cultural norms.

According to McInerney (2008), some of these include emphasis on choice, individual goal setting, and problem solving. Research has tried to expand theories of emotion by taking into account their subjectivity and by considering the various environmental factors that impact emotional experiences (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Purpose of the Study

Given the importance of emotional self-regulation to children's social competence and prosocial behavior (Tentracosta & Shaw, 2009), and the significant role early childhood teachers play in supporting the development of young children's emotional self-regulation (NAEYC, 2009; Boyer, 2009) it is important to explore the concept from their perspectives or from the socio-cultural lens through which they (i.e., teachers) make sense of the world. As a result, the purpose of this study was to describe and explain understandings of emotional self-regulation among three Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts and to identify socio-cultural perspectives that influenced their ability to apply their understandings. The following questions were used to guide this study:

1- How do teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts define the concept of emotional self-regulation?

2- What strategies do teachers use to support emotional self-regulation within their early childhood classrooms?

3- In what ways do teachers' implemented strategies align or deviate from their stated understanding of emotional self-regulation?

4- In what ways do socio-cultural perspectives influence teachers' application of their understanding of emotional self-regulation?

Theoretical Framework

In order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of emotional self-regulation within particular socio-cultural frameworks, I employed Rogoff's socio-cultural theory. Rogoff's socio-cultural theory is based on the premise that individuals are social beings who develop through cultural activities. According to Rogoff (2003), individual development occurs on three planes: personal (individual), interpersonal (through interactions with others), and community (contextual) through apprenticeship (active participation in culturally organized activity), guided participation (communication and coordination of efforts during culturally valued activity), and participatory appropriation (individual process that allows for change and preparation for engagement in subsequent related activities).

Given Rogoff's understanding that people develop as participants of cultural communities and as a result of specific cultural circumstances to include different classrooms and school environments, I interpreted teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and strategies for supporting emotional self-regulation based on participants' individual socio-cultural contexts. Rogoff's socio-cultural theory also helped frame my interview questions.

Importance of the Study

Given that numerous contemporary scholars highlight the importance of the development of emotional self-regulation competencies in preschool children (Dennis, 2006; McClelland & Cameron, 2012; Wanless et. al, 2011), as well as the importance of teachers in this process (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994), and the understanding that emotional self-regulation may differ socio-culturally (Trommsdorff, 2009, 2011), it is critical to understand the socio-cultural perspectives that impact individual teachers' understandings of emotional self-regulation as well as their ability to apply those understandings within their classrooms. However, it is important to do so in a manner that counters current research that, as McInerney (2008) points out, simply tests what are assumed to be universal principles.

The importance of this study lies in its ability to:

1- Provide an emic view (i.e., a teacher's view) of emotional self-regulation;

2- Contribute to understanding of how socio-cultural perspectives relate to conceptual understandings and classroom application of strategies for emotional self-regulation; and

3- Expand current understandings of emotional self-regulation in terms of how teachers define and operationalize their understanding of the construct.

Research Design

The qualitative nature of the collective or multiple case study allowed me to better understand the multiple meanings that teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts have for emotional self-regulation. Naturalistic classroom observations, semi-

structured interviews and self-reflection tools enabled me to explore teachers'

understanding and implementation of their beliefs within specific socio-cultural contexts.

The use of video clips of segments of classroom events served to prompt teachers to think

more deeply about their practices and to help guide my conversation with teachers

regarding their classroom practices.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in the study.

Conjoint Agency	"agency that is responsive to desires and expectations of important others" (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008, p. 861).
Culture	a multitude of values inherited from past human activity in the form of rituals, beliefs and ways of conceiving the world in general that guide acceptable ways of feeling and behaving in a wide variety of activities (Cole & Parker, 2011).
Emotion	cognitive, behavioral, and physiological reactions to internal or external stimuli that afford children the ability to quickly evaluate experiences (Brenner & Salovey, 1997; Cole et al., 2004).
Disjoint Agency	"agency that is responsive to individual needs and preferences" (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008, p. 861).
Models of Agency	"implicit frameworks of ideas and practices… that guide action; they reflect descriptive, prescriptive, and normative understandings

of how and why people act" (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008, p. 862).

Normative	"Culturally preferred" (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011, p. 153)
Perception	the way that you notice or understand something using one of your senses (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perception).
Perspectives	the ability to understand what is important and what isn't; a point of view (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perspective).
Scaffold	To support children's process "of transition from teacher assistance to independence" (Bodrova & Leong, 2001, p.11);
Self-Construal	"Refers to the grounds of self-definition, and the extent to which the self is defined independently of others or interdependently with others." (Cross, 2011)
SMIC	"Staff Member in Charge of the staff and program of a day nursery shall be a high school graduate or have the equivalent of a high school diploma and have completed a minimum of six (6) semester hours of college credits in early childhood education with passing grades" (Licensing Regulations Governing Pinellas County Children's Centers, 2013, p.18)
Head Start	A federally-funded school readiness program that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services for children ages 0 to 5 from low-income families. (http://www.floridaheadstart.org/about%20us.html)

VPK   Free Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program available for children who turn 4 years old by September 1st

Delimitations and Limitations

This study explored perspectives and practices of 3 (three) Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts regarding emotional self-regulation. At the time of the study, participants served as Lead Teachers in 3-4 year old classrooms, had 4-year degrees in Early Childhood Education, and had worked at their current setting since the beginning of the school year. The study's location in a demographically diverse county in West Florida helped yield the required group of teachers. Selection of participants and sites enabled the researcher to better understand individual perceptions, beliefs, and practices within varying socio-cultural frameworks.

Flyvbjerg (2011) addressed the controversy regarding case study's ability to provide knowledge that is generalizable noting that views of case study as a methodology that is not generalizable were "so oversimplified as to be grossly misleading" (p. 301). While a case study's ability to generalize depends on the case itself, the scholar further noted that the focus should be on transferability and not on generalizability and that "knowledge may be transferable even where it is not formally generalizable" (p. 305). As such, this study's participants' understandings of emotional self-regulation as well as their practices provide us with deeper insights. However, these may be limited to teachers situated within very specific socio-cultural contexts.

Chapter Summary

       This chapter opened with an introduction and rationale for the study. A statement of the issue and purpose of the study followed. Rogoff's socio-cultural theory was presented and the importance of the study to current literature in early childhood was explained. A brief overview of the research design was followed by important definitions contained herein. The chapter ended with a section on delimitations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain understandings of emotional self-regulation among three Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts and to identify socio-cultural perspectives that influenced their ability to apply their understandings. The questions that guided this study were as follows:

1- How do teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts define the concept of emotional self-regulation?

2- What strategies do teachers use to support emotional self-regulation within their early childhood classrooms?

3- In what ways do teachers' implemented strategies align or deviate from their stated understanding of emotional self-regulation?

4- In what ways do socio-cultural perspectives influence teachers' application of their understanding of emotional self-regulation?

The literature review that supported this study focused on five important areas. Those are as follows:

1- Historical and theoretical overview of self-regulation;

2- Emotional self-regulation research in early childhood;

3- Strategies to support emotional self-regulation in early childhood classrooms;

4- Socio-cultural perspectives that impact classroom practice; and

5- Rogoff's Socio-Cultural Theory.

Historical and theoretical foundations of self-regulation

Rogoff's socio-cultural theory

EC teachers' understanding and application of emotional self-regulation strategies

Emotional self-regulation research in early childhood

Socio-cultural perspectives that impact classroom practice

Strategies to support emotional self-regulation in early childhood classrooms

Figure 1. Visual representation of literature review

Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Self-Regulation

While the focus of this study was emotional self-regulation, it is essential to first situate the construct within the larger overarching body of work related to self-regulation in general. A review of contemporary literature (Bronson, 2000a; Cole, Mart, & Dennis, 2004; Eisenberg & Sulik, 2012; McLelland et al., 2012; Post et al., 2006) suggests that definitions of the multidimensional construct of self-regulation are dependent on the theoretical framework from which they emerge. While some definitions/theories emphasize the regulation of external behaviors, others focus on the regulation of

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cognitive systems, and still others examine the complex relationship between cognitive processes and social interactions. These differences then influence the strategies chosen to support the different kinds of self-regulation.

According to Post and colleagues (2006), literature related to self-regulation can be divided into 4 broad historical periods including: Precursory Period (1891-1950), Emergent Period (1950-1970), Contemporary Period (1970-1990), and Expansionist Period (1990-present).

During the precursory period (1891-1950), the emphasis was upon individual self-control, which was viewed as primarily influenced by external factors; more specifically, from an individual's desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain. One of the most significant studies of this period was that of Pavlov (1927) who demonstrated the ways in which behavior can be conditioned through the associations that develop in relation to a particular stimulus. Pavlov's discovery became foundational to the field of behavioral psychology and, from this theoretical perspective, self-regulation became viewed as primarily "learned self-control" (Bronson, 2000a, p.14) because as individuals become adept at learning the conditional aspects of rewards-based systems, they will direct their behavior in such a way as to maximize rewards and minimize punishments within that system (Post et al., 2006).

While external factors were still considered influential to learning and self-control during the emergent period (1950-1970), the view became challenged by early work in the area of cognitive theory, which was characterized by an interest in the individual's ability to manage his/her behavior in order to comply with social norms (Crandall, Orleans, Preston, & Rabson, 1958). Piaget's (1952) research on cognitive development in

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children was particularly influential during this period as he suggested that individuals possess mental frameworks, or "schemas" of understanding through which observations and interpretations of the external environment are continually being processed and used to shape behavioral responses. Further, as one encounters different experiences and acquires new understandings of the world, the range of behavioral responses available to the individual will expand as well (Bronson, 2000b). During this same period, the work of Vygotsky (1978) appeared and situated cognitive development, and its role in self-regulation, within a larger social-cultural context by suggesting that social and cultural factors are the primary influencers on development. According to Vygotsky, children's participation in cultural activities and their use of cultural tools enable them to develop so that they may function according to the norms of their cultural context (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). Vygotsky's central concepts, the More Knowledgeable Other and Zone of Proximal Development, established the primacy of the social-cultural environment in a child's development by suggesting that, in the first instance, children can learn and develop through their interactions with more experienced or knowledgeable individuals. The Zone of Proximal Development refers to what a child is capable of doing independently and what that same child can be expected to accomplish with the assistance of someone more skilled. Thus, in both instances, it is the child's social interactions with others, supported by the use of language, that play a significant role in his/her cognitive development and ability to exhibit self-regulated behavior.

During the contemporary period (1970-1990), a multitude of work addressing definitions, influences, effects, and implications of self-regulation was produced and, taken collectively, served to legitimize self-regulation research as a field of professional

inquiry. Behaviorist and cognitive theorists were joined by those proposing a new theory

of metacognition. Among the leaders in this emerging area of inquiry was John Flavell

(1963) who had been influenced by Piaget. Flavell based his theory of metacognition on

the premise that all cognitive exchanges involve considerable information processing and

that, at all times, there is a corresponding cognitive process through which the individual

monitors, regulates, and even manipulates his/her behavior to achieve some goal (Flavell,

1976). However, Flavell was not alone as Bandura (1986), through his Transformed

Social Learning Theory, contributed to the emerging contours of the field by proposing

that self-regulation consists of three sub-processes involving both cognitive and social

interactions: 1) self-observation, or an individual's heightened awareness of his/her

specific actions; 2) self-judgment, or the comparison of one's actions against a perceived

normative standard; and 3) self-reaction, or the manner in which an individual responds

to critiques of his/her actions.

The expansionist period (1990-present) reflects a wide range of theoretical

approaches resulting from on-going research grounded in the work of early behaviorists,

Piaget, and Bandura with a majority of the studies adopting Social Cognitive, Social

Cultural, or Transformed Social Learning perspectives (Post et al., 2006). Additionally,

self-regulation studies are now characterized by greater diversity with respect to the

inclusion of children from other cultures and children with special needs. For example,

Brewis and colleagues (2003) conducted a cross-cultural analysis of self-regulation

finding substantial differences between children in Mexican, American, and European

cultures along the dimensions of attentiveness and impulse control. Further, recent

studies have broadened the scope of self-regulation research by examining the impact of

caregivers (i.e., families, teachers, etc.) and environments (e.g., school versus home) on children's ability to self-regulate (Boyer, 2009), symbolizing a shift away from the individual child as the "unit of analysis." Rogoff's socio-cultural theory, which serves as the theoretical framework for the current study, also emerged during the expansionist period but it will be discussed in further detail in the last section of this chapter.

In summary, by examining the theoretical traditions within their historical context, it becomes clear that the study of emotional self-regulation must take into account its' complexities by acknowledging the different perspectives used in research and practice.

Emotional Self-Regulation Research in Early Childhood

A review of contemporary literature in early childhood indicates an increase of interest in emotional self-regulation. Over the last three decades, scholars have dedicated entire books (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994), handbooks (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Hall & Goetz, 2013; Vohs & Baumeister, 2011), as well as individual articles (Dennis, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2009) to the topic. The range of scholarship encompasses conceptualizations of emotional self-regulation, intrinsic and extrinsic influences, and its impact on academic success, among others. Emotional self-regulation is one of three constructs normally used to conceptualize self-regulation. Along with cognitive and behavioral regulation, it is thought to enable individuals to focus and/or shift their attention and to control both emotions and behaviors in response to specific environmental stimulation (Calkins & Willford, 2009; Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, & Brock, 2009).

Executive function, which is involved in the conscious, goal-directed control of thought, emotion, and action (Zelazo & Carlson, 2012) has traditionally only referred to 'cool,' or cognitive aspects (Kerr & Zelazo, 2004) such as working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility that allow an individual to plan, focus, and carry out a goal-oriented task (Caughy, Mills, Owen, & Hurst, 2013). However, it should be noted that current literature distinguishes between cool and hot Executive Function, with the latter referring to aspects of affect and motivation that influence behavior and emotional self-regulation (Hongwanishkul, Happaney, Lee & Zelazo, 2005).

While working memory refers to one's ability to retain and manipulate information, inhibitory control refers to inhibiting a response, and cognitive flexibility allows an individual to shift his/her attention. Behavioral regulation, the ability to control one's behavior, involves a child's readiness to conform to adult requests, delay gratification, and monitor his/her own behavior (Kopp, 1982; Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1995). Emotional regulation refers to the internal and external processes involved in controlling emotional reactions to achieve personal goals (Campos, Campos, & Barrett, 1989; Thompson, 1994). While the focus of this study was emotional self-regulation, it should be noted that, as exemplified in the definitions above, the complexity of the construct of self-regulation does not always allow for separation of emotion, cognition, and behavior. In fact, emotional self-regulation is believed to improve as children gain more cognitive control in the areas of attention regulation, inhibitory control, and executive function (Fox & Calkins, 2003).

In spite of an increase in studies related to emotional self-regulation, this area of research is still challenged by a lack of conceptual clarity stemming from multiple

definitions of emotion and from challenges separating the processes involved in emotion from those involved in its regulation (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004). While different theories of emotion (Barrett & Campos, 1987; Frijda, 1986; Mesquita & Markus, 2004) offer differing perspectives, it is generally agreed that emotions are comprised of various components such as feelings, cognition, and physiological activity (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2001) that support individual appraisals and responses to environmental stimulations.

Trommsdorff and Heikamp (2013) and Trommsdorff and Cole (2011) highlight two theoretical approaches related to the development of emotions: a structural approach and a functionalist approach. From a structural or developmental approach, emotions are seen as part of an evolutionary process rooted in biology. From a functionalist approach (Barrett & Campos, 1987), emotions are seen as a means of communicating needs and reaching personal goals. The need for emotional self-regulation, is then justified by a potential for conflict brought about by dissonance between personal goals, relationship goals, and socio-cultural norms (Trommsdorff and Cole, 2011).

Emotional self-regulation is influenced by intrinsic (innate) factors as well as by extrinsic (environmental) factors. Intrinsic factors include temperament, which is defined by Fox and Calkins (2003) as the "manner and frequency with which a young child responds to stimulus situation" (p.10), attention regulation, a child's ability to focus or shift attention, effortful control of behavior, and cognitive regulation. External factors include children's interactions with caregivers (parents and/or teachers), caregiver responsiveness, peers as well as socio-cultural perspectives. Recently, culture based theories of self-regulation have added the importance of cultural models of agency. This

perspective recognizes the ways in which individual behavior is shaped by the underlying structures within a larger cultural system and how the system is also integral to the attachment of meaning to social interactions (Mesquita & Markus, 2004).

While most studies in emotional self-regulation have used individual-centered approaches (Trommsdorff, 2009), cultural approaches (Kitayama, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) indicate that different cultural values and models of agency influence self and emotional experiences. Generally speaking, a cultural model of agency that prioritizes independence will seek individual benefits over collective ones, while a model that prioritizes interdependency will strive for the opposite. While this is of significance to this study in that the beliefs contained within cultural models are also believed to impact how caretakers interact with children (Trommsdorff, 2013), Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) warn that culture preempts all other considerations resulting in a need for scholars to account for the ways in which history and socio-cultural contexts can attribute to different behavioral practices within groups of individuals. While a view of individuals as participants of cultural communities rather than as members of specific ethnic groups better addresses the dynamic nature of individual and community practices (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003), there are still some cultural regularities that should be considered.

Scholars such as Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Trommsdorff (2009) have addressed cultural regularities in their work related to different models of agencies and construals of self and others. According to the scholars, relationships are often the end goal for individuals with interdependent self-construals. Consequently, interdependent individuals may be more likely to strive to increase their connection to other individuals while individuals with an independent self-construal may be more likely to express

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themselves in such a manner that highlights important defining personal attributes such as separateness.

Researchers have historically recognized the influence of culture on the perceived norms and strategies related to self-regulation in general (Eisenberg and Zhou, 2000). As Trommsdorff (2009) explains, the dominant model of agency, either independent or interdependent, will impact the development of individual self-regulation strategies with a primary goal of producing either individual or collective outcomes. Specifically, action in an independent model of agency is directed at "influencing other individuals or environmental factors in accordance with one's own needs and goals, while action in an interdependent model is directed towards adjusting one's own goals and behavior to the goals and expectations of others" (p.6). As table 1 illustrates, self-regulation in an independent model of agency prioritizes autonomy and relatedness in an interdependent model.

Table 1. Trommsdorff's (2009) cultural model of agency and self-regulation

Self - Construals	Universal Needs	Agency Beliefs	Goals for Self-regulation	Strategies for Self-regulation	Behavior
Independent	Autonomy	Disjoint Agency	Self Goals	Promotion Focus	Self-regulation
Interdependent	Relatedness	Conjoint Agency	Social Goals	Prevention Focus	Self and Interpersonal Regulation

Several recent studies support the influence of cultural models of agency on goals and strategies of emotional self-regulation. For example, an observational study conducted by Wang and colleagues (2008) found that praise was used to meet different goals within different cultural contexts. While Chinese-immigrant families used outcome-focused praise before and after a child's action to both induce and acknowledge a specific

interdependent goal, European-American families used praise to acknowledge a self-initiated independent behavior. In 2009, Hayashi and colleagues wrote about what they referred to as pedagogy of feelings employed in certain Japanese preschools. As the authors explain, classroom teachers in those preschools socialized children so they would understand their own as well as others' feelings. Feelings were taught as a way to ensure that the universal interdependent goals of relatedness and social harmony were met through an understanding of individual as well as collective feelings.

Further, studies conducted by Trommsdorff indicated that German mothers intervened once their children had exhibited signs of distress, while Japanese mothers intervened to avoid a negative outcome. As Trommsdorff and Cole (2011) state, such *anticipatory self-regulation* encourages patterns of regulation aligned with optimal social functioning within a specific context. Such studies serve to illustrate the understanding that emotions and emotional experiences are not universal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In fact, Trommsdorff and Cole (2011) indicate that caregivers' beliefs about competency and its development as well as caregivers' competency goals influence their practices related to children's emotional experiences. In short, cross-cultural research on emotion indicates that children are encouraged to express emotions in contexts that value autonomous and unique individuals and are encouraged to restrain such expressions in contexts that value interrelatedness (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011).

Similarly to Trommsdorff's model, this study viewed differences in processes related to emotional self-regulation as a function of cultural models of agency, which it should be noted are not necessarily expressed solely through language, but can also be

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observed in interactions (Mesquita & Markus, 2004). However, it also explored cultural variations among those models.

Emotional Self-Regulation Strategies in Early Childhood

Early childhood is considered to be a critical time for children's social and emotional development (Fox & Calkins, 2003; Trentacosta & Shaw, 2009; Webster-Stratton, Reid, Stoolmiller, 2008). During this period, young children begin to better comprehend and communicate their feelings, to understand and negotiate their needs, and to gain increasing control of their emotions and actions. It is widely agreed that social and emotional skills acquired during this period, including those related to children's self-regulation, support later academic and social success (Denham, Blair, DeMulder, Levitas, Sawyer, Auerbach-Major, Queenan, 2003; Trentacosta & Shaw, 2009; Willford et al., 2013).

Within this time frame, young children learn and improve skills and strategies for social functioning by participating in personally meaningful exchanges with others (Campos et al., 1989; Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown, 1986) and by observing exchanges between others at home, at school (Katz & McClellan, 1991) and within their larger community (Rogoff, 2003). Much of the literature related to the acquisition of self-regulation in general in early childhood has focused on the ways in which parents' interactions with young children support or hinder the development of skills in this area (Thompson, 1994). Parents can influence children's development in emotional self-regulation by serving as role models and by providing children with guidance as to appropriate emotional responses (Miller and Sperry, 1987) including a recognition of the

consideration of context in relation to behavior (Rogoff, 2003). Landry and Smith (2008) refer to the role of parents as that of socializing agents.

Numerous studies and scholars (Eisenhower, Baker, & Blacher, 2007; Noble, Norman, & Farah, 2005; Raver, Jones, Li- Grining, Zhai, Bub, & Pressler, 2011) address the impact of children's preschool experiences on the development of social-emotional skills, including the area of self-regulation. Indeed, because the classroom setting produces a range of complex interactions, it is necessary for children to develop emotional, behavioral and cognitive self-regulation skills in order to establish and sustain successful relationships (Torres, M. 2011). Further, Kochanska (1994) indicated that children's ability to employ advanced emotional self-regulation strategies results from progressive changes in other domains of development. Stansbury and Sigman (2000) extend this line of thought by connecting theory of mind, or the use of one's personal cognitive framework to understand and assign meaning to one's own as well as to others' mental states, an increasing ability to internalize standards, and an increasing awareness of one's individuality, i.e., sense of self, which varies across socio-cultural contexts. Through these connections, it is possible to conclude the critical nature of the early childhood period to a child's acquisition of strategies for emotional self-regulation.

Because of the importance of emotional self-regulation within the early childhood classroom, researchers have examined the instrumental role of teachers in terms of how they can impact a child's acquisition and development of skills in this area. This line of inquiry has demonstrated that teachers with professional training who employ a proactive, supportive approach in working with young children can positively impact a child's social and emotional development (Stansbury & Sigman, 2000; Webster et al.,

2008; Williford, Whittaker, Vitiello, & Downer, 2013). Evidence from other studies suggest that such teachers consistently praise and encourage children, refrain from using punitive disciplinary approaches, and seek to implement strategies that pre-empt challenging behaviors by modeling positive interactions and teaching children to solve problems (Webster et al., 2008). Katz and McClellan (1991) acknowledge the critical role of teachers by referencing the ways in which they can establish classroom practices that are respectful of children's emotions. Strategies may include modeling responsiveness to children's emotions and teaching children to communicate their feelings. Results of Williford and colleagues' study (2013) on the relationship between preschool children's engagement with teachers, peers, and classroom tasks and self-regulation indicated that positive interactions between teachers and children were related to advances in compliance and executive function as well as to significant decreases in unregulated behaviors.

Recognizing the critical role of teachers in shaping the development of a child's self and emotional regulatory skills, researchers of various theoretical backgrounds (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Hayashi, Karasawa & Tobin, 2009; Helm & Katz, 2011; Vaughn, Lentini, & Fox, 2005) have designed a broad range of strategies and approaches to support children within early childhood settings. School-wide programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS) are considered to be a proactive approach. While its implementation may vary by context, key features include instruction of behavioral expectations, acknowledgement of desired responses, proactive behavior correction, and the development of individualized, ecological strategies (Fox & Little, 2001). However, as Kalyanpur and Harry (1999) explain, these features are reflective of

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mainstream North American cultural values of individualism, personal choice, and equity, among others; i.e., of an independent cultural model of agency. It should be noted that this is the case for most, if not all, strategies discussed in this section.

Reactive approaches used in early childhood classrooms focus on consequences. Teacher strategies associated with such approaches include the use of verbal reprimands, exclusion from activities, and overcorrection. However, it should be noted that while these strategies may alter the course of a child's action short-term, they have limited positive impact in children's long-term emotional responses (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2007; Lamm, Grouix, Hansen, Patton, & Slaton, 2006).

The current interest and concern regarding children's emotional self-regulation has led to the development of different curriculum and programs. The Tools of the Mind (TOM) Program (Bodrova & Leong, 2007), for example, supports emotional self-regulation by embedding specific skills in content areas such as Math, Science, and Literacy and include teaching strategies such as scaffolding children's make-believe play. Inspired by the work of Vygotsky, TOM's focus on the impact of play to the development of emotional self-regulation allows for peers as well as teachers to mediate self and other-regulation through social interactions and language.

The Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving Child Training Program, which uses Bandura's cognitive social learning theory, was originally created to treat young children diagnosed with behavior disorders but which has subsequently been adopted for general classroom use (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). The program utilizes a three-prong approach that relies on training parents, teachers, as well as the children themselves on emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development (Webster-Stratton &

Reid, 2004). In a Dinosaur classroom, teachers help children identify and label feelings by having them check their bodies and faces for clues as well as by discussing the feelings of characters in songs, nursery rhymes, and books. They also teach children reappraisal skills, i.e., turning a negative emotion into a positive one through puppetry, breathing techniques, and age-appropriate games. These strategies are not unique to classrooms that implement the Dinosaur curriculum, but rather reflect practices common in a variety of preschool settings throughout the United States.

Socio-Cultural Perspectives that Impact Classroom Practice

Research in Early Childhood and Child Development indicates that a teacher's interaction with young children can impact the child's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral self-regulation and ultimately their social and academic success (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Stansbury & Sigman, 2000; Vygotsky, 1962). Given the potential influence of teachers' support, in terms of positively impacting a child's acquisition of skills in these areas, and the multiplicity of practices and supporting strategies that teachers may choose (consciously or not) to implement within their classrooms, it is important to understand what socio-cultural perspectives help shape teachers' decisions regarding classroom practices. Such understanding would allow teacher educators and administrators to more effectively support teachers at all levels of the profession.

Pajares (1992), one of the first scholars to explore the association between beliefs and classroom practice, reflected on the multiple ways in which beliefs are referred to in research. These include, but are not limited to, judgments, opinions, perceptions, attitudes, and standards of practice. The author states that these multiple 'aliases' (p.

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309), along with challenges in distinguishing *belief* from *knowledge,* have often led to confusion in the literature. While it is then helpful to establish the difference between the two constructs, this is not always done (Griffin & Ohlsson, 2001). For the purpose of this study, knowledge will be defined as that which has been experienced and beliefs as that which is thought to be true, regardless of direct experience. This definition is supported by the work of Davidson (1992). According to the author, knowledge derives from activities whose meanings stem from previous knowledge and can be separated into 3 groupings: phylogenetic, sociogenetic, and ontogenetic. Phylogenetic knowledge stems from evolutionary processes, sociogenetic from culturally-bound, specialized understandings, and ontogenetic from personal experiences (Davidson, 1992). While sociogenetic and ontogenetic knowledge may seem more relevant to the socio-cultural framework of this study, phylogenetic knowledge such as teaching instincts may also be significant to a preschool teacher's work in the classroom.

To Roehler and colleagues (1988), knowledge differs from beliefs in that it is dynamic and changes as individuals engage in varying experiences and integrate new information regarding those experiences into existing mental frameworks. Shank (1982) postulates that mental frameworks, or schemas, developed based on observations of others are critical to learning how to behave in specific contexts. Lortie (1975) addresses learning through observation as well as the early on-set of teacher beliefs in his seminal work, *Schoolteacher.* According to the author, teachers' classroom practices are solidified through observations during their own schooling experiences in a process known as "apprenticeship of observation" (p.61). Rogers and Freiberg (1994) agree and indicate that teachers are especially apt to emulate behavior management strategies given

that teachers, "tend to teach the way they've been taught and discipline the way they've been disciplined" (p.241).

The acquisition of beliefs and belief systems, which is thought to develop early in an individual's life through interactions with others in the community, occurs through a process referred to by Pajares (1992) and other scholars from diverse fields as 'cultural transmission.' This process serves to socialize individuals with the beliefs, values, and knowledge of their community (Rogoff, 2003).

Teacher's beliefs have been the topic of various studies (Cheung, 2012; Haney & McArthur, 2002; McMullen, 1999; Romanowski, 1997). Clark and Peterson (1986) suggest that teacher's beliefs function as a 'contextual filter' for classroom behaviors, helping teachers to process, interpret and adjust their practices accordingly. Further, as demonstrated by Vassallo's (2013a) study, a teacher's beliefs can serve as the basis for rejecting dominant modes of practice.

However, a review of the literature indicates that scholarship stands divided regarding the association between the two constructs. This may be at least partially due to challenges in accurately measuring domain-specific knowledge (Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). While Haney and McArthur's (2002) study conducted with teaching candidates in the United States and Tsai's (2006) study conducted with 8th grade Science teachers in Taiwan indicated that teacher's beliefs impact classroom practice, Cheung (2012) found a weak association between the two constructs in her study on creative practices in preschool classrooms in Hong Kong. The latter findings were consistent with a 3-year study conducted by Simmons and colleagues (1999) in the United States. Even though participating secondary teachers espoused student-centered beliefs, implemented

practices revealed teacher-centered approaches. Inconsistencies such as this one may be due to teachers' endorsement of opposing beliefs (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985).

Studies such as these serve to illustrate the prevailing broad variability of findings regarding belief-practice associations. Study findings also indicate the importance of exploring other perspectives that may impact teachers' behaviors and/or practices in the classroom, among those educational background, course work, work conditions, strength of training, and personal traits (Hamre et al., 2012; McMullen, 1999; and Vartuli, 1999).

A recent study by Hamre and colleagues (2012), one of only a few to explore the impact of course work in Early Childhood on classroom practices, found that course work influenced not only teachers' knowledge and practices, but also their beliefs. Those findings supported those of McMullen's (1999) study, which indicated that academic training in Early Childhood influenced classroom behaviors.

Studies indicate that teacher's perceptions regarding work conditions and school climate can help shape teacher attitudes and behaviors in early childhood classrooms (Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Rowan, Raudenbush, & Kang, 1991). Feelings of isolation, stress and a lack of access to resources can negatively impact teacher's ability to act according to their beliefs (McMullen, 1999) as can pressure placed on teachers to focus on basic skill development over developmentally appropriate practices (Stipek & Byler, 1997). Additionally, stress from parents and administrators can also present obstacles to teachers' practices (Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, & DeWolf, 1993). However, Nelson (2000) suggests that beliefs, training, previous experience, and different personality types are more influential on classroom practices than environmental factors.

While Ernest's (1989) work examined beliefs and attitudes of mathematics teachers, his findings are relevant to early childhood teachers as well. According to the author, beliefs about teaching and pedagogy may be more firmly rooted when interwoven with other kinds of knowledge such as knowledge regarding child development.

There is a growing awareness of the emotional demands faced by teachers (Hargreaves, 2000), which is leading to a corresponding increase in research related to this issue (Garner, 2010). As Chang (2009) suggests, the documented instances of emotional fatigue and burn out warrant further exploration into the emotional lives and resiliency of teachers. Freudenberger (1974) further characterizes professional burn out as lacking emotional resources or reserves to draw upon resulting in decreased levels of engagement and self-motivation. Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001) note that, when a professional begins to disengage, his/her views towards work change as what was once believed to be rewarding is increasingly "viewed as unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless" (Maslach et al., 2001, p.416). One of the key outcomes of burnout in teachers is a deterioration of classroom management skills (Chang, 2009). Further, as the author suggests, there is a direct link between teacher burnout and key demographic indicators including age and years of experience. More recent studies, however, have expanded our understanding of factors that contribute to teacher burnout to include workload and number of students taught. In fact, the most widely accepted model of burnout is comprised of three dimensions including:

• emotional exhaustion or depletion;

• cynicism or jaded negativity;

• and inefficacy (Chang, 2010).

Rogoff's Socio-Cultural Theory

According to Lerner and colleagues (2011), research surrounding human development must recognize that it is a process that occurs within a broader context of individual views and beliefs. However, it is important to note that views of this process have shifted over time. While traditional views and beliefs held that development was based on dichotomous conceptions regarding the foundation of development (nature vs. nurture) and the course of development (continuity vs. discontinuity), contemporary science explicates development as relational and dependent on a multiplicity of factors ranging from biology to socio-cultural context and history. Thus, theories resulting from these perspectives, including Rogoff's socio-cultural theory, use a framework that revolves around the intersection of people, relationships, and environments.

Human development is a bi-directional process of growth and change based on socio-cultural interactions of individuals within their communities (Rogoff, 2003). This development occurs on three inseparable planes: personal (teacher's understandings, beliefs, and perceptions of emotional self-regulation), interpersonal (interactions between teachers and children, colleagues, partners, families, and administrators), and community (contextual). This framework highlights the interdependence of teachers and their particular social environment in the development of knowledge related to emotional self-regulation. In this active and dynamic process, teachers both contribute to and adopt practices from both their contemporary and historical peers as well as artifacts within the broader environment.

The developmental processes related to Rogoff's (1995a) personal, interpersonal, and community planes are participatory appropriation, guided participation, and,

apprenticeship, respectively. *Participatory appropriation* refers to an individual's active engagement in activities and to how those activities produce a change that prepares him/her for similar subsequent activity involvement. *Guided participation* addressed interpersonal engagement in 'culturally valued' activities. Finally, *apprenticeship* highlights the ways in which individuals interact with others in culturally organized activities designed to provide less experienced individuals with opportunities to mature.

According to Edwards (2007), sociocultural theories (such as Rogoff's) have gained increasing approval as a means of countering traditional developmental-constructivists explanations of learning and development in early childhood. For example, a group of early childhood educators in Australia attributed their shift from a developmental-constructivist approach in favor of a socio-cultural approach to issues regarding inadequacies of Piaget's normative approach to development, the subjective nature of knowledge, and to an increase in awareness and appreciation for Vygotsky's socio-historical views of development (Edwards, 2007).

In another instance, Fleer (2004) used Rogoff's theoretical framework to examine cultural understandings of Indigenous preschool-aged children at home, in the community, and in schools and learning centers in Australia. Video clips of significant aspects of children's lives were taken by participant families and later analyzed using Rogoff's three planes. Fleer indicates that her choice to use a socio-cultural framework was based on a need to critically analyze practices from the perspective of those marginalized by dominant power structures. The use of Rogoff's three planes allowed her to account for the broader socio-cultural environment of the study by simultaneously focusing on individual perspectives regarding specific aspects of education, what

individuals thought as expressed in conversations with others, and lastly on the entire

cultural context. While specific findings are not of relevance to this review, it should be

noted that the study served to identify critical aspects of some Indigenous Australian

socio-cultural contexts and to highlight the need for various educational approaches that

address the needs of multiple culturally and linguistically diverse schools in Australia.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included a visual representation of the literature that was used to

support the study. The literature was primarily chosen on the basis of its' ability to situate

emotional self-regulation within a larger historical context. Additionally, in the review of

emotional self-regulation research in early childhood section, I unpacked the constructs

of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional self-regulation and reviewed emotion and

emotional self-regulation through a cultural lens. Strategies to support emotional self-

regulation in early childhood classrooms addressed the role of teachers and included a

discussion regarding various strategies that have been identified. Internal and external

socio-cultural perspectives that influence classroom practices followed and the chapter

closed with an explanation of the application of Rogoff's socio-cultural theory to the

study. The methodology chosen for the study is informed by my personal and

professional experiences as an early childhood educator working in the United States and

abroad. Further discussion of methodology follows in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

A review of relevant literature (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Dennis, 2006; Hall & Goetz, 2013; Trommsdorff, 2009; Vohs & Baumeister, 2011) indicates a growing interest in the area of children's emotional self-regulation. However, despite this increased interest, there remains a discernible gap in the literature with respect to studies that focus on children's emotional self-regulation from teachers' perspectives. Additionally, existing literature is dominated by Western-bound conceptualizations of emotional self-regulation (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010; Post et al., 2006), which may not reflect the perspectives of teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe and explain understandings of emotional self-regulation among three Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts and to identify socio-cultural perspectives that influenced their ability to effectively apply their understandings. Specifically, the questions that guided this study were:

1- How do teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts define the concept of emotional self-regulation?

2- What strategies do teachers use to support emotional self-regulation within their early childhood classrooms?

3- In what ways do teachers' implemented strategies align with or deviate from their stated understanding of emotional self-regulation?

4- In what ways do socio-cultural perspectives influence teachers' application of their understanding of emotional self-regulation?

In this chapter, the following sections are used to describe the research methodology: rationale for research design, researcher position, video elicitation, pilot study, site selection, participant selection, data sources, procedures, data analysis, theoretical framework, ethical considerations, credibility, and chapter summary.

Rationale for Research Design

This interpretive study shares similar characteristics with other qualitative studies in relation to purpose and process. Specifically, such studies (a) consider the researcher the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, (b) involve an inductive process, (c) take place in natural settings, (d) provide descriptive accounts of phenomena, and (e) use multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010).

Of particular relevance to this inquiry is case study, defined by Stake (1995) as a "study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p.xi). Stake's definition highlights the importance of the case, or unit of analysis, which in this study is an individual teacher. As per Stake (2006), the primary purpose of this study was to describe and develop a deeper understanding of a phenomenon within a bounded system, which in this case was Head Start teachers working in Our Care Child Development Centers. Further, Stake identifies three types of case study based on the purpose of the inquiry. Those are as follows:

- *intrinsic,* when a case serves to provide deeper understanding of the case itself;

- *instrumental,* when a case serves to provide insight into an issue; and

- *collective,* when several cases are studied in order to gain an understanding about a particular phenomenon.

This collective case study explored understandings of emotional self-regulation among three (3) Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts. Study participants worked in three classrooms located in two centers affiliated with the same child care provider organization in west central Florida. The type of case study utilized allowed for individual analysis of participating teachers' data resources gathered in natural conditions, as well as for a cross-case analysis that explored the impact of teachers' socio-cultural contexts on their understanding of emotional self-regulation as well as their application of that understanding.

Researcher Position

While much of the literature in qualitative research highlights the importance of the researcher's role as the primary research instrument, Lincoln and Guba (1985) address the specific reasons for this. Those are as follows:

- Humans are active participants within their environments,

- Humans can process and assess significant amounts of data at the same time,

- Humans are able to attach meaning to unusual occurrences.

Because of the interpretive nature of this study and of my role as its main instrument, it is important for me to disclose and address my own positionality as a researcher. As Peshkin (1988) states, "subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be

removed" (p.17). As a result, it is particularly important for me to be transparent with respect to my background, education, and experience.

Originally from Brazil, I moved to the United States (U.S.) with my family when I was eight years old. While initially challenged by the overwhelming number of options to choose from (to include different products in the market to multiple activities in the classroom), I was required to negotiate differing expectations between a home environment where an adult held decision-making authority to a social environment (i.e., classroom) where I was expected to function independently. Thus, at a young age, I began to understand that expectations around individual behavior and relationships differ according to context as do notions of competence. This growing awareness would play a pivotal role in shaping my experiences both as a student and teacher. For example, in the United States, where independence is highly valued, my classroom practices are more aligned with a disjoint model of agency in that I place greater emphasis on children's ability to independently make choices. In contrast, my interactions with young children in Brazil stem from an understanding and respect of the need for relatedness that supports a conjoint model of agency. Thus, it is my own personal belief that emotional self-regulation is always expressed differently within different contexts.

In my current role as a trainer and technical assistance specialist, who provides support to schools and school districts on the implementation of behavioral supports based on positive, proactive strategies, I often default to a position of noticing and wanting to problem-solve behavioral issues, which I see from a functional perspective. Specifically, my educational background and professional experiences have led me to understand the communicative function of behavior; i.e., that children's behavior

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communicates a need to either obtain something (e.g., attention) or to avoid something (e.g., a challenging task). Because of my experience and established perspectives, I recognized the need to reflect upon the relational stances I adopted towards teachers and their practices. In this regard, my reflexivity journal became a critical tool as I used it to work through conflicts that arose as a result of my two roles (i.e., 'technical assistant' and 'researcher') and to check that my understandings generated through prior experience as a teacher and administrator were not inadvertently filtering into my conversations with teachers and that I maintained a non-evaluative stance. The latter proved quite challenging at times. For example, during one of the observations I noticed Pam, one of the study participants, consistently respond to one of her student's attention-seeking behavior in a manner that appeared to encourage the child's negative behavior. While I wanted to speak to Pam during the actual visit to problem solve alternative responses to the child's behavior, I knew that was not my role. Journaling about such moments helped me work through some of my feelings and get to a place where I felt I could return to the classroom and observe events without feeling a need to evaluate or change them.

Video Elicitation

As noted previously, interpretive studies utilize multiple sources of data in order to generate rich descriptions of the phenomena and triangulate emerging themes or issues (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010). Consequently, another tool selected for use within this study was visual research, which addresses the "production, organization, and interpretation of imagery" (Prosser, 2007, p.13). While we have seen an increase in the use of visual methods in case studies, this increased interest has not been

accompanied by comprehensive integration of practices across sciences (Pauwels, 2011). In fact, scholars (Derry et al., 2007; Pauwels, 2011; Prosser, 2007) agree that, although visual methods have become increasingly used, the impact has been minimal in terms of advancing a cohesive and deep methodological structure. Specifically, as Pauwels (2011) asserts, "often more effort is expended in trying to 'appropriate' a field (through renaming it, relabeling its techniques, and by imposing theoretical perspectives and themes) than in developing a more cumulative and integrative stance" (p.4).

Of particular relevance to this study is video elicitation because it allows the researcher to examine video-based data sources in relation to data generated from interviews and document analysis. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to isolate particular incidents or interactions for the purpose of close reflection and analysis (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Because of this, I was able to use video elicitation as a means of providing participants with visual stimuli in order to prompt responses and pursue deeper discussions of their classroom practices thereby shifting the attention from external manifestations to an emic perspective. As Pauwels (2015) explains, video elicitation allows for more than the simple recording of 'concrete facts,' actually transforming what may otherwise have been a mere informational discussion regarding recoded material, into a "data collection session about the significance of the recorded material to the respondent, shifting the attention from external manifestations to an interior perspective" (p.97).

In deciding which methods to use for the video elicitation, I considered the three themes of Pauwels' Integrated Framework for Visual Research that are reflected below:

Origin and Nature of Visuals	Research Focus and Design	Format and Purpose
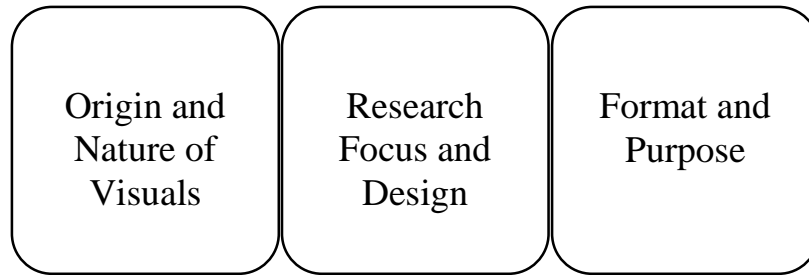
Figure 2. Pauwels' Integrated Framework Themes

As the author explains, this framework supports overall research design by using a holistic approach that plans for, and captures, the flow of data from beginning to end (Pauwels, 2011). For this study, the following procedures were used:

(1) I captured video images of naturally occurring interactions between teachers and children surrounding issues of emotional self-regulation.

(2) I shared video images of classroom events with teachers in order to deepen my comprehension of individual teachers' understanding and enactment of emotional self-regulation practices as well as their feelings and opinions regarding the same. Given that Western culture often equates seeing with knowing (Jenks, 1995), sharing the visual data with teachers and listening to their understandings of what they were revisiting provided opportunities for an emic view of what had transpired in the classroom, helping me interpret their actions within the teachers' socio-cultural frameworks.

(3) I relied on 'opportunistic sampling' (Sorenson & Jablonko, 1975) in order to capture episodes that reflected teachers' stated understanding of emotional self-regulation. Specifically, I collected visual images as they occurred. In order to increase the likelihood of capturing data resources that was truly representative, I arrived in each classroom approximately 20 minutes prior to the scheduled visits, allowing the teacher and children to adjust to my presence. As Rosenstein (2002) noted, twenty minutes is

approximately the amount of time it takes for an observer or video camera to "fade into the background" (p.25) and for children and adults to behave more naturally.

(4) As Erickson (2006) noted, the visual images were resources for data. The images used for the study were not used as an end product themselves, but were instead used to assist teachers in reflecting on their implementation of emotional self-regulation practices, and in triangulating data.

The use of video elicitation empowered the participants by placing them in the role of an expert who could observe, and explain, recorded interactions as opposed to that of a respondent whose answers may have been limited by either the researcher's verbal prompts or frame (Pauwels, 2015).

Equipment utilized for videotaping included a Sony Carl Zeiss Handycam and 20 mini DVD+RW discs set to record approximately 30 minutes each. The handycam's built-in microphone allowed me to choose different levels for recording sounds, depending on the activity. Although I had a tripod available for use, I found that manually holding the camera afforded me greater control, the ability to respond quickly to events in the classrooms and was less intrusive. Once recorded, video segments were saved on my personal Mac Book and later stored in a password-protected Dell computer and external hard-drive.

Choices regarding which interactions to capture during my classroom visits were based on teachers' self-reflection forms; i.e., teachers' stated understanding of emotional self-regulation. Specifically, I set out to film situations that were reflective of individual teachers' stated understanding of regulated and unregulated children and of their practices around the same. Similarly to Tobin and colleagues (1989), I wanted the

captured images to create opportunities for discussion, but doing so meant that my own lens (and sense-making of events) was also a part of the process.

Prior to entering the field for interviews and observations, I engaged in a systematic process of preparation to include completing formal classes and a pilot study. Specifically, I completed two qualitative methods courses which provided me with opportunities to develop critical skills for fieldwork including observations, interviews, research, and writing skills. Further, a required pilot interview study assignment enabled me to explore critical issues, such as gaining entrance into a site, building collaborative relationships with participants, and identifying data saturation points. I was also able to practice collecting, coding, and analyzing data, as well as conducting and transcribing interviews.

Pilot Study

I had the opportunity to pilot the process of videotaping, developing, and implementing an individually tailored self-reflection form in a pre-school classroom at Hillsborough Community College (HCC)'s Ybor City Child Development Center (CDC). That experience allowed me to better understand the nuances of videotaping and to also explore potential challenges in a safe setting while receiving objective feedback from a classroom teacher. Important lessons learned during the pilot study are listed below:
1- It was important to assure the teacher and his/her assistant that I am not going to evaluate them or their performance during or after my visit and that I will not discuss what I observe with their Supervisor nor share the final videotape with them or anyone else. Additionally, all of our conversations would remain confidential;

2- I must establish and convey my own sense of comfort in order to place the teacher at ease;

3- I should also take notes during the classroom observation so that I could track any activity that goes on outside the scope of the camera lens. For example, during the current study, I turned the camera off at one point during an interaction between a teacher and child because the camera appeared to be exacerbating a challenging situation. For that brief period, I took notes;

4- After conducting the pilot study, I added two questions to better address the impact of the values teachers developed over their lifetime on their current work. While the previous interview protocol may have allowed me to infer as to what those values might be, the insertion of additional questions allowed for greater transparency in the process.

Site Selection

This study took place in three Head Start (HS) classrooms located in two different sites affiliated with Our Care Child Development Centers, a not for profit child care provider in West Central Florida. Head Start classrooms were chosen as study sites based on two primary factors. First, Head Start has a history of working with a highly diverse population of staff, children, and families. Second, self-regulation is a foundational component of Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The Framework, which is intended to guide program choices regarding curriculum and learning materials, daily activities, and intentional teaching practices, outlines the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that Head Start programs must foster in all children (Office of Head Start,

2010, 2016). Participating classrooms were thus linked by institutional history, mission, and policy that were well aligned with the study's purpose.

According to the Head Start's Early Learning Framework, the goal for emotional self-regulation is for children to "use various strategies to help manage strong emotions, such as removing oneself from the situation, covering eyes or ears, or seeking support from a familiar adult" (p.12). It should be noted that the Framework recognizes that strategies used by children may vary based on their cultural background (i.e., while some children may use self-soothing strategies, others may seek comfort from adults).

Our Care Child Development Centers, whose mission is to "provide quality early learning and youth development programs that strengthen children, families, and communities," was established in 1976. The not-for-profit organization provides full day preschool, before and after-school and extended learning programs for 2-14 year olds and for exceptional students ages 3-22 in the central west coast of Florida. According to agency's 2014-2015 Annual Report, Our Care served more than 3,200 children daily in 47 locations with more than 400 trained staff and a budget of $18 million. While Our Care was not the HS grantee in the county where the study took place, the agency partnered with the grantee to offer additional space to house HS classrooms in some of its centers, including those where the study occurred.

According to Our Care's 'Ten Tips for Prevention of Behavior Problems,' included in the agency's Group Management guide for teachers, "most techniques for handling behavior do not get at the source of the problem. They are merely methods of handling overt signs of behavior problems. The best method is a program designed at preventing the problems form occurring.

1. Be thoroughly prepared

2. Over planning is better than under planning

3. Have something of interest to each child

4. Challenge the children

5. Structure situations that all may achieve some degree of success

6. Always maintain emotional and physical control of yourself

7. Maintain voice control, keep it pleasant. Firm, but friendly when necessary

8. Do not regard a child's actions as a personal affront

9. Avoid sarcasm

10. Keep some local distance – avoid the "Buddy" syndrome"

While the guide does not address emotional self-regulation as such, it does state that effective group management supports inner self-control. The guide also provides a list of components that lead to successful group management along with suggestions for implementation. The components are as follows:

- Transitions

- Circle Times

- Setting limits and boundaries

- Understanding developmental stages

- Stating expectations

- Using limited choices & consequences

- Problem Solving

- Adequate amounts of developmentally appropriate and age appropriate activities

- Structure of the environment

- Consistency

- Interaction

- Redirection of behavior

- Positive Practices

Our Care's study site A, which housed two of the three classrooms, was located in small urban area in the north central part of the county. While that site was owned and operated by Our Care at the time of the study, the organization was in the process of turning the center over to the local HS grantee. The site, which consisted of 4 classrooms for 2-5 year olds and was licensed for 65 children, had approximately 53 children enrolled. In addition to changes in ownership, there was also significant administrative turnover during the time of the study with the departure of three Directors (including one that had worked at the center for 10 years) over the course of a three – four week period. This site is where Lourdes and Martha taught.

Our Care's study site B, which housed the third and final classroom, was located in the northwest part of the county. This site, which consisted of 7 classrooms for 8-week olds to 5-year olds and was licensed for 143 children, had approximately 75 children enrolled in the early childhood program and 5 school-aged children in their Before and After Care programs. This is where Trisha taught her group of students.

Although both sites initially reflected stability in operations and employment patterns as indicated by the rate of staff turnover and the longevity of existing staff, study site A's Director, who had been employed at that Center for 10 years, resigned during the first week of the study. Subsequently two other Directors served for brief periods during

the time of the study and one of the study participants resigned. Although I was not able to conduct all three scheduled classroom observations with that participant, she remained committed to the study. Approximately one month after the observation, she and I met to discuss the final classroom observation.

Participant Selection

Cilesiz (2010) and Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) agree that selecting research participants who have significant and meaningful experiences of the phenomenon being investigated is of critical importance. Stake (1995) recommends choosing people who have knowledge of a particular environment and who display a willingness to freely share their observations and experiences. Selecting participants from different backgrounds within similar Early Childhood settings allowed me to understand how emotional self-regulation was defined and implemented by each teacher within their particular setting, what socio-cultural perspectives within their personal, educational, and professional background influenced their understanding and implementation of supports for emotional self-regulation, and how these perspectives were similar or different among the three teachers.

In order to broaden opportunities for deeper insights (Stake, 2006), I employed purposeful sampling techniques, as is commonly done in case studies. To that end, I developed a list of criteria for selecting the three participants. In order to participate in the study, participants needed to:

1.   Have a 4-year degree in Early Childhood Education;

2.   Currently serve as a teacher in a Head Start classroom;

3.   Have between 2 to 5 years of experience working in an Early Childhood program, with a minimum of 1 semester in their current setting; and

4.   Work within varying sociocultural contexts.

While the first criteria was implemented to help increase the likelihood that participants had been exposed to a working definition of emotional self-regulation through either their coursework in the field of Early Childhood Education or their professional development activities, it also posed a challenge in that many of the teachers I approached regarding the study had 4-year degrees in Elementary Education rather than in Early Childhood Education. In fact, I had to wait close to a year to be able to secure a third and final study participant that met this criteria. It is important to note here that one of the study participants was a teacher I had worked with previously as part of another study. Although we had not seen or been in contact for two years, she was agreeable to participating in the study and accepted my invitation. Given our previous relationship, we immediately re-established rapport and achieved a level of trust which allowed me to move more quickly into the focus of my study.

The number of years working in the field and, more specifically, the amount of time working at their current site, allowed participants opportunities to implement their professional and personal understandings within a specific institutional context. This proved quite beneficial as we delved into understanding teachers' conceptualizations and implementation of practices around emotional self-regulation. Finally, given the study's focus on exploring diverse perspectives, it was critical to have teachers who worked in varying socio-cultural contexts.

Due to the highly selective criteria employed in this study, a limited population of potential participants was available. Consequently, the study focused on three individual cases that provided opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Head Start teacher's "activity and situation" (Stake, 2006, p.25).

Data Sources

As is the case in qualitative studies, the researcher was the primary instrument in the proposed inquiry. As such, it was critical for me to exercise self-reflexivity regarding the impact of my experiences and views on my interactions with study participants and my interpretations (Berthelsen, 2013). I used a reflexivity journal to help me make sense of how my presence impacted observations as well as data collection (Pink, 2011), analysis, and interpretation.

Data for case studies are usually collected from many different sources. For this study, sources of data utilized included: semi-structured interviews, a reflexivity journal, naturalistic observations, videos of classroom events, video elicited interviews, and individually-tailored reflection forms. Documents for this study included Head Start's Early Learning Framework, Our Care's Curriculum Guide, Our Care's Group Management Guide, Our Care's Guide for Building Positive Relationships, Our Care's Training Calendar, Our Care's Individual Professional Development Plans, 'Transition to Kindergarten' handout provided to Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) Parents, Head Start Teacher Job Description, Lesson Plans, Home Visit Forms and Individual Child Assessment Forms. These documents provided insight into the institution's structural framework, operations, and priorities. Data collection tools included individually tailored

self-reflection forms, a digital recorder, a digital video camera, and demographic data forms.

While a digital audio recorder was used during the interviews, a digital video camera was used to capture visual images of teacher classroom practices to be discussed during individual video-elicited interviews with participants. Similarly to Flewitt (2006), I chose to use digital video, digital audio, and written data to "provide multiple avenues to arrive at multiple truths, reflecting different participant's perspectives" (p.29).

Procedures

Prior to seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I contacted a colleague who was employed by Our Care Child Development Centers to discuss my proposal and to request a letter of support since Our Care housed several Head Start classrooms in West Central Florida. Upon approval from the IRB, I asked my colleague to identify sites where I might find participants who met the selection criteria I had outlined for my study and asked for permission to contact the Center Directors personally to discuss my study and to request assistance in recruiting participants.

During the initial meeting with the Center Directors, I explained that I would need consent forms from participating teachers as well as consent forms from the parents of children enrolled in participating teachers' classrooms and asked for copies of relevant documents. All documents were reviewed prior to meeting the teachers for the initial interview in order to provide background and context for the interviews and observations that followed.

After participant interest was established, I scheduled a time to meet with the interested teachers to explain study procedures, discuss participation requirements, review teacher and parent informed consent forms (APPENDIX C & APPENDIX D, respectively), and to discuss issues of privacy and confidentiality. I explained that I would be the only person viewing any video footage taken during classroom observations and that the videotapes would not be further distributed or used for purposes other than video-elicited interviews.

During the meeting, I assured teachers that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Teachers were asked to help collect consent forms from families of children enrolled in their classroom and were informed that participating teachers would receive a $25 gift card from Wal-Mart or Target, regardless of the length of their participation. Lastly, I arranged a date to pick up consent forms, answer any questions or concerns the teachers or families had, and also provided them with my personal cell phone for follow up questions. This date occurred within a week of the initial meeting.

Once I received signed consent forms from the three participating teachers, I scheduled a mutually convenient time and location to meet with them for individual semi-structured interviews regarding their understanding and practices related to emotional self-regulation. Given the importance of establishing a positive relationship with participants early on, I spent the initial part of the interview discussing my personal background and interest in the topic of study. While I had worked with one of the participants previously, I shared the same information with her as I did with other participants as I was not sure what she knew or remembered regarding my background. I encouraged teachers to speak candidly and explained that their shared experiences could

help teacher educators and administrators gain insight into the kinds of support systems that teachers might need in order to create and maintain effective learning environments.

Upon establishing rapport, participants spoke in depth responding to my questions. The interviews were structured as a topical conversation, lasted between 30-45 minutes, and were audio recorded. As Banks (2001) states, social research, such as this study, "has to be a social engagement, not an exercise in data collection" (p.179). During the interview, I asked a series of open-ended questions related to participants' personal and educational backgrounds, experiences working in an early childhood classroom, and their understanding and practices related to emotional self-regulation. The open-ended nature of these questions served to encourage participants to respond in a manner that was most comfortable to them, i.e., either by commenting or by sharing stories structured around personal emic issues (Stake, 2010). However, one of the challenges at times was keeping participants focused on core issues as they seemed eager to share. Teachers were asked to discuss how they supported young children's emotional self-regulation in their own classroom. Answers included strategies, materials, and activities that were part of their daily classroom practice. While I tried to avoid asking "yes" and "no" questions, these at times naturally emerged as follow-ups to participants' open-ended response and helped clarify what I had heard. After the initial interview, I asked participants to complete a demographic data form with information regarding their age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational level, years of experience in Early Childhood Education, country of origin, number of years in the United States, and language(s) spoken at home (APPENDIX F).

Transcription began shortly after the initial interview and was supported, in some instances by *Dragon*, which is a speech recognition software platform. Once I completed transcribing a particular conversation, I emailed the participants copies of the transcription and discussed it with them at our next face-to-face meeting, which took place in most cases within a week. This helped ensure accuracy of information prior to coding the data.

Similarly to Fleer's study (2004), the use of Rogoff's three planes enabled me to account for the broader socio-cultural context of the study by simultaneously focusing on individual perspectives regarding emotional self-regulation, what individuals thought as expressed in their interviews and classroom observations, and lastly on the entire socio-cultural context.

As discussed with all study participants during the initial study meeting, categories discovered through the coding process of the initial interview were used to develop individual self-reflection forms to guide our conversation when viewing the video clips from classroom observations (APPENDIX I). In some instances, these forms were tweaked during the initial observation to include strategies that teachers may have forgotten to discuss in the initial interview. The self-reflection form was designed using an emic perspective and addressed the central concepts of emotional self-regulation as identified by the teachers.

I then made arrangements to videotape each participant's classroom on three different occasions for approximately 40 minutes. While I was only able to conduct two classroom observations with the second study participant due to her resignation from the Center, I do not believe that this impacted the study results in any appreciable way based

on her consistent behaviors and responses during the two observations and three interviews. Although the final, edited video footage shared with teachers consisted of 18-21 minutes, initial over sampling helped ensure that there was sufficient footage to capture pertinent issues of emotional self-regulation.

Videotaping took place in teachers' classrooms and in outdoor play areas within the Child Development Centers, in the mornings. It included two sequential activity blocks, with at least one block involving a large-group activity. Activities captured included circle time, center time, story time, transitions, and clean up time. As Elias and Berk (2002) indicated, large group time and clean-up time are often associated with challenges around emotional self-regulation.

Transcription of the video data began soon after the first observation. It should be noted that I did not transcribe every verbal interaction captured on video during the classroom observations, but instead transcribed 18-21 minutes of segments that were directly related to the issues under study. This decision to use shorter segments for teachers' self-reflection was guided by established research suggesting "audience engagement and attention span lasts no more than 18-21 minutes" (Mitchell, 2011, p. 162).

On scheduled observation dates, I arrived 20 minutes prior to the agreed time to review the classroom's daily schedule, set up the video equipment, film the classroom environment, and to allow time for children to adjust to my presence as well as to that of the video camera. I employed an" opportunistic sampling" technique for recording visual data. As Pauwels (2011) states, this type of sampling is commonly used in exploratory studies.

The placement of the video camera was discussed with the teacher prior to beginning videotaping and depended on the classroom set up for the specific activity. The beginning of shooting involved capturing wide-angle and general pan shots of the classroom environment and of the teacher and her interactions with the students. As events reflective of teachers' stated understanding of emotional self-regulation occurred, I would zoom in when possible in order to capture the interaction as closely as possible. That is, if I believed I could capture the event by zooming in without interfering, I would do so. However, if I felt that doing so might present a problem for the teacher and/or her student, I took notes of the event instead.

As Goldman et al. (2007) recommend, the process of data selection, i.e., "of focusing on particular information in accordance with theoretical frameworks, research questions, and instruments" (p. 15) happened prior to, during, and after video collection. Segments captured included two types: 1) interactions related to the strategies that teachers had self-identified, and 2) vignettes that appeared to reflect their broader understanding of emotional self-regulation as shared with me during the interviews. I also employed my own judgment to record additional images that appeared to reflect issues around emotional self-regulation as a means of later clarifying a teacher's understanding of those vignettes. This approach allowed me to address the specific research questions within the established socio-cultural frameworks (Goldman, Erickson, Lemke & Derry, 2007).

A follow-up interview was scheduled for the purpose of viewing and reflecting on the video segments that had been intentionally selected from the large body of available images (Derry, 2007). During that interview we (i.e., myself and each teacher) viewed

and discussed the video using the individually tailored self-reflection forms as a guide. The video helped trigger deeper reflections and discussions regarding events in the classroom (Pauwels, 2011) as I guided participants to view and reflect on the images in light of the definitions and meanings they ascribed to emotional self-regulation by using prompts such as "In what way did you support…? Give me an example of…" These video-elicited interviews were digitally (audio) recorded and later transcribed (i.e., translated into written form) for coding. I again shared copies of the interview transcription with each participant and invited them to comment and discuss any inaccuracies (member check) prior to beginning the coding process; an iterative process that allowed me to effectively transition between the differing data sources (Barron & Engle, 2007) as I further developed my interpretations. While none of the participants mentioned any inaccuracies, one of them did indicate she found this process very helpful in allowing her to verify how effectively she had communicated her thoughts. In one instance, she asked to re-state her answer for greater clarity.

Data Analysis

"There is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself" (Denzin, 1994, p.500).

Data analysis began once I received school documents from the first Our Care Child Development Center site. This allowed me to analyze any information that could provide insight into the Center's and/or Head Start's perspectives and policies regarding emotional self-regulation prior to conducting classroom observations. An early start to data analysis enabled a cyclical process to take place that allowed collected data to guide future data collection. Stake (1995) refers to this process as iterative and reflexive and

explains that it allows for researchers to respond quickly to data, and to make any necessary changes and/or adaptations to the research design.

Stake (2010) maintains that information emerging from qualitative research must first be disassembled into its constituent parts and then reassembled for the purposes of synthesis and analysis. I engaged in such a process by organizing individual participant data separately in order to develop a deeper understanding of each teacher, her views, and classroom practices. Individual data records assembled for each teacher included transcription of initial interview, a Self-Reflection Form, naturalistic observations, transcriptions of video-elicited interviews, reflexive journal notes, and lesson plans. Reviewing each participant's data records multiple times prior to developing preliminary categories served to decrease the likelihood of misinterpretation. Through successive reading sessions, I was able to refine the initial broad categories by clustering similar ones leading to a set of focused and relevant codes for each teacher. A separate master list of these final codes allowed me to closely examine them in an effort to identify patterns that were ultimately grouped into larger conceptual themes for each teacher. These themes were then further examined within the context of the research questions. While I used the study's research questions as a general organizational framework, I took great care to avoid placing too much or too little emphasis on the particulars of the questions so that I could identify new issues while also capturing subtle nuances of relevant relationships (Herriott & Firestone, 1983).

Once I had identified individual themes and was intimately familiar with each individual case, as recommended by Stake (2010), I used the individual case themes in conjunction with the original data sources to generate codes across cases which were

used to generate themes across the cases. It was these larger themes and consequent

assertions that were used in the cross case analysis presented in the final chapter.

Theoretical Framework

Rogoff's sociocultural theory (2003) provided a useful theoretical framework for

understanding the beliefs and practices of Head Start teachers working within varying

socio-cultural contexts in Our Care centers. According to Rogoff (2003), people develop

and change by participating in cultural communities. When a community emerges out of

the coming together of individuals, in this instance a classroom or a Child Development

Center that community begins to impact the shared space and activities of the group.

Emotional self-regulation then is "situated" in that it occurs within specific and bounded

contexts encompassing the Center at a macro community level and the individual

classroom at a micro community level. As a result, a teacher's understanding and

practices around emotional self-regulation must be studied within the broader context in

which she/he is engaged on a daily basis.

According to Rogoff, individuals develop through cultural activities across three

planes: personal, interpersonal, and community or cultural. However, it is critical to

emphasize that the three planes do not operate in isolation but as interrelated pathways as

individuals function within and across a broad range of socio-cultural contexts.

Rogoff's personal plane was addressed as teachers' understandings, beliefs, and

perceptions of emotional self-regulation were explored through semi-structured

interviews. Recognizing the highly interrelated, and sometimes contested relationship

between theoretical understanding and practice, both the interpersonal and

community/cultural planes were examined through classroom observations and teachers'
reflections of video taken during those observations. Further, Rogoff's interpersonal and
community planes as related to each teacher's classroom practice was explored through
the analysis of artifacts such as, but not limited to, Head Start's Early Learning
Framework, Our Care Guide for Building Positive Relationships, Our Care's Group
Management Guide, and communication between parents and teachers regarding
children's development.

Ethical Considerations

As Mertens (2012) states, "qualitative researchers' interactions with individuals
and communities provide fertile ground for the emergence of ethical dilemmas" (p.19).
This study presented an additional need for caution given that data also consisted of
visual images of teachers and young children. In order to address the ethical issues that
could arise, I took various precautions to uphold the "do not harm" maxim and to protect
the emotional well-being of the participating teachers and their students.

Prior to initiating contact with potential study participants, I secured IRB
approval. However, as Morse and colleagues (2008) state, this is not sufficient and it
should be noted that ethical conduct depends more on deliberated caution by the
researcher than on IRB approval. In order to remain deliberately cautious, I used a
reflexivity journal to reflect on my own perceptions, feelings, and reactions regarding
what I had observed in the classrooms and to analyze any potential impact that these may
have on the inquiry. This was especially important in terms of reminding me that my role
was that of a researcher and not that of a technical assistance specialist so that I needed to

observe interactions, make sense of them, but not offer comments, evaluations, or suggestions regarding teacher practice. The journal also served to support the development and integration of new understandings into my study.

Participants were fully informed of the project's purpose, scope, and logistics, prior to its launch. However, in order to ensure that they understood what they were agreeing to, I went over the consent form together with them and encouraged them to ask questions. I explained that my role was not that of an evaluator, a point I reiterated throughout our conversations. I further assured participants that their involvement was voluntary, that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and that their visual images and data would remain confidential. I also secured consent forms from all of the families of children enrolled in participating teachers' classrooms. Confidentiality of video images and privacy was ensured by restricting access to the video as well as any identifying information of participants (Derry, Hickey & Koschmann, 2007).

In order to protect participants' privacy, I also utilized pseudonyms for participant names and for the nonprofit agency they worked for. This tactic was used to protect the children's names as well. However, as Stake (2010) points out, maintaining confidentiality is not sufficient in protecting participants' privacy. I also refrained from asking participants to share any private information that was not related to the study and redirected any comments that were reflective of such information. Furthermore, I provided participants an opportunity to review and verify their statements through member checking and, as recommended by Guba & Lincoln (1989), sought to incorporate all perspectives in the study.

Given the potentially emotional nature of interviews, I made every effort to create

a trusting, safe environment for the participants by scheduling interviews at a place that was comfortable for them and by using language that was non-judgmental and/or biased and assured participants that my role was not that of an evaluator. While this was accomplished with all of the participants, my previous experience with one of the study participants served to facilitate a faster process with her. I was also careful not to influence the interviewee's answers and to communicate in a way that was respectful of individual participants' socio-cultural perspectives.

Finally, study participants were informed regarding the manner in which textual and visual data would be collected and stored. As was shared with participants, all textual and visual was stored in a thumb drive and locked in a filing cabinet in my home office, where it will be kept for a period of three years from the time of data collection. Visual data was only viewed by the primary researcher and will not be distributed. While many precautions were taken to ensure ethical conduct is maintained throughout the study, perhaps most importantly, I remained open to participants' suggestions and concerns regarding ethical issues.

Credibility

As Stake (1995) indicates, credibility is of significant concern to qualitative researchers given the "ethical obligations to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding" (p. 109). To Creswell (2009), credibility can be established by adopting systematic processes related to data checks and the triangulation of data. Further, Lincoln and Guba (2007) suggest that these processes include:

- Prolonged engagement

- Triangulation

- Peer Debriefing

- Member Checks

While prolonged engagement was not possible, this study used multiple data sources to better understand the socio-cultural perspectives that impacted teachers' understanding and practices around emotional self-regulation. Data sources including naturalistic classroom observations and interpretations were triangulated to enhance trustworthiness and to detect any pending gaps or questions. I also consulted with an outside reviewer who read my transcripts and interpretations and provided feedback. Study participants were described accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1995) and I further employed member checking with study participants (e.g., sharing transcripts with teachers).

As Flewitt (2006) asserts, the use of digital video, audio, and written methods allowed me to gauge, among other things, the credibility of emerging findings. Through member checking, I invited participants to review writings that included their words and/or actions. This is an important consideration for trustworthiness and credibility of interview responses. This was especially important to Pam, one of the study participants who requested on several occasions to re-state what she had said and that I remove certain comments from the transcript. Additionally, I was intentional in terms of building in periods of reflection surrounding my emerging data and interpretations. Finally, as previously mentioned, I maintained a reflexivity journal that allowed for heightened self-awareness. The use of the journal aided in the process of reviewing the ways in which my background, experiences, and biases may have impacted my interpretations.

In terms of visual research, the issue of credibility was addressed through the clear articulation of my decision-making framework relative to the images selected for use in the video-elicitation process (Donaldson, Christie, & Mark, 2009). Additionally, images were captured over a three week period and a detailed explanation of the reasons for the study along with its design was shared with the participants. As per Donaldson et al. (2009), the images provided sufficient context from which to base interpretations and allow for engagement at both a descriptive and an interpretive level.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research methodology that was employed to describe and explain the understandings and application of emotional self-regulation strategies used by three Head Start teachers working within varying social-cultural contexts and to identify those perspectives that influenced their application of their understandings. Further, the rationale for research design, video elicitation, participant and site selection processes, was discussed as was the pilot study and theoretical framework. Data sources included the researcher, a reflexivity journal, naturalistic observations, semi-structured interviews, video-elicited interviews, and document analysis. Data collection tools included a digital recorder, a digital camera, individually-tailored self-reflection forms, and demographic forms. Procedures and methods for data collection and analysis were discussed, as was the researcher's position. Ethical considerations were outlined along with procedures for ensuring study credibility.

In keeping with 'thick descriptions' (Stake, 1995), the following chapters provide detailed case narratives of each of the three study participants, including their setting and

context, their background and experiences, and the themes that emerged from each individual case as I explored the study's research questions. To develop these narratives, I have intentionally used the study's research questions as a general organizational framework. However, as Firestone and Herriott recommend, care was taken to avoid placing too much or too little emphasis on the particulars of the questions so that I could "recognize new issues while also capturing subtle evidence supporting the most important relationships" (as cited in Stake, 2006, p.13). Further development of the narrative was based on direct quotes from participants, which lends authenticity to corresponding interpretations, notes from my reflexivity journal, and videos of classroom events. Finally, as recommended by Stake (2006), I have used ordinary language to discuss relevant issues within the narrative.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOURDES

I first met Lourdes and her Teaching Assistant two years prior to this study when I served as Lourdes' coach during a one-year, grant-funded study within the Head Start (HS) organization. The focus of my work as a coach had been to support classroom implementation of Tools of the Mind (TOM), a research-based curriculum that focuses on cognitive, social-emotional, self-regulatory, and foundational academic skills. During the previous project, I had the chance to visit Lourdes' classroom approximately once every two weeks to observe her teaching and to provide feedback with respect to curriculum implementation. While Lourdes as well as other participants felt they had no choice but to participate in the HS study, she always exhibited a welcoming attitude and an openness in terms of discussing the successes and challenges she was experiencing within the project. Lourdes and I had no further contact during the intervening two years. However, when I invited her to participate in my dissertation study, she agreed as soon as I explained its overall purpose to her.

Lourdes was a lively and candid Puerto Rican woman in her early thirties who grew up in a Christian home where being helpful, respectful and non-judgmental were fundamental values. As she explained it:

My parents are Christian persons so they always teach us to help people, to respect difference between other people; that it doesn't matter how the people

look, what the people do for their life. It doesn't seem because it's different than mine, that the person is wrong. So my parents raised us in a way that we are really open to everything we see.

Lourdes' immediate family consisted of a husband, a teenage son, a toddler girl with special needs, and a baby on the way, which she proudly pointed out during one of the scheduled observations via a t-shirt that read, "I love my bump."

While Lourdes was initially interested in a career in accounting, she discovered early on that she did not actually enjoy accounting. After giving birth to her first child, she recalled how much she had enjoyed a previous job working with young children. Her realization also merged with the pragmatic realities of being a mother. Teaching became an increasingly attractive career option as it would allow her to spend more time with her son. As a result, she changed her major from accounting to early childhood/elementary education. While her interest was in working with younger children, there was no degree that focused solely on early childhood in Puerto Rico, so the dual focus was the only option available to her.

Coursework for this teacher's bachelor's degree included methodologies in math, Spanish (her first language) and science as well as psychology, a two-year course in human development, and a one-year course in behavior modification. Her first opportunity to implement some of the classroom theories and concepts she learned was during her practicum experience. As Lourdes indicated is common in Puerto Rico, this took place during her final semester of college. For four hours per day, Lourdes observed and contributed to the daily routine of a 1st grade classroom. Looking back on her experience working with 1st graders, she noted that:

Children in 1st grade, they been in school enough so they know the rules. They're really, you know, they follow things. When you come to preschool, those children just start. I mean it's not the same thing. In 1st grade, they have the base. It's more about knowledge and stuff like that. Preschoolers is more about social emotional regulation. So it was different, I will say, way different.

Lourdes' comments suggest that, once children have attended school long enough to internalize the social and emotional skills required to successfully navigate a community learning environment, the focus of learning shifts from internal regulatory processes to the acquisition of academic content. This moves teachers further away from the role of 'emotion mentors' who, according to Boyer (2009) work to "help children recognize their own emotions, as well as be responsive to and take the perspectives of others" (p. 178).

During her practicum, Lourdes' supervising teacher provided on-going assessments of her performance. Lourdes also had formal observations done by a university instructor three to four times during the 4-month long internship. The observations lasted approximately one hour and went as follows:

The person from the College went there and they see because they were looking more about how I did my plan, how I follow because in Puerto Rico public schools you have a plan you have to follow, they give you everything there and you are supposed to know what is in there and you can maybe make some changes, but you have to cover what is the theme of that day. So the person spend like one hour because the person observe like each class. I did math one day and

they went to see math. Science one day, Social Studies. So they go each time you teach a different class so they see how you follow your plan with the information.

In 2006, Lourdes moved from Puerto Rico to the United States (U.S.) with a bachelor's degree in early childhood/elementary education and a master's degree in special education. Unable to secure a teaching position in a public school in Puerto Rico, she hoped to be able to do so in the U.S. Her first job was in a private setting, but within a year, she was offered a position at a HS program. At the time of this study, she had worked in three different HS centers and was planning to transition to a different early childhood agency at the end of the school year. While she enjoyed being a classroom teacher, she felt it was time to do something different, especially given the stress brought on by numerous changes within the HS grantee organization. This is how she explained her decision to accept an offer to work elsewhere:

I've been here for 7 years, but, when I came to this country, I want to become a public school teacher, then my baby was born with all her conditions. I want to wait a little bit longer until she's in kindergarten so I can go to public school because they require more time and…but since everything that is going on in the program I don't want to stay another year in here because it's not stable. It's not stable moving from one agency to another. So this [new] company seems to be really stable. I can make my own schedule. In seven years we didn't have any kind of raise. Instead of gain benefits, every time that a new company take over we lose benefits, so I'm gonna give it a try, and if I like it I will stay. In early August when we come back is a lot of new faces so I guess I'm not the only one

who after years got tired. Even though we love so much the children, we just want to explore something different.

She later added:

Every year we have to apply as new employees. We fill out already four different applications and we have to go on a Saturday, time that is supposed to be with our family. They don't choose any day throughout the week so we can go. The last time I went to move to [a new grantee] now, when we just applied last year for [a new grantee] and Our Care in August. It was a few Saturdays ago, so it's really…for us as a teacher, it's really stressful.

In addition to the stress from numerous changes within the larger organization, Lourdes also experienced stress around her daily work routine and schedule at the center.

I noted in my journal on (5/9/2014)

Upon entering the center I noticed Lourdes looked a bit frazzled, walking around with a Styrofoam plate in her hands. She told me she had not been able to warm her lunch as the center's cook had been warming her own, even though she knew this was the only time the teachers had to prepare their lunch. Lourdes told me that they were only allowed 10 minutes to use the bathroom, heat their food, and eat. I offered to come back another day to meet with her, but she insisted I stay. I was concerned about the effects of the stress on her as well as on her baby, especially given the complications she had with her last child.

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In addition, she expressed concern about the larger impact of recent staffing changes on her students.

> We have a situation recently with our Director. She resigned. I guess she feel some more pressure. And she did it on the middle of the morning with all the children here. And children are asking for her. It's only 2 week left so…in my opinion, the way they [Our Care] handled things it weren't right because it's only 2 weeks left. They just could have waited 'till the end of the year and just talked to her and see what's going on and let her finish the year, thinking about just children, parents, and community. First, she been here for at least 10 years. They ask for her. Then they hire a new Director and she last only 3 days. So this is our third Director in less than 3 weeks. So, yes, the children they feel and the parents, too.

Setting and Context

Lourdes taught a group of 16 VPK students. Her student population consisted of 2 Middle Eastern (Arabic), 7 Hispanic, 6 African American, and 1 Caucasian child.

Figure 3. Lourdes' Classroom

Lourdes' classroom was located on the far west corner of the Child Development Center, past the Director's Office and a small multipurpose area which was used as a make-shift Nurse's Station and meeting and eating area for teachers and staff. The classroom was divided into four main areas that accommodated approximately eight different learning centers. The classroom walls, which were painted a soft beige, were filled with children's work, multicultural pictures of people, and various visual cues to help children navigate the space. Visual cues included labels with names and pictures of the different centers and toys as well as pictures and text related to classroom rules and expectations.

The first area to the left as you entered the classroom was the Drama/Sensory center. A rectangular wooden table with eight chairs divided the space into two smaller areas. To the left was a small narrow space with a combination of store-bought and child-made dramatic play toys, dolls, a wooden ironing board as well as two small blue and red sand and water activity tables. To the right was a larger area with child-sized kitchen

furniture and a stand-up mirror, all of which served to separate the area from the Block/Science area.

The Block/Science learning center consisted of an 80 x 36 colorful city map rug pushed up against two large shelving units that lined the back wall. The shelving units, which were located under a large window, contained a wooden doll house with small wooden dolls, blocks, trucks, and construction books. In the middle of this center was another wooden table, with eight chairs, and an additional shelving unit with bins containing large plastic bugs, plastic microscopes, and other small science-related toys as well as a box of Kleenex tissues. The table in this learning center, as well as the one in the Drama center, served a dual purpose as both were also used for family-style meals, which the Child Development Center required the teachers to participate in.

The back of a four foot shelving unit served to separate the Block/Science area from the Circle Time area. It was covered with white tissue paper and decorated with a bright orange border. On this board was a picture of a child sitting with his legs crossed. The caption under it read "Levanta su mano/Raise your hand." This most recent visual cue card was posted to help Lourdes prepare her students for kindergarten. To its right was a poster with the current classroom rules written in English and Spanish and illustrated with pictures of the children following the rules, which were: We listen/Nosotros escuchamos, We clean up/Nosotros recogemos, We are nice/Nosotros somos amables, We share/Nosotros compartimos, and We wait for our turn/Nostros esperamos por nuestro turno.

At the center of this area was a large blue oval rug with pictures and symbols of the letters of the alphabet. Against the far wall were the teaching materials Lourdes used

for Circle Time, Story Time, and Music. Lourdes made sure she had an assortment of visual, auditory, and tactile resources that enabled all children to actively engage in learning. This is how Lourdes described that area:

> We have there the theme, what we are talking about this week…so you see that it was a theme board. We have a white board where we put the date, we put the message of the day, and then anything else. When they ask questions we write it down there so they can see. Also…there are the days of the week, the letter of the day, the number of the week…we have shapes, colors, the weather, so every day we go through all that skills with them during Circle Time so they need something they can see and associate. Even we have songs for weather, songs for the days of the week, and we have other resources but we want something on the board so they can see what we are talking about…they can relate what we are singing and what we are reading with what is in there.

The last learning center of the classroom was the Computer Center located in a 6x6 foot space adjacent to the Circle Time area. This learning center housed the classroom's desktop computer and a timer that helped children manage "turn taking."

Lourdes counted on her assistant as well as the CDC's floater to support classroom management. As she and I spoke briefly one morning, I observed her assistant move to the carpet area to put on music for the children while she still monitored others who were brushing their teeth and washing their hands. When reviewing the video of that day, Lourdes explained that the children were very familiar with the music and did not need them to be in that area during that time.

We can just keep them by themselves on the carpet. We keep watching them, but

we can just focus on the ones that are finishing eating breakfast because we have

children that arrive late, that are brushing their teeth and the others can just stay

on the carpet with the music.

When I initially spoke to Lourdes regarding ways in which she supported children

learning the skills she deemed important, she spoke about what she and her assistant did,

using the term 'we.' Lourdes also counted on the support of the CDC's floater, whose

role was to cover teacher breaks as well as provide an additional set of eyes and hands as

needed.

They [the children] do know her [the floater] already because she's been here

since last year so…they know her name, they know that if they need something

they can either go to me as a teacher or to her as well.

However, while her comments indicate the collaborative nature of her relationship

with her assistant and floater, they also indicate a hierarchy that places her, as the teacher,

on a different level.

Foundational Role of Emotional Self-Regulation

Lourdes' stated definition of emotional-self regulation centered on self-control.

She defined the term as the "control that a child have over himself to make choices, to do

things; how much that person can control himself when it comes to taking a decision,

doing things." In her opinion, a child with emotional self-regulation is patient, can wait

his turn, and is able to delay gratification. "If a self-regulated child is interested in doing

something that is not available to him, he can find something else to do without become

frustrated or mad." Lourdes' comments illustrate her understanding of what Bailey, Curby, and Bassett (2015) refer to as the overlap of emotional regulation and executive control, which the researchers explain is caused by "the role of attention, memory, and response inhibition during emotion activation and regulation" (p.265).

Lourdes believed that emotional self-regulation was foundational or the "base of everything" in an early childhood classroom. Without it, children "are not able to learn, to be more knowledge because there's no concentration." As she explained it, while it was important for children to know colors and shapes and letters, "first it's just the transition for them to be able to follow the daily rules, to respect the other children, learn to listen to what the teacher says, learn how to solve their personal problem without start crying all the time, manage emotions…those are the skills that are really important for me." Her reference to the importance of respecting other children indicates a value placed on relatedness, or the "need to feel closeness to others" (Boyer, 2009, p.176).

In further discussion regarding her general views of emotional self-regulation, Lourdes pointed to classroom experience as a significant influence on her views and practices.

> As you go year through year and you see children and you see how they react, and you start helping them solve problems, that give you more background, more ideas, and you can use them in different situations over and over with other children. Until you get into your classroom, you don't have the chance to see how everything that you learned can be implemented. And maybe when you implement it finally, it maybe doesn't work for all the children so you have to

keep an open mind and find different ways from experience and use them with
children to see how that may work.

She added:

Even when I complete my degrees and everything, it's not the same. When you go
to the classroom that is when you are going to implement everything you know
and all you learn in school is not gonna be the same thing you use in the
classroom. Experience is the more helpful resource you can have. College give
you knowledge, but when it comes to practice you make your own one.

Integrating Knowledge and Practice

During the initial interview for this study, the interview that served as the basis
for the development of the Self-Reflection Form used during classroom observations,
Lourdes indicated she did the following in her classroom to support emotional self-
regulation:

- Engaged children in transitions;

- Embedded specific emotional self-regulation skills in everyday activities;

- Provided opportunities for children to learn from each other;

- Implemented TOM strategies/activities; and

- Partnered children intentionally.

While I had the opportunity to observe all of Lourdes' reported strategies during
my classroom visits, I also observed various other strategies being implemented.
Consistent with previous evidence of practices that impact emotional self-regulation
(Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004; Rimm-

Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, & Brock, 2009), Lourdes implemented emotional

supports as well as organizational supports.

Emotional Supports

Emotional supports are "behavioral qualities related to the creation and

maintenance of relationships characterized by warmth, respect, sensitivity, and

individualization" (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 263). In spite of the stress at the Child

Development Center, Lourdes worked diligently to establish a calm, responsive, and

stimulating environment for each of her students. She was very intentional in setting up a

positive emotional learning environment for all.

Lourdes' classroom support for emotional self-regulation began as soon as a new

school year started. She felt it was important to begin working on it right away as she

always had children that had been away all summer and needed reminders. Additionally,

she had children who had never attended an early childhood program and needed to learn

how to behave as part of a group or classroom. Evidence suggests that children's self-

regulation is positively impacted by teachers who focus on scaffolding children's

activities early on in the school year (Emmer & Strough, 2001; Cameron, Connor, &

Morrison, 2005).

During the beginning of the year, Lourdes scaffolded children's play engagement

in the following manner:

> In the beginning they [children] just wanted to move. They just feel bored in the
>
> area and they just wanted to move to another area and it was hard to let them
>
> know that if you choose an area, we want you to stay there because if they kept

changing areas, we have a certain amount of children in each area so we just try to

engage them on the games. You want to go "Look at the babies. They're hungry.

What do you think we just feed the babies now?" And if you see that the child is

getting bored again, that's when you go in and say, "Did you change the babies'

diaper? Let's change the diaper. I don't think the baby have fever. Let's

see…let's take the temperature." They keep engaging until they come up with

their own scenarios and then they stay the whole Free Choice Time.

During these interactions, Lourdes also modeled the use of private speech, i.e.,

speech that, while audible to others is meant for internal rather than external

communication. She did so by saying things such as "I wonder if the baby is hungry,"

and "I should check the baby diapers." Such private speech is thought to help young

children regulate mental as well as observed behaviors and is well-recognized as a tool

for self-regulation (Diaz & Berk, 2014; Winsler & Fernyhough, 2009).

While Lourdes implemented some emotional support strategies more frequently

during the first part of the school year to scaffold certain behaviors, others were repeated

throughout the year. Among those was intentional partnering, a strategy which also

provided children opportunities to learn from their peers as well to expand their

understanding and tolerance for differences. When discussing a Tools of the Mind

activity I had observed her implement, she said:

If you see they have to do "Share the News," but I assign partners. I want them to

be with someone different every single day so they can learn different things. I

don't want to see the Spanish all the time together, or the one who speak English

all the time together. I want to see them sharing information…I don't

know…'como junto.'

Interviewer: Together, yes.

Teacher: All the Spanish-speakers, no, English and Spanish, English and

Arabic…

When I asked her what types of things the children might learn from each other, she

responded:

If my question is "What do you eat at home?" what the Arabic child eat at home

may be different from what the Spanish one eat, but if I put 2 Spanish all the time

they're not gonna learn anything different. How about if the Arabic or the Spanish

said 'X'? "Okay, what is that? How do you do it?" Because they're gonna wonder

if it's something different and that's how vocabulary and communication builds.

So I try to assign the partners myself so they don't make the choice, I make the

choice (laughs).

My observation of her implementation of "Share the News" [1] during one of my

visits also allowed me to note her responsiveness to children and their needs. After

noticing that a group of children was not listening as they should, but were instead

distracting themselves as well as others, Lourdes switched the question she had planned

for that day. Rather than asking the children to speak about a time they had gone to the

circus, she posed the following question "Why do we have to listen?" Once the children

were done discussing their answers with their partners, Lourdes shared her own answer,

referencing the posted rule.

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[1] Tools of the Mind Activity

We are in the Circle Time, we have to listen to the teacher. We have the rule

there. And why? Not only because it's my rule, because we are going to

kindergarten guys. We have to learn. Daddy and mommy make a big effort to take

you here because they want you to become but we cannot learn if we don't listen

to the person that is standing right there. And I let him know it made me really

sad. I don't wanna say that 'Ms. Lourdes is really mad'. No. I want them to

understand the feeling we feel when see children that are not interested in

something that they need it. So I put them in the same situation. "If you are

talking to me and I don't listen to you, how do you feel about it?" "I will feel

sad." "So I feel the same way."

Lourdes' comments above appear to be meant to instill a sense of relatedness and

social harmony in her students, which are prioritized in interdependent models of agency

that seek collective over individual outcomes (Trommsdorff, 2009).

Organizational Supports

Organizational supports are "qualities related to creating and maintaining an

organized classroom, characterized by setting clear expectations, effectively redirecting

misbehavior, ensuring students are productive and providing engaging learning

opportunities" (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 263).

As described in the previous section titled 'Setting and Context,' Lourdes was

very intentional in creating a well-organized physical environment. To support physical

organization, which in turn supported classroom management and emotional self-

regulation, Lourdes used a variety of engaging tools and materials, including a center

wheel with colors and pictures that matched the different learning centers in the classroom.

> We have the Wheel that have a circle with the areas. We have center labels so when they gonna choose a clip, the clip have a color and the color belongs to a specific area. The Housekeeping can be the orange, Block can be the blue and they never change throughout the year. They will have another picture, because they don't know how to read, so they can use the color, but also they can see the picture. But the picture we take from the area in the classroom.

Other tools included visual mediator cards used to help children gain control over their actions and behavior during music time. During the second classroom observation, Lourdes stood in front of the children with her back to the wall in the Circle Time area swaying from side to side holding up a card with a picture of a stick figure with arms and legs spread out. The figure served as a model of the pose that children should freeze to when the song paused. After every pause in the song, she would move the guiding card to the back of a pile she was holding so the children could see and prepare for the next pose. The children often giggled when they saw what came next, knowing they were not to actually pose until the song stopped again. This Tools of the Mind activity, implemented from the first day of class, allowed children to work on inhibiting their responses in a fun manner. As the year went on and children's self-regulation skills increased, Lourdes added more challenging poses as well as opportunities for the children to partner with a peer during the poses.

During the third and final observation, as children finished sharing a story with a peer during the TOM activity 'Buddy Reading,'[2] Lourdes' said

Now it's gonna be Ms. Lourdes' turn to read a story. We all gonna listen to the story because when we finish the story you are gonna draw something that happened in the story. You're gonna draw something that the caterpillar ate. You're gonna go there [to the table] and draw a vegetable or a fruit that the caterpillar ate. You're gonna choose one (holding up one finger) and you are gonna draw about it on the paper. Are you guys ready?" The children then children replied, "Yeah."

While the guidance provided in this case was an integral part of the activity, verbal guidance was a common practice in Lourdes' classroom as were conversations meant to assist children in solving problems. When speaking about problem solving as a strategy Lourdes explained that,

There are some questions that you don't have to give them the answers, but guide them through, like "What do you think that we should do? What do you think that is appropriate? What will happen if we just take the decision you want to take right now?" Just let them think about the consequences. What is gonna happen if they just do whatever they want? "Let's think about it. What do you think is gonna happen? Do you think we may have another solution to that?" So when you let them use their logical thinking, they're gonna come up with the right answer.

Lourdes also placed great value on being prepared for her lessons and on ensuring her children were constantly engaged. When reviewing a video segment of a Circle Time

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[2] Tools of the Mind Activity

I had observed, we spoke about her continuous verbal engagement with the children even as she turned her back to them momentarily to switch out CDs. This is what she said:

Something that is really good is to have everything ready. If you see, I have all my stuff next to my radio. I have my mediator cards. I have my marker ready. My board is next to it. If I have to stand up and go get something, they're gonna get distracted and they're gonna lose the concentration. I don't know how to say it. I don't like it that way. I like my things to be ready next to me, but the only thing that kills sometime is that you have to switch from one CD to another one. In less than 2 seconds they can start talking to the person next to him, they can just focus on something else, then when you start again it's like start over. So I try to have everything ready, even my CD. I have the songs in the order that I use them. I put all my songs for my Circle Time on one CD that way I don't have to keep switching that much. In the beginning I have to take one CD out, put another CD, they lose concentration very easily. I think things should be ready next to you when you're gonna need them.

During all three classroom observations, Lourdes could be heard speaking to the children regarding expectations as well as offering explanations for the established expectations. When I asked her why she thought it was important for children to understand what was being asked of them, she responded:

It's better than when you just told them "Because I say so. Today you are gonna read." No, no, we need to explain them why. We can't just say "no" without any explanation because they need to understand "why do I have to stay quiet? Why I cannot have the turn today first?"

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Lourdes felt children deserved an explanation rather than a directive. She believed that explaining things to children made it easier for them to then transfer that knowledge, i.e, "when it comes to another situation it will be easier for them to implement what they learn from there to other experiences in life." Lourdes comment indicates that she is preparing children for the future, preparing them to make decisions on their own based on their understanding of the reasons.

In addition to the proactive, supportive strategies Lourdes implemented, she indicated children's emotional self-regulation was also supported by the Child Development Center and Head Start policies. The lesson plan template she was required to use, for example, contained a social emotional section for teachers to complete with information regarding feelings they were going to introduce to the children and a section for explaining how they were going to address emotional self-regulation. The lesson plan also contained space for teachers to include the name(s) of 1-3 children that they thought would benefit from additional one-on-one support in this area. Lourdes also had access to a network of mental health resources to support children's "growing ability to experience, regulate, and express emotions (http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/mental-health)." According to Lourdes,

> We have that a child, it doesn't matter how many times you speak to him, is still lacking in self-regulation, the program offers a social worker, they offer inclusion teachers, other people that have more experience than us and we just fill out paperwork and then they come to the classroom, they observe, and they see if the children need extra help, more help than they have in the classroom.

Negotiating Institutional Policies, Families, and Personal Philosophy

Lourdes' teaching philosophy reflected a strong orientation towards the individual child and a recognition that each child moved within a specific context encompassing the classroom environment, peer circles, and significant adult influencers. Yet her larger role as a teacher working within a particular organizational context and community of parents presented a number of challenges. Specifically, Lourdes found that institutional policies and family expectations frequently collided with her personal child-centered philosophy. As a result, she had to find ways to successfully negotiate conflicts that arose and to avoid others from developing.

Lourdes felt very comfortable implementing institutional policies and practices that she believed positively impacted children's emotional self-regulation, such as Structured Routines. When asked about the importance of routines to emotional self-regulation, this is how she explained it:

When they have a routine as we repeat it every day they start to regulate themselves, that is a specific amount of time to play, a specific amount of time to read, and time to write, and time to do music, so they cannot be the whole day playing because they need some learning experience through art, using pencil, language through story so when we have the routine the time is over, now it's time to read a story and if they don't understand we go "Look, now it's time now for this. We don't have more time for free choice, but we can go tomorrow."

At times, though, this teacher was challenged by policies that were counter to her personal beliefs. One example was the Child Development Center's policy on rewards and incentives.

The way we see on the class thing is like when a child is doing something that is not okay, that child needs to see that the outcome of their action is not good so that way they will change the way they are doing things but it doesn't make any sense when you come here and they tell you that no matter what the child do you have to treat it the same way or give them the same thing that you give to the rest of the class.

Institutional policy required that incentives not be used as rewards for individual student behaviors but rather distributed to the group as a whole. However, Lourdes believed that individual children should receive incentives for making, what she considered, good choices or behaving well. In spite of the policies, Lourdes followed through on implementing practices she believed in…just not when she was being observed and monitored.

When I have people from the agency who come to my classroom I have to follow the rules because they will know, see, maybe the way that I handle situation in the classroom. For me, when they [children] are acting "Ok, I'm making good choices", I like to reward them with something like the treasure box and every Friday all the students that have been behaved and following the routine, I will give them a treasure box. The one who maybe didn't follow everything, I will encourage them to do better the following week, but I won't give them anything that day. It seems to be working just fine for me. If you go for the agency here, they will not agree with the way that I do things. They think that all the childrens deserve the same thing. You cannot just avoid to give the child something just because of their behavior.

Lourdes was also not comfortable with the institution's view on homework, or home activities, as the Child Development Center referred to them. According to her, teachers were not supposed to provide children with home activities, but Lourdes did so because she wanted her students to practice what they were learning in the classroom. Her classroom experience had shown her that this was an effective way to consolidate new knowledge.

While Lourdes did not follow the institution's policy on incentives or home activities, there were other institutional policies that she disagreed with but followed.

Here we cannot do 'Time Out.' We cannot sit a child down because he made a bad choice. In my country, you sit a child down until he's ready to go back. If we see a child is harming other children, we can do that. Here you can just "Ok, think about it," but you cannot do that a long time. And we cannot avoid him to do other activities because the child is not making the good choices. In my country, if the child is making bad choices they want us to teach them that bad choices lead to bad consequences. You didn't make a good choice, you are not gonna be able to play. Ok, you make good choice, you're gonna play so they make connections. But in here, they want the children to be able to participate for the whole routine and we cannot keep them apart just because the child is not self-regulated.

Lourdes' beliefs regarding the value of 'Time out' in supporting children's emotional self-regulation was based on personal cultural practices as well as on professional training.

For many years I learned, even when I went to college they gave us some behavior modification class as part of the college classes, and they teach us

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through theories how children, since they are born make connections between "how do I have to behave to grab people's attention." So normally they teached us 'ok, if a baby is crying and you know the diaper is changed and it had a meal, you don't touch that child because it's when you grab that child because he's crying, he's gonna say "Ok, from now I just need to cry to get what I want." So when they teach me that, and it seems so…it makes sense, so we're able to manage children in a different way. When I come here, I need to remind myself all the time "You cannot sit that child down. You cannot keep him away from playing just because he's not making good choices." So, it was hard… Because I believed that what they teached me was the right way. Like I said, when I come here I needed to open my mind and see different. After a few years you get used to it because you're practicing, but it doesn't mean that in your heart it changes what they teach you is correct… because that is what I used with my kids and it works really good.

While Time Out is referred to as an exclusionary practice in Western-based research and often seen as a negative, reactive strategy, Lourdes saw it as a natural consequence for children's actions. As she provided positive consequences for children's positive behavior, she believed that there should also be negative consequences for negative behaviors. In discussing this further with her, I came to believe that her willingness to follow a policy she disagreed with may have had to do with its inconsequential nature as there may have been only a few instances where children's behavior would have warranted a 'Time Out,' especially towards the end of the school year.

To Lourdes, change in practice did not mean change in beliefs or philosophy. When asked how she made decisions regarding which institutional policies and practices she would implement, she simply replied, "It depends on the children." When I asked her for further clarification, she told me children's reactions to her strategies informed those decisions.

Collaborating with families was an integral part of the Child Development Center's as well as of Head Start's philosophy. Twice a year, in the middle of the first and second semesters, school policy mandated that she meet with parents. After going over the child's progress, Lourdes was required to ask the parents what they thought would be best for their child to learn next. This policy was supportive of the Center's goal for parental involvement. According to the Center's 'Building Positive Relationship' Guide, the center sought to develop a "trusting, cooperative relationship with all parents. You [the teacher] are a major link in that relationship. When you succeed in developing a trusting relationship, the results will be an increase in parent understanding, support, and involvement" (p. 9).

As a parent herself, Lourdes appreciated the institutional value placed on parental support and involvement. However, there were some challenges that required Lourdes to effectively manage institutional policy, personal beliefs, and family goals. In order to ensure the children in her classroom acquired the academic skills that parents deemed important for the next phase of their child's educational life, as well as the social-emotional skills Lourdes valued, she developed ways of achieving a balance. For Lourdes, reconciling her views with those of the families she worked with was not an 'either-or' proposition. As she explained it,

So when I start with the 3-'s (referring to 3-year olds), I focus so much on, you know, "We have to learn, we have to share, you need to feel for the people, you know, just don't think about yourself." And, but when I see parents asking "No, I want my son to learn this" when they see that they don't know colors, number, shapes, they just think that they're just playing here all day, and they're not learning. So I start to worry more about those things and have them ready for that, but it doesn't mean that we're not working on socialization and self-regulation because as you see my kids. But we try to combine both things. At this time of the year [end of school year], they should know how to behave so we focus way more on those skills that they gonna ask them in few weeks…We can make a lot of damage on those children if we don't teach them those skills. So when it comes to January I say "Ok, guys, we give you time to adjust, we give you time to learn the basic things, no more colors in this classroom, no more shapes, now we go letters, sounds, compound words, rhyming." So I will increase the challenge for them.

As was evident in our conversations and in my observations of Lourdes' classroom, this teacher indeed developed her own practice, sometimes prioritizing her personal values and those of the families she worked with over institutional ones.

Summary

Lourdes perceived emotional self-regulation as foundational to learning to the extent that it was an integral component of a child's social-emotional, cognitive and academic growth. Her definition of emotional self-regulation (i.e., "the control that a child have over himself to make choices, to do things; how much that person can control

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himself when it comes to taking a decision, doing things) illustrates an overlap of emotional and cognitive functions. Her implemented strategies accounted for the ways in which emotion and cognition overlap and addressed both organizational and emotional supports.

While Lourdes' definition of emotional self-regulation indicates that the locus of control is situated within the individual child, her practices highlight the important role she, as a teacher, had as "emotion mentor," implementing strategies that allowed children to think about their own emotions, as well as that of others. This was observed, for example, during the discussions she had with her children regarding the importance of listening.

Lourdes' strategies reflect independent and interdependent models of agency, which prioritize individual and collective outcomes, respectively, in that she sees emotional self-regulation as critical to children's sense of self, autonomy and success, but also as a means of successfully relating to others. As Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) recommend, it is important to account for the ways in which history and culture attribute to different behavioral practices within groups of individuals. In Lourdes' case, it was evident that the socio-cultural contexts of the families she worked with as well as her personal beliefs and values had a greater impact on her classroom practices than the institutional policies she was expected to follow. As I delved deeper into the data, it became increasingly clear that Lourdes privileged her personal beliefs over institutional policies and procedures, remaining committed to her values, while still being responsive to the families and children she worked with.

CHAPTER FIVE

PAM

The first time I met Pam I mistakenly thought she was the Child Development Center (CDC)'s Assistant Director as well as a classroom teacher. During my initial visit to the CDC she could be seen in the Director's office answering the telephone and doing what appeared to be office work.

The day of my first scheduled observations I received a call from her early in the morning to inform me that the Center Director had resigned. During the call, she also explained that she wanted to verify that I had obtained permission to conduct my study from someone at Our Care's Main Office. When I spoke to her later about mistakenly identifying her as the Assistant Director, she told me she had never been in the position of Assistant Director nor would she be interested. After 16 years of teaching, she was in fact questioning her future as a teacher.

When Pam agreed to participate in the study, she noted that she felt strongly about supporting education and was happy to assist. While several challenging situations arose for her during the 3-week period that we had planned for her classroom observations and follow-up interviews, including a medical leave of absence and her resignation, Pam fulfilled her commitment to the study. However, due to the challenges mentioned, I was not able to conduct the third and final observation of her classroom. In fact, the last meeting we held to discuss her second classroom observation took place in a library close

to her home more than a month after the observation had been conducted. Because of the time lapse, the video recording I had of her classroom and interactions with students proved extremely helpful. Rather than basing our discussion on our individual recollections of events that day, we were able to address what actually occurred as we viewed the video together.

From the beginning, Pam was very sensitive to how her comments might be perceived. She took great care and time in answering questions posed during our meetings, at one time indicating that her slower pace in responding was due to her "trying to formulate [the answers] in my head." She often checked to make sure I understood what she had said and re-stated her responses. During one of our conversations, she told me "I'm sorry I'm not giving you what you need." When I asked her to explain what she had meant, she said

> Uhm…I feel like when I speak with you, I speak in circles (laughs)…I can't formulate what I'm trying to say. It's in my head, and I know what I want to tell you, but as I'm saying it, is sounds so…bizarre and jumbled that I don't think you understand a word I'm saying.

After reassuring her comments didn't sound jumbled and bizarre to me, I asked her if her comments were clearer to her once she read the transcripts. She replied that they were, assuring me of the usefulness of the member checking process I had in place.

This teacher was also sensitive to the manner in which she believed her colleagues viewed her.

> It's been stated around the school that I'm a bit too… (long pause) supportive…too…'cushy' with the children because I do let… them talk so much.

I'm the one that will have them in my lap all the time or hanging on me or

constantly talking. And yes, it gets very tiring and I can understand it gets very

tiring for the other teachers to hear and everything like that, but that's my way. I

want to constantly talk to them… because I feel that if they are not heard at this

age, they are gonna clam up and they are not going to speak when something is

wrong at a later age.

Pam, who was in her mid-forties at the time of the study, stated she had "always

worked with children," having grown up babysitting the neighborhood kids. She began

working in day care (as she referred to it) when she was 16 and had done so most of her

life, except for taking a 12-year leave of absence to raise her three children. She had

returned to the profession after accepting a Head Start (HS) teaching position with Our

Care.

In speaking of professional development, Pam shared that she did not have a

development plan in place with HS. She had a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood

Education and, according to her, "only those [teachers] that are in school right now or

waiting to go to school are the ones that fill that out." Pam's reference to a professional

development plan as a form to be completed seemed to suggest that she did not place

great value in it. Further, rather than relying on the institution to support her professional

development needs, she indicated engaging in a more targeted, self-directed process.

When I asked her about additional training she had had on topics such as emotional self-

regulation and Early Childhood best practices, for example, she said:

I…read everything I can get my hands on regarding children. Uhm…Not so much

anymore…my life's kind of in flux right now so I haven't read any books in 2

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years, but I do like to read a lot of the newest practices, the newest thoughts of what's out there, just trying to keep up with all of that. I'm always on the Internet. If one of my children are (sic) having problems here or at home I will look up ways to help them handle those emotional times.

Her role as a mother had been critical in preparing Pam for working with young children. She noted that the practices she used in the classroom were informed by her experiences at home and vice-versa. "Everything I do is child-based…raising my own three children…I implement the same things with them as I do in the classroom." In explaining the impact of her role as a mother on her understanding of parent-child dynamics, Pam said

…before having my own children I was judgmental about what the parents would do and say when their children were in my classroom and once I had my own children it's like, Oh! That's why that parent said that…or that's why that parent felt that or…uhm… that's why the child would cry when mommy came to pick him up and they were fine all day long, then my own children were doing that same type of thing so it gave me more insight into how the parents were feeling and how the children were feeling.

Her experience as a mother also shaped her teaching priorities. As a result of parenting a child with Asperger's Syndrome, who struggled to make friends, she stated that teaching social skills became her top priority. "Everything else will come, but they need to learn social skills. They need to learn social skills when they are littler (sic) otherwise they are gonna be left behind even in preschool." During a follow-up conversation, I asked Pam to explain what getting 'left behind' meant to her. Because I

was accustomed to hearing that term used in reference to the 2001 'No Child Left Behind' Act, which focused primarily on academic progress, I wanted to make sure I understood what she was referring to. This is how she explained it,

> Cliques do start, whether we want them to exist or not. Cliques start very, very young and…them learning to be social with everybody and not just a…small, intimate group of friends because that doesn't allow for if a child was to come in mid-year, they need…this, this group of children needs to have the skills to recognize how difficult it is for the student that is coming in mid-year and they need to have the social skills to engage that new child and say "Hey! Why don't you come and join us and play with us?" and make that child feel comfortable. I guess what I'm trying to get at is all children should feel like they can play with anyone that they want to and not just certain kids.

When asked about how the values and beliefs that she was raised with had impacted her work as an Early Childhood teacher, Pam said she was raised believing

> …that children, children are to be heard. I was raised in the era of 'children are to be seen and not heard' and my parents were just the opposite. My parents wanted the kids to be heard, but in a respectful way and I think that greatly impacted how I teach and how I raise my own children.

She then added,

> If a child is crying, I want to know exactly why they're crying. I don't want to just pat them on the back. "You're okay. Go play." I want to know what they're thinking, what they're feeling.

Pam saw herself as influential in terms of the adoption and implementation of what she believed to be best practices within the CDC, stating during our initial meeting that the other teachers were "coming more to my way of talking to children." Her perceived leadership role extended to her relationship with her Teaching Assistant (TA), in which he characterized herself as a mentor.

> In the beginning of the year she [the TA] would get frustrated with the child that would throw the temper tantrums every 2 minutes. She would…simply walk away, didn't even want to deal with that child, wanted nothing to do with that child, would even tell me "he's yours." About half-way through the year, uhm, I pretended like I wasn't paying attention to her at all, and noticed that she was over dealing with that child when he was throwing one of his temper tantrums and I don't even remember what it was that she said, but it was something exactly like I would have said it…uhm… and from then on, it was like she would still have her rough days when she didn't want to deal with that child, but she was definitely more receptive to learning how to deal with the more difficult kids as opposed to…(pause) just extricating herself and saying "You deal with it."

One of the methods Pam stated using to mentor the TA was 'testing' her by giving the TA opportunities to manage challenging situations in the classroom. After being slapped by one of her students, for example, Pam asked her TA to speak to the child that had slapped her. When we discussed this particular incident later, she told me that she was providing her TA with the opportunity to "learn how to speak to them…because she [the TA] had trouble at the beginning of the year, so it was, it was more of a test."

Setting and Context

　　Pam taught a group of 14 three and four-year old children. Her student population consisted of: 3 Middle Eastern, 4 Hispanic, 2 African American, 3 multiracial, and 2 Caucasian children.

　　Figure 4. Pam's Classroom

　　Situated on the east corner of the building, Pam's classroom was located down a short hallway, across from a small multi-purpose room that served as a make-shift Nurse's Station and meeting and eating area for teachers and staff. The majority of the classroom's eight learning centers were located along four walls that gave the room a square, tight, configuration. Many of the learning centers overlapped, often sharing both space and resources.

A half door connecting the hall and classroom served as the main entrance to the room. As you entered the classroom, a poster with AB and ABA patterns of teddy bears, toy boats, and cars taped to the door of a storage closet as well as the Sensory Center were located to the right. The center consisted of a 2-way red and blue plastic sensory play table, which remained covered with a faded pink towel when not in use, and a narrow 12 inch wooden shelf with small colorful plastic containers to be used for sensory play. During center time the table was pulled away from the wall to accommodate two to three children standing around it. Lesson plans, parent articles, notices, an allergy list (properly concealed), as well as First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) procedures were located to its left, above a small wooden desk that held an older desktop computer that appeared to be non-functioning at the time of the study.

Across from the Sensory Center was the back of a shelving unit that served as storage for supplies and materials such as Playdough, paper, scissors, and clay tools for the Art Center located on its other side. On top of the shelving unit were pink and brown canvas puppets as well as while cotton community worker hand puppets. The Art Center also included two rectangular wooden tables with eight chairs each and an adjustable easel with two painting surfaces that seemed to be limited to use on one side due to its location and close proximity to the classroom's back wall. To the right of the easel was a door to another closet. On it were blue, yellow, and pink cut-out letters that spelled the words "Homework Wall." To the left was a red plastic cash register above a cabinet with a sign that read "Science Center."

A large metallic storage cabinet, partially covered with colorful magnetic letters and small magnetic toys as well as a rectangular teacher-made 'Our Class' board, was

located to the left of the classroom's main entrance. The board, which contained green circles and purple squares with children's handwritten names and smiley faces, was meant to assist with classroom management. Children were expected to take their name tags to the learning center they wanted to play in and place them on that center's sign. While the name tags had Velcro attached to the back, some of the Velcro on the learning center signs appeared to have peeled off and some of the signs themselves were obscured by items in the learning centers. During one of my observations I noticed that a few children simply took their name shapes and placed them on the table where they were sitting or held them during play time.

The classroom had a water cooler to the left of the main door, but because cups were not available in the area, children had to rely on an adult to assist them when getting a drink. Children's personal items as well as a small radio/CD player and CDs along with miscellaneous toys were located inside and on top of three 5-section locker units to the right of the cooler. A 4-foot stand-up mirror placed next to the last locker served as a transition into the Housekeeping Center. This center also contained a variety of stuffed animals, a house cleaning set, a kitchen set, a high chair, as well as a variety of items, including plastic food and dishes. A wooden round table and chair located in the corner allowed children to sit while playing with the large doll house that sat on the table. A large blue plastic container placed on top of one of the center's shelving units next to the dollhouse table remained closed during the classroom observations.

Diagonally across from the classroom's main entrance was the Circle Time area. Sparsely decorated, it contained three colored posters with pictures of children: a white boy cupping his ears, a white girl sitting with her arms crossed, and a black boy holding

his index finger to his lips. The Circle Time wall also contained the words "Spring" as well as "All About Me" along with a few pictures and student-made collages, the latter which covered most of the wall space in the classroom. This area, which doubled as the Manipulatives and Block Center as well as the classroom's Library/Reading Center, contained a shelving unit with a variety of plastic interconnecting toys and blocks as well as some large books and a puzzle rack with eight wooden puzzles on the floor. The area also served to store the blue plastic cots used during nap time, which were stacked against the far wall next to a long vertical window and a door that led to the parking lot. An exciting viewing spot for children, three of them could be seen during one of the observations rushing to the glass window upon hearing a loud, jarring sound. Looking through it they yelled, "Garbage truck! Garbage truck!"

The door adjacent to the window had been a source of frustration for Pam. After the departure of the CDC's first Director, she indicated being disappointed with changes regarding her use of that door. Mainly, she was no longer allowed to use it to gain access to her car, which she parked right outside the door. When we spoke about how that policy had been communicated, she said

> …Uhm…a…I don't want to call it a contract…a letter was written up with all of the new rules and passed around the school for each one of us to sign it after we had read it.

She then went on to say,

> It was never communicated, it was never explained, uhm, as to why you can't do this when before it was okay. It was just a "here, read, sign, ok, next person."

Pam's frustration seemed surprising given that she appeared to be aware of safety issues around the use of that door. In fact, she specifically told an upset child who threatened to go out of that door not to do so during one of the classroom observations. "No, sir," she said. "You know better than to open that door. Ok? That's dangerous out there. Did you see the garbage truck out there?"

The departure of the CDC's first Director had been very upsetting for Pam both professionally and personally. When speaking about the impact of her departure she said,

The teachers, myself included, were very frustrated those days and I'd say barely hanging on a thread where uhm,…it was hard to…put our whole heart and soul into the children…and me personally, because I can't tell you how anyone else feels, me personally, that kills me because I'm there for the children number one. Uhm…so whenever I feel like I can't put my heart and soul into the children, to me, that's craziness.

At a more personal level, Pam felt that

…she [the Director] was the glue to that whole center. She understood that we were not only teachers, but we were also people with real lives and real problems, uhm (pause) and she would understand that and work with us if like if I needed to come in late or leave a little early because my mom was ill or couldn't take my child to school for some reason.

She went on to say that

Once that Director left, uhm… it was "you are in your classroom 7:15-3:15. You are not to leave your classroom even to use the restroom unless it is your 10 minute break time. You are to eat with the children" even though their food was

Godly awful - and that's a whole other story. And on your 10 minute break you

were expected to make any phone calls you needed to make, use the restroom,

heat up, and eat your food…and do anything you needed to do in that 10-minute

span. And everybody was just so…frustrated at that point that nobody cared any

more.

Emotional Self-Regulation as a Tool for Promoting Socialization

In Pam's opinion, emotional self-regulation was made up of two components, one

cognitive and the other emotional. Specifically she defined it as "for children to learn

what their emotions are and how to take care of their own emotions." Emotional self-

regulation was important in that it supported children's socialization or, as she put it "the

social aspect of the classroom." As she explained it,

If a child is throwing a temper tantrum all the time then the other children don't

want him to play with them so he is now a social outcast because he doesn't know

how to regulate his own emotions.

This teacher's emphasis upon the importance of children successfully integrating

into their peer groups could suggest an interdependent model of agency which prioritizes

collective outcomes over individual ones. However, when interpreted within the context

of her overall patterns of interaction, it is more likely aimed at minimizing conflict and

aligned with an independent model, focusing on the complex relationship between

cognitive processes and social interactions (Trommsdorff, 2009).

Pam believed children had an innate ability to behave and to control their

frustration, but she did not think they were aware of it. It was the teachers' job to "draw it

out of them," to nurture 'inbred, easy-going temperaments' and to teach children that were 'naturally born difficult' that "that is not the way to be." However, if

> …they are a naturally born difficult child in a difficult household, that's just what they know and that's what they're going to grow up living and learning and it's going to get to the point where it's almost impossible…to break that from them.

Pam indicated the ages of 3-4 provided a great window of opportunity for addressing children's temperament. Stressing the importance of social relationships, she suggested that during that period adults can encourage 'easy-going, get-along with everybody type temperament' or make 'I'm going to throw a temper tantrum every time you turn around type temperament' understand that "that's not how they're going to be able to get along." Her comments seemed to suggest that children with the latter type of temperament needed to learn about the negative repercussions of their actions rather than learn how to identify and deal with the emotions that may be leading to their tantrums, as per her stated definition of emotional self-regulation.

For Pam, emotionally self-regulated children, understand their emotions as indicated by their ability to assign labels to their feelings.

> [Children] can express what they are feeling, tell you with their words. "I'm feeling frustrated," "I'm feeling tired," "I'm feeling overwhelmed." Uhm…[they communicate this] non-verbally [by] not throwing temper tantrums because they are feeling certain ways, but taking care of their well-being. If they are frustrated and overwhelmed, going and sitting in the Library and looking at a book to calm themselves down without anybody having to tell them "Why don't you go take

some time to yourself?" but them knowing that's what they need and going ahead

and doing it.

As Pam understood it,

The kids that can say "Hey! I'm frustrated. I'm tired" and know how to help

themselves with that are able to put themselves into somebody else's play a little

bit easier. And when that child is having a rough time, he's got a support group

that will come and try to help them to feel better whereas the child who is

throwing the temper tantrum, nobody wants to be around him.

Strategies: Personal Mitigates Professional

My first scheduled observation of Pam's classroom provided a glimpse of an

environment that I would come to better understand during the ensuing visits and

interviews. Surprised by my arrival that day (even thought it had been previously

scheduled), Pam's students gathered around and showed great interest in me and in the

video camera. As a way of encouraging the children to return to their activities, Pam told

them to treat me as being invisible. Sensing that I may be disrupting her schedule, I told

her that I did not want to interfere with her normal routine. She laughed, and replied,

"There's no routine. We have no routine at this time."

During our initial interview, Pam indicated that she implemented the following

strategies to support children's emotional self-regulation in her classroom:

- Providing consistent, responsive caregiving;

- Providing choices for children;

- Using language to help children identify and label feelings; and

- Providing praise and encouragement.

Given this teacher's understanding of the meaning of children being 'left behind,' I felt it was important to ask her to define some of the strategies she indicated implementing. While I considered them to be a part of the greater educational lexicon that was common to those in the field of early childhood education, I wanted to make sure that my interpretation of what I observed in her classroom was based on a common understanding. When I asked Pam to explain 'providing consistent, responsive caregiving,' for example, she said

> It means to…be able to take the time when…a child is in need of it…to work through an issue that they are dealing with, whether it be a bigger issue, a smaller issue….without having to push them to the side because you are trying to deal with the 13 other children in the class.

Embedded in Pam's definition was the suggestion that her ability to use this particular strategy was influenced by certain external factors such as class size.

Initial Strategies

During the second classroom observation, I observed Troy, one of her students, remove plastic food items from the Housekeeping area and throw them on the floor, saying "I don't need those in the sink!" Pam, who had been across the room setting up the sensory table for water play, approached him. After a few attempts to speak to Troy regarding the incident, she followed him as he left the center. Troy stopped in front of the door that led to the parking lot. A short conversation ensued regarding why he was upset. When Pam suggested they find a new center for him to play, he threatened to go out of

the door to the parking lot. After reminding him of safety issues regarding exiting through that door she asked him to get down from the stack of cots that he had climbed on. Picking him up, she thanked him and moved to the center of the Circle Time area, sitting down on a chair with him on her lap. "What would you like to do? Do we wanna sit for a minute together or are you ready to go back and do something else?" she asked. After wiggling out of her lap he threatened to dump all of the toys in the nearby shelving unit on the floor. Pam then attempted to convince him to comply by appealing to his feelings for her by telling him that dumping the toys would make her sad. When he proceeded to slam two small plastic bins he'd removed from the shelving unit on the floor, she asked him if he wanted to make her sad. "Yeah," he replied. The teacher then changed her strategy saying "I'm gonna make you sad because once you take all the toys out who's gonna have to clean them up?" "No, I don't," he said. "I think you will," she replied. As Troy began sliding the bins around on the floor, she changed her approach and tone again with him, now asking if he wanted to take the toys out of the bin and play with them. Troy assembled a toy bat and they began to play. The teacher then assembled her own structure and told him he could go on her 'Busch Garden ride' if he was nice. While she asked him not to jump over the structure, he did so twice before jumping on her back. When he refused to get off of her, the TA approached them and told him to get off the teacher, which he did. Shortly after the incident Pam left the classroom, returning to find Troy doing something that she was not pleased with (which I unfortunately did not observe). Upon being redirected to another activity, he slapped Pam's face. "On, no you didn't," she said before telling the TA what happened and asking her to speak to him.

When viewing the section of the video where Pam sat on a chair in the center of the Circle Time area holding Troy, she indicated she was trying to provide responsive caregiving. "See, I'm trying to give him some…uhm… of the loving comfort that…even though he's struggling, I know that's what he's needing." During the incident, she also provided the child with choices (i.e., "Do you wanna sit for a minute or do something else?), used language to help him label his feelings by asking him how why he was upset, and provided praise and encouragement, thanking him for getting off the cots. However, her choice of strategies appeared to be based on emotional responses to the child's actions and comments as his behavior evolved from attention-seeking to physical aggression. During their interaction, Pam could be seen and heard trying different strategies to persuade Troy to behave, moving back and forth between positive strategies (e.g., asking him to talk about what had upset him) to reactive ones (e.g., threatening to make him sad by having him clean up the toys).

Some of the strategies observed during Pam's interaction with Troy were ones that Our Care's Group Management Guide discouraged teachers from using. According to the Guide, negative 'you messages' (e.g., "you are gonna make me sad or angry") should not be used as such messages can be interpreted as blaming and can hinder problem solving. The Guide also encouraged teachers to "keep some social distance" from their students, to avoid what they call the "Buddy" syndrome. However, throughout most of the event described above, the boy seemed to respond and interact with the teacher as he would have with one of his peers, with one of his buddies.

Additional Strategies

When viewing the classroom videos, I noted that Pam often mentioned additional strategies to explain her interactions with her students during what appeared to be challenging situations. When I asked her about her process for choosing strategies to implement, she said,

> If we are having a day where… Ms. L [her TA] and I are not having a good day
> for some reason such as the other day when A [the Director] left, she and I were
> not in a… position to… consistently provide these [strategies] so we didn't even
> put the kids into a position where things may come up like..uhm…expecting them
> to sit at Circle Time where she and I weren't even up for sitting at Circle Time.
> Uhm…and we knew that if we tried getting them to sit in Circle Time and say
> Blake [one of her students] decided to get up and start running around, we would
> not be able to handle that properly. So we chose to pass on Circle Time that day
> and go straight into Center Time. There are days that we skip Center Time
> because the kids are… tired or hungry. Mondays are big days. Mondays and
> Fridays are big days that we will skip Center Time because we can tell that it is
> going to cause more problems than anything so we will choose those times to go
> do something at the tables as a group.

While Pam indicated that changing the routine and the expectations for students was meant to decrease the likelihood of challenging behavior, this strategy is not generally recognized in the field. As Levin and Nolan (2010) state, children in general and especially those that exhibit challenging behavior are especially sensitive to such changes. In fact, during my classroom observation, on a day in which changes to the

routine had been implemented, Blake spent a significant portion of the time being visibly upset. While the other children played 'Mother, May I?' he cried consistently, asking Pam to go home. When we spoke about it later, Pam told me that Blake

> …had a very difficult life so far. He's three, he'll be four next month uhm (pause). He acts much younger than what he is and we [Pam and her TA] are thinking that there might actually be some other issues from when he was born and stuff like that as to why he cannot focus and pay attention and stuff. But when he gets frustrated, his 'go to' method is "I want to go home."

She also mentioned Blake just wanted to run around and that he didn't play cooperatively yet. Rather than implementing one of the strategies she originally listed to help him understand and manage his emotions, Pam ignored him until he complied with her requests. As she explained it,

> Making him wait was to let him know that this behavior, the whining, the crying isn't going to get him to go quicker [to the playground] just because he was acting like that. He needed to do as the other children were doing – sit and wait to be called to go in and play. And he kept getting frustrated because he would come sit down and I wouldn't call on him right away. I was doing that on purpose.

Ultimately, Blake did sit down and Pam allowed him to go to the playground.

Pam's comments indicate that she viewed her actions as a supportive strategy designed to help a student learn appropriate ways to make requests. However, its implementation appeared more punitive than supportive, more reactive than proactive, in that it appeared to focus on consequences for the child. As scholars generally agree, while such strategies may change the child's immediate behavior, they have limited long-term

impact on their emotional responses (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2007; Lamm, Grouix, Hansen, Patton, & Slaton, 2006).

During a subsequent conversation, Pam shared that she believed that the time of day could also impact children's physical and emotional state and indicated she also considered time of day when making decisions regarding strategies. As she explained it,

…because some of my children start getting more tired as the morning goes on and some of them are not nappers so uhm… if one of my sleepers is having trouble as it's approaching nap time yeah, I take into consideration. 'You know what, they're probably getting tired.' Uhm…I have a couple of children that don't eat breakfast and getting to lunch time, they start getting more irritable and more sensitive. Uhm…a couple of them will start getting more antsy after naptime because they are non-nappers and now they're starting to get sleepy as everybody else is trying to get up.

This teacher also considered children's skill base (i.e., what they were able to do) when establishing expectations and implementing strategies for individual children. When reflecting on her stated process for individualizing strategies and on her interaction with Blake it was unclear as to which facts from the child's background or other considerations she took into account when choosing to implement 'planned ignoring.' While she indicated using redirection to support children's emotional self-regulation, she did not feel that would have been a good strategy to implement with Blake. When I asked her what redirection would look like she stated that its implementation would depend on the child.

Some of them I would be able to just verbally speak to and let them know, "I know you wanna go home right now and it is outside time to play. Why don't we go do something together to pass the time?"

By the end of my observations, the gap between Pam's stated strategies and her actual practices became more evident. Her attempts to invoke additional strategies as a means of explaining her behavior and interactions with her students suggested that she might be struggling to manage herself and the children. This conclusion was supported by reviews of my reflexive notes, transcripts, and videos. Thus, it became plausible to conclude that Pam's level of stress was likely impacting her classroom practices. In addition to what she had shared regarding the climate at the CDC, she had also recently experienced a series of personal challenges including a contentious end to her marriage, issues with her mother's health as well as health issues of her own. Consistent with Jennings and Greenberg (2009)' findings, this teacher's stressful emotional situations appeared to compromise her ability to effectively manage the classroom and support student learning. The combination of emotional stress and difficulties with classroom management has been identified as key characteristics of teachers who may be suffering professional burnout (Chang, 2009).

Philosophies & Practices: Intersection of Personal and Professional

In speaking to Pam, it became evident that she was aware of best practices in the field and yet our conversations were punctuated by points of conflict reflective perhaps of the challenges she faced as her personal and professional life intersected. In addition to

the personal stressors mentioned in the previous section, Pam also talked about particular aspects of what she referred to as her internal struggle.

Over time, this teacher had grown increasingly frustrated by her 14-year old son's excessive questioning. However, according to the CDC's philosophy, children should be encouraged to question things. The conflict between these two perspectives could be heard in comments she made regarding her experiences and practices at home and in the classroom. Specifically, Pam's role as a mother led her to believe a child's ability to ask questions should have some limitations in order to avoid having that child become disrespectful. She noted that while she had always encouraged her own children to ask questions, she recently found herself saying "because I said so" in response to her son's questions. She felt that she should have begun responding to him in this more authoritarian way when he was younger so he would be better prepared to hear 'no' more readily now that he was a teenager. "Now he wants to debate everything that I say, every decision that I give him" she said. In terms of her classroom practices, she said

> A part of me wants me to encourage them to ask questions to get clarification, but then another part of me wants to not allow it because I don't want to set them up for a future of not being able to accept answers.

Pam was also frustrated having to implement HS policies that, according to her perception, diminished the individuality of the children. The philosophy of the CCD was "either they all get it, or no one gets it." When referring to the use of reinforcements such as stickers, for example, she was not allowed to reward children individually, but rather had to ensure everyone in the group earned them. However, as she stated, she did not

always follow this policy because, as she put it, she had to "do what I believe is right in my classroom."

She added that

> …if somebody wants to come and challenge me, then come and speak to me about it and I will give you my reasons for why I believed that child deserved a sticker and why I did not give one to the rest of the class…because that child was the one that was…going above and beyond…beyond their… behavior skills…and deserved to have that extra recognition.

Pam's relationship with her TA also appeared to impact her classroom practices. In speaking further about the change to classroom routine on Fridays, Pam mentioned that she did not do allow the children to play at the centers on that day because her TA wanted to avoid having to clean the classroom and so, to maintain a harmonious relationship, Pam chose to alter the routine instead.

> She was in charge of cleaning the classroom and spraying it down and she didn't want to do it on Friday afternoons, so she did it on Thursdays and we wouldn't have Center Time on Fridays…That was my little…gift to her that she didn't have to stay on Fridays to clean the classroom.

Pam's comments and observed classroom practices were reflective of professional burn out, a common phenomenon among teachers. According to Chang (2009), burn out involves emotional depletion, skepticism or jaded negativity, and ineffective practices. In addition to the challenges around classroom management, Pam communicated a certain level of skepticism regarding interactions with her classroom parents. For example, when

I asked her if she relied on parent communication to better understand her students, she said,

> You can't always rely on that because a lot of the information that they'll give you is not reliable. It's what they think you want…they…what they think you want to hear or that they're hiding stuff and they just don't want to share.

Summary

For Pam, emotional self-regulation was made up of two components, one cognitive and the other emotional. Specifically, she defined it as "for children to learn what their emotions are and how to take care of their own emotions." Emotional self-regulation was important to this teacher in that it supported children's socialization or, as she put it "the social aspect of the classroom." Further, Pam's stated definition is aligned with an independent model of agency which prioritizes individual outcomes and focuses on the complex relationship between cognitive processes and social interactions.

Pam indicated that the role of adults, and teachers in particular, was to nurture easy-going temperaments and to teach children that were 'naturally born difficult' that that "is not the way to be." I had the opportunity to observe this, for example, when she did not respond to a child in distress, whom she had previously referred to as her 'fit thrower.' While she later indicated intentionally ignoring the boy as a way to teach him certain skills centered on waiting, her interaction with him seemed more punitive than supportive of the development of specific skills. As I noted during the course of the study, this teacher implemented practices to help manage situations in a reactive manner or after they had occurred.

In Pam's case, it was evident that her role as a mother had greatly impacted her definition and stated strategies of emotional self-regulation as well as her classroom environment. It had also led to some cognitive dissonance regarding her classroom practice. Finally, multiple reviews of the data seem to suggest that the gap between this teacher's stated and implemented strategies was due primarily to both personal and professional stressors. Further, her behaviors were suggestive of someone who was experiencing professional burnt out as identified within the literature (Chang, 2009).

CHAPTER SIX

TRISHA

I met Trisha one semester prior to her participation in the current study. I had spent more than six months searching for a third and final study participant and I was growing increasingly concerned about finding a Head Start teacher who met all of the participant criteria and who would also be willing to participate. After calling, or personally visiting, every Our Care Child Development Center (CDC) within a 40-mile radius covering two neighboring counties in the Spring and Summer of 2014, I began reaching out to the centers again in the Fall. After speaking to the Director at Trisha's center, I learned that the CDC now had an eligible teacher except she had just begun working at the Center. A few days after our initial phone conversation, I met with the Director to discuss the specifics of the study. Trisha and I met later that same afternoon. While we agreed to wait until the following semester to begin data collection, she indicated that her current job was only temporary. She was looking for a position as a Center Director and would be leaving the Center as soon as she was able to secure one. We exchanged e-mail addresses and I told her that I would be in touch the following semester. When I contacted her during the first week of classes the following Spring, she let me know that she was still available. Within a week, Trisha and I met at the CDC for the initial interview.

Trisha was a no-nonsense, confident teacher in her early thirties. Born and raised in southwest Florida, she had lived in the Sunshine State all her life. Coming from a family of teachers ranging from "Head Start, to Speech, to Elementary, to Middle School Band, to High School English," Trisha grew up, as she put it, in her mother's kindergarten classroom. Her family, which also included her fiancé, had been a great support system for her. While her mom provided emotional support, and advice regarding classroom management, lesson planning, and teaching material, other members generously shared resources to enrich her work in the classroom.

> They'll e-mail me and say "Would you be interested in a bunch of northern pine cones?" and it's like "Yeah!" (laughs)…It's like, "would you be interested in a bunch of milk cartons?" "Yeah!" (laughs). Everybody knows I like random trash (laughs).

In addition to teachers within her family, Trisha was also surrounded by teachers at her Church, where she was raised as an acolyte. Her parents' friends at Church were teachers and, following in their footsteps, their children all became teachers as well – "every single one of them."

Trisha attended a University located on the west coast of Florida, graduating in 2006 with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. She had a background in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and was certified in pre-k through 6th grade. As part of her College's course requirements, Trisha participated in four practicum experiences: one in a preschool setting, two in Kindergarten classrooms, and one in a 1st Grade classroom.

During her final internship, which was in a kindergarten setting, Trisha was required to be in the classroom from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm every day. Over time, the Lead Teacher was to slowly relinquish the tasks of planning and teaching to her. Later, due to pregnancy-related complications, the classroom teacher was not able to finish the school year so Trisha took over the class or, as she put it, "got thrown into it." Since Trisha was not yet certified to teach at the time, and could not be the official teacher of record, the school hired substitute teachers to help her whenever possible. However, since Trisha had more experience than the substitutes, they had very little to do but watch her teach…and "get paid to do it," Trisha said with a laugh. As she pointed out, some of the substitutes did not even have a background in education, but in some cases in business. Looking back on that experience, she said:

> I remember the last two weeks I was there, the principal would just stop in and make sure everything was going straight, but I never told my Professor this was going on (laughs) because I wasn't supposed to be doing that, but there was nothing I could do. I just think when I got that freedom to do it, you know, I knew how she [the classroom teacher] taught and I knew what her expectations were for the room and by that time the kids were so used to me…I knew the whole schedule.

Trisha indicated that her final practicum experience helped her as a teacher; however, she was not sure if other student teachers would fare as well under the same circumstances. She was very aware that her experiences growing up had allowed for unique learning opportunities. As she put it,

I grew up in her classroom so I mean I knew…I had all of the materials, I knew

exactly what I needed. I watched her [mom] teach all the time. So I think that I

was more prepared actually than other people I graduated with because they

didn't have those tools that I did. I mean, I knew going into teaching "It's not

going to be like wonderful, and sweet, and precious all the time," you know?

There are situations that happen, so…

Trisha's comments indicate that she was able to bridge the gap between her

college coursework and the actualities of the classroom environment largely due to her

mother's experience, guidance, and support.

I think when you go to the college setting they don't prepare you for what it

actually is to be a teacher. I think they give you the curriculum tools, but they

don't prepare you for the first day or for things that actually happen in a room.

When discussing this further, she explained that

I wasn't there on the first day of school, but I think that interns should get that

experience. They should see what it's actually like. And that it's chaos. But it

depends on how the teacher is to organize and, you know, control that chaos. I

think that they need to know that, you know, it's not just about making a lesson

plan. It's about being able to change at the last minute, like the real experiences

that teachers actually have.

Upon graduating from college, Trisha worked for the local public school system.

Trisha's first year of teaching had been a very challenging one. A group of veteran

teachers at her school had been allowed to hand-pick all of their students leaving the most

challenging ones to her care. During that year, Trisha cried on the phone with her mom

every night, exasperated at not knowing how to handle her students. "I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do." Her mom's advice was to not to let the children upset her. "Trisha, they're five, you know. They're five years old. Don't let them get to you. If they know they're getting to you, they're going to continue it."

At the end of that first year, Trisha swore to herself that she would not go back into the classroom unprepared to manage her students. That summer she took Classroom Management and Classroom Arrangement classes to make sure "not only is the behavior functioning, but the whole environment is functioning." In addition to the classes, Trisha's conversations with her mother led her to a particular understanding of her role within the environment, which she summarized as, "If you don't have the control over yourself, you are not going to have the kids under control."

After working for six years as a teacher, Trisha left the public school system for a position as an Assistant Director at a non-profit Child Development Center (CDC) affiliated with a local art museum. Two years after doing so, she lost her job due to funding issues. Since it was too late at that point to secure a teaching position with the public school system, she accepted a teaching position with Head Start (HS) while she continued to search for another Administrative role.

As an employee of HS and Our Care, Trisha was required to follow policies and procedures for both agencies, whereas her colleagues were only required to abide by Our Care policies and procedures. While she had to contend with more rules than the other teachers because of the federal requirements mandated by HS, she did not seem to mind except for some additional stress it provided during certain times of the year. As she saw

it, being the only HS teacher at the center assigned her greater importance. 'I'm the big guy here, so I have a lot of rules,' she said jokingly.

Setting and Context

Trisha had 15 three and four-year old students enrolled in her classroom: 2 Asian (Indian), 3 Hispanic, 2 African American, and 8 Caucasian children. However, during the duration of the study (i.e., three weeks) only 13 children were in attendance.

Figure 5. Trisha's Classroom

Trisha's classroom was a large, bright space located on the far west corner of the CDC. While 2" white vinyl venetian blinds on the three windows located across from the classroom entrance door were kept closed the majority of the time, normal wear and tear had left enough space between the slats to allow natural light in during the day.

Once you entered the room through the classroom's blue door, to the right was a 20-cubby storage unit with yellow, green, blue, and orange plastic baskets intended to store children's personal items. The cubby units not occupied by baskets were used instead as part of the children's dramatic play, storing items ranging from plastic food to hair brushes and small baby dolls. On the wall located across from the cubby storage unit were copies of meal calendars, notes regarding the location of allergy lists, First Aid procedures, and the classroom's Daily Routine and lesson plans. Most of the posted notices were part of a Parent Information area that overlapped the door to a teacher storage closet, which also served to store children's coats and jackets on colder days.

Past the closet was a bathroom with two child-sized toilets separated by a four-foot high gray partition. The bathroom had a half-door that allowed adults to look in and monitor children's activities even when closed. To the right of the bathroom was a light switch and a purple printed flyer with pictures and a list of steps to be followed when washing hands. A 3 x 5 foot vertical acrylic wall mirror hung above a child-sized single basin sink, between the purple flyer and a paper towel dispenser. This sink, one of two used for tooth brushing after breakfast, was one of the children's favorite meeting spots in the morning.

Children's art work framed with different colored construction paper shared the white wall space throughout the classroom with store-bought posters of various shapes and sizes. Posters taped to the walls contained pictures of the sign language alphabet, shapes, colors, and I-Care rules, a conflict resolution program focused on, among other things, understanding and managing feelings (http://www.schoolcounselingbyheart.com/2012/10/06/i-care-the-foundation-for-conflict-

resolution). The posted rules were as follows: We listen to each other; Hands are for helping, not hurting; We use I-Care language; We care about other's feelings, and We are responsible for what we say and do.

Trisha's classroom was divided into 9 different learning centers, Art, Computer, Manipulatives, Table Toys, Writing, Blocks, Drama, Reading (which consisted of a book shelf, a small reading chair and a basket with puppets located in the Circle Time area), and Music (consisting of a small mobile lockable cart with instruments, an old record player, a CD player and CDs). The Music Center, which was to the left of the Circle Time area, also contained an adult-sized plastic blue chair and a desktop computer used by Trisha in conjunction with an interactive Smart Board.

Trisha's Teaching Assistant helped her manage the classroom and support children's emotional self-regulation. "She is very calm with them. Very calm. And she supports me, too." However, counting on her assistant's support was not always possible. Since the time she had begun working at the center 6 months prior to the study, Trisha had had three different assistants, two during her first semester and one who had just started the day of our first classroom observation. Trisha explained that the children were not used to having an assistant in the classroom because her assistant was usually asked to help in other classrooms as well or to "fill in" around the school. While Trisha realized this was not ideal, she explained rather matter-of-factly that it needed to be done.

> She is not supposed to be a sub [substitute]. She is not supposed to go around to
> the other rooms. She is supposed to be my assistant, but when we have a shortage,
> you know, she is one of the first to get pulled. But I mean I taught in public
> schools without an assistant ever so I am just used to it.

Trisha's prior experience working in a public school classroom and directing a CDC likely accounted for her confidence in managing the classroom by herself. However, the lack of classroom support proved challenging when Trisha herself had to step out of the classroom. As one of two Staff Members in Charge, or SMICs, at the CDC, she was required take over some of the administrative responsibilities in the absence of the Center Director.

> It's very difficult sometimes because…if I get put in that spot and I don't have my aide, uhm, it's very difficult because I've gotta answer phones, I've gotta watch the kids, sometimes I have to step out to go to the office to get something and I've gotta find somebody, you know, to come and cover me so I can do it…I've got the phone in here. I've got the 'walkie.' Sometimes I have to call someone to come out really quick so I can go and do something in the office…But…Jack of all Trades (laughs).

Independent/Dependent Process of Emotional Self-Regulation

When asked to define emotional self-regulation, Trisha initially used herself as a reference.

> To me, it would be like if there was a specific situation that came up where it's like "Oh, my Gosh, you know, what am I gonna do?" Instead of like freaking out, like calm myself down and be able to solve the problem the right away. I mean, just like with this [Federal] regulation stuff that keeps coming in. They [administration] keep giving me new stuff to do every day and it's like "Oh my

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Gosh! Oh my Gosh! What am I gonna do?" And it's like "Calm down! Calm down! It's going to be okay and after Tuesday, it doesn't matter" (laughs).

Applied to herself, Trisha's definition of emotional self-regulation was a 2-step process. First you calm yourself and then you problem solve. When defining the term for young children, she defined it in a way that suggested a dependent relationship between the child and the adult. Specifically, she said:

Children calm themselves most of the time. Sometimes they call on me or other adults when other children are involved to help solve their issue, and in those instances, they rely on the adult to calm them down.

In her opinion, being emotionally self-regulated as a child meant:

Being able to sit properly on the floor when we're doing a story, being able to walk in a line, being able to wash their hands and not get the water all over the sink, knowing the rules of the classroom, being able to, when they are sleeping, when it's time to wake up, to bring me their mat.

The opposite of emotional self-regulation for this teacher was non-compliance and defiance. In speaking of non-compliance Trisha noted,

Temper tantrums. I've seen kids that they wanted something that someone else had and they went and took it out of their hand and when the child came to me and said "They took that out of my hand" and it's like "No, you need to give that back," they throw it across the room…so…or throw it at me. I've seen that happen before (laughs).

To illustrate defiance, Trisha shared the following scenarios:

1.   It is when I ask them to do something. "Go put the toys back." "It's time

to clean up," and they refuse to do it and it's like "Well, if you don't go and do it

then you can't play in that center any more, you know. We've got to clean up our

toys." I might go and pick up the toy and they'll push my hand out of the way.

2.   They are sitting on the rug doing something they are not supposed to be

doing and I ask them "Do you need to go back to the table?" and they'll be like

"No," but then they'll do it again and then they'll refuse to get up or if they do

something out in the playground that they're not supposed to do, they'll refuse to

come to me;

Trisha's understanding of the behaviors of emotionally self-regulated and

unregulated children was centered on compliance, indicating that following rules was a

critical part of emotional self-regulation. In oppositional situations a child was

unregulated when he/she did not comply with teacher demands.

In discussing the role of emotional self-regulation in an Early Childhood

classroom, Trisha again focused on her own emotional self-regulation.

It's being able to take those situations where they are being defiant and not like

blow up because sometimes you feel it. I get hot, but it's like 'No,' being able to

take them to the side and to talk to them. Like I have one that gets out of control

and the only way to get him…without me getting stressed and without him going

crazy, I have to bear hug him. So, I have to…for like for 5 minutes to get him to

stop…and it calms him down. But we sit there. I'm not screaming at him. He's

not running around the room screaming at me. So it just stops it, but it's totally

non-verbal. But once it's over, we talk. He's calm. I'm calm. Because otherwise, I

can just imagine blowing up (laughs).

When asked if she thought emotional self-regulation was important in an early

childhood classroom, she responded "Yes. If you don't have control over yourself, you

are not going to have the kids under control."

Control and Autonomy

During our initial interview, Trisha stated that she implemented the following

strategies to support emotional self-regulation in her classroom:

- reviewing rules;

- maintaining a tight schedule;

- providing physical support (e.g., touch and bear hugs);

- engaging children in problem solving;

- using time out; and

- supporting students' self-reflection.

However, as we viewed the video recordings of her classroom together and

discussed her practices in subsequent sessions, it became evident that some strategies had

been left out of her original list and Self-Reflection Form. Omitted were use of

movement, use of a reward system, and use of non-verbal communication other than

physical support.

Trisha's implemented strategies vacillated between exerting pressure on students

to "think, feel, or behave in specific ways" (Reeve, 2014, p.94) and promoting children's

autonomy. Her decision to exert control or promote autonomy was context-bound in that,

while she allowed children to independently regulate their emotions and behavior during Free Choice Time, she immediately interrupted and stopped potentially disruptive behaviors so that her students could focus and learn during planned lessons.

Trisha began supporting student's self-regulation early on in the school year by establishing a consistent routine.

It was constant structure from day one, doing the same routine every single day…You know, showing them how to use everything in the room, you know "this is how you use the center"…One day we spent on one center and then we would review it for the rest of the week.

Trisha also modeled appropriate play. "I showed them how to play. It's like you know, "Am I going to take the block and am I going to throw it across the room? It needs to stay on the rug."

In the beginning of the year, Trisha also taught her students the classroom rules. However, the rules as communicated to the students were not the I-Care rules posted on the classroom wall. For example, the posted rule that referenced hands stated, "Hands are for helping, not hurting."

When we were teaching the rules like keeping our hands and feet to each other (SIC) I acted out with the kids. I would put my hands all over them and I'd be like "do you like this?" And they'd be like "no, you're bothering me." And it was like "That's exactly why you need to keep your hands to yourself." I would give another child a toy and then I'd take it away and say it's mine. And I'd ask "did you like that?" and they would say "no, that's my toy." And I'd say "that's why you don't do that from somebody else. You don't do that to somebody and

somebody is not going to do that to you." So they learned rules. That's pretty much how they learned it at the beginning of the year.

As Reeve and colleagues (2014) state, the use of "direct, practiced strategies" (p.96) are often used as a means of ensuring control.

Trisha's focus on maintaining a tight schedule was apparent from the first classroom observation. In spite of the many potential challenges presented that day, which included having a new assistant in her classroom, the late arrival of some of her students due to a long weekend, and my presence along with a camera, Trisha maintained her routine. As she saw it, sticking to a tight schedule helped her students know "to go from one thing to the next. They know exactly what happens next." According to McIntosh, Herman, Sanford, McGraw, & Florence (2004), the use of clear, predictable routines is an example of one way that teachers can decrease problems during transitions and increase the likelihood of student compliance.

Reeve and colleagues (2014) indicate teachers opt for controlling motivating strategies because they believe these are effective, fast, and easy to implement. During one of my observations, for example, I noticed Trisha respond to a child that had used what she considered unkind words with a peer by saying, "Uh, oh. I hope I didn't hear that. We're all best friends, right?" Once the child (and many others around her) indicated agreement by nodding, Trisha moved on to attend to something else. When we discussed her response to the incident while viewing the video footage from that day, Trisha told me, "There's no reason to beat a dead horse. You can go on and on forever with that."

Speed and ease of implementation and avoiding disruption to the flow of instruction seemed to be significant considerations for Trisha when choosing strategies to

use with her students particularly during planned lessons. Physical support, another strategy initially identified by Trisha, addressed both considerations. As Trisha and I viewed a video segment of the third classroom visit, we noticed that, as she began reading a story to her children in the Circle Time area, one of the girls was, as she referred to it, 'fiddling.' This meant the girl was "playing with her shoes and messing with the books." As we observed, Trisha touched the girl's shoulder so that, as she explained, she wouldn't have to stop reading the book. While watching the video, Trisha explained that while the girl was not bothering anybody else, she was "doing things she knew she wasn't supposed to be doing. But instead of me having to actually verbally say something to her, you know, and call attention to her, I just put my hand on her shoulder."

The girl's 'fiddling' during Story Time had not resulted from having been seated for an extended period. As I observed, Trisha was careful to integrate movement into activities that required children to sit for lengthy periods. During the first classroom observation she engaged children in singing and dancing for approximately 10 minutes before sitting down to read stories with them. As she read the story, 'From Head to Toe' by Eric Carle, for example, she had the children engage physically by acting out different animal movements ("I'm a penguin and I turn my head. Can you do it? I can do it!"). The same type of physical engagement took place during her reading of 'Chicka Chicka Boom Boom."

The inclusion of movement activities was especially important during Circle Time.

Because we have to do 45 minutes of Literacy Time and Calendar Time so the

fact that they are able to get up and move and that they're not just sitting there the

whole time, they are able to do it. Like today we went over and did an activity

next door, 'Going on a Bear Hunt,' and they were over there for an hour for a

literacy activity and they were fine because they kept getting up and sitting down.

While this teacher implemented strategies such as movement throughout the

school year, other classroom strategies were implemented early on and then discontinued

as children were better able to follow rules. An example of this was Trisha's 'Super

Duper Helper', a reward strategy she used to encourage children to clean up.

I started that because we had some kids that were having a hard time cleaning up.

Not all of them. So I used stickers as an incentive. Every day one kid would get

the 'Super Duper Helper' sticker and I was doing that up until Christmas and then

in January, when we came back, I started them on it again, but I've been able to

kind of wean them off of the reward at the end so now they just do it [clean up].

According to Boggiano and colleagues (1987), the use of incentives is a common

strategy used by controlling teachers to "turn on" students' motivation.

Although I did not have an opportunity to observe Trisha's use of rewards or

'Time out,' Trisha provided a hypothetical case regarding what type of behavior might

lead to the use of 'Time out' with one of her students.

Teacher: He has a problem with sharing. He'll just take things. So outside, if he

gets in trouble for something like, let's say, he took the ball away and we say "no,

you can't do that. No you can't take that. You can't take someone's toy away, you

can't take it away." He won't give it back then it's like "well then, alright you need

to sit down and think about what you did" and he'll throw a tantrum and then he calms himself down and then he's back.

Interviewer: And how do you establish how long the child will need to sit out of the activity for?

Teacher**:** By their age. So I give them a minute per age.

Interviewer: And how long does it usually take him to calm himself down?

Teacher: About two minutes. And he is four, so it's about two minutes to calm down and two minutes to, you know, relax. But I always make them, if they have a timeout situation like, once they get out, I make them come over and tell me why it is that they did that. Why did you have to go and sit in timeout?" So it's not just like "hey, time out. Now you can go play again."

Interviewer: So you take them through that self-reflection? [Referring to one of the initial strategies Trisha indicated using to support student's emotional self-regulation]

Teacher: Yes, yeah. "I didn't just put you there for no reason. You have to tell me why you went over there and are we going to do that again and why not?"

Trisha often used non-verbal strategies other than physical support with her students. During one of the classroom observations, one of the children could be seen dancing rather erratically during the Macarena version of the 'Months of the Year' song, using what were, in contrast to his peers, exaggerated movements. While the majority of the group copied Trisha's arm and hand movements as they sang the names of the months, this particular child flapped his arms and hopped in place energetically. Later, when watching the video with Trisha, I asked her to explain what she was seeing.

That was actually a new song that we started when we came back from Christmas and he has had difficulty doing that. It's kind of calming down. It used to be really bad, but it's calming down a little bit more. But he knows if I give him the look or touch him, to stop it. So I don't have to sit there and like scream at him.

Non-verbal communication in this classroom included focused stares as well as finger snapping, both of which were used to guide children's behavior. For example, when viewing another video segment, Trisha and I observed three children playing across from her on the carpet while she was reading to them. When I asked her to describe what was happening, she said:

Teacher: I mean, well, they weren't crazy off-task, they were just kind of messing with each other and chatting and I just kind of… I didn't stop… but you can see my eyes (laughs).

Interviewer: You didn't stop, but they did (laughs).

Teacher: Yes, they did. They don't have to have verbal cues, they can just have the physical (SIC) cues (laughs).

I then asked Trisha at what point she felt that such cues sufficed.

Teacher: Uhm, probably maybe like November, you know. Instead of constantly having to say or stop what I'm doing…eventually you just give them a little stare, you know…

We returned to viewing the video.

Interviewer: Ok. Alright…so then you just looked at them and indicated…

Teacher:…that wasn't the right behavior to be doing at the time.

Interviewer: So you go on reading the book.

Teacher: Yeah. So that was…

Interviewer**:** So tell me…If you can just talk about what happened right there [referring to interaction between Trisha and a girl].

Teacher: I didn't say anything to her.

Interviewer: So what was she…what was that girl doing?

Teacher: They were all...she was messing with the little boy next to her and I gave her the look (laughs) and I snapped [my fingers] and pointed and she knew…

Interviewer**:** Ok.

Teacher: I was expecting her to move next to me.

Interviewer: Ok. And she knew immediately…

Teacher: She immediately rose without saying a word.

Interviewer: [She moved] next to you and let's see what happens after she moves and sits next to you.

Teacher: After that, once she'd moved, you see he [referring to one of the boys the girl had been playing with] moved away. He didn't want to have to move (laughs).

Interviewer: So he was proactive about it.

Teacher: Yes, "Let me just go away from that situation…"

Interviewer:"…so I won't need to be moved to the front of the class."

Teacher: Yes, because that means you know, you're not in trouble, but I had to remove you from that situation because you were not doing what you were supposed to be doing.

Interviewer: And what about the girl that you had sit up next to you? What is she doing?

Teacher: She is now sitting Criss-Cross Apple Sauce and totally focused on what we're supposed to be doing…

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher: …without having to draw attention to her.

Trisha's comment regarding the need to move the child seemed to suggest that she did not feel that the girl could properly manage her behavior so Trisha had to step in and assist. It also suggests the prioritization of interrupting the current behavior so they could go on with the scheduled learning activity (i.e., "what they were supposed to be doing").

The non-verbal strategies Trisha used to engage her students in learning, which Reeve and colleagues (2014) refer to as motivating style, during structured activities were controlling in that they were meant to guide children to feel and behave in very specific ways. While a controlling motivating style is believed to restrict self-regulation (Soenens, et al., 2012), I also observed this teacher exhibit behaviors and implement strategies that supported self-regulation during what she considered less structured times of the day, like Playground Time and Free Choice Time. In fact, when speaking of Free Choice Time, Trisha indicated she did not consider it structured enough. As she stated,

I would like it if they [the Institution] allowed me to have more structured centers instead of just letting them [the children] go to Blocks, you know, have an activity for them to do in Blocks. But we can't tell them what to do. It's supposed to be creative play.

During the second classroom observation, as Trisha worked on making bear headbands with a small group of children in the Art Center during Free Choice Time, a boy could be seen energetically sweeping the classroom floor with a small play broom. For a few seconds the boy also swung the broom above his head and hit the floor with it, before two other boys joined him and a game of tug-of-war ensued. Shortly after the game began, one of the two boys directed the others to hold both ends of the broom horizontally as he proceeded to do the limbo dance underneath it and to show the other two how to do the same. When reviewing the classroom video together, I noted that when the boys initially began their tug-o-war game, Trisha spoke to them from where she was sitting across the room but did not get up or move closer to them to address the situation. When we spoke about this, she said

> I think with stuff like that [type of play], I think some of its maturity.
> So…yeah…like this one is older and he's just doing that [pulling on the broom] to mess with him. And he does that a lot. He's the oldest in my class. He should actually be in VPK.

During the boys' interaction above, Trisha did not intervene directly in the situation, but rather let the children resolve the issue, thus promoting autonomy. The same approach was used in the playground. While at times Trisha reminded children of the playground rules (e.g., "We go up the steps, and down the slide, she mainly walked around monitoring children's safety.

> I have to constantly rotate. I have to walk the playground, but I find that a lot of times I have to stay on this corner because that's where the bigger toys are. The Swings are a little dangerous, the slides- you know, making sure they are going

down the right way because are getting very creative about the way they go down the slides now (laughs).

Trisha set up additional supports to assist children in regulating themselves in the swing area. Specifically, she added timers so children could effectively manage their turn taking by themselves.

Classroom as Contested Site

Trisha worked in an early childhood setting where institutional policies were accompanied by specific guidelines aimed at supporting children's development and growth. As a Head Start teacher, Trisha was expected to use Head Start's Child Development and Early Learning Framework as a guide for curriculum implementation and assessment of children's progress. According to the Framework, learning should be integrated rather than hierarchical; i.e., all domains (areas of child development) are important and teachers should intentionally scaffold learning across all domains throughout the day. However, as observations and interviews would reveal, Trisha's classroom became a contested space where she routinely prioritized certain domains of learning over others (e.g., Literacy Knowledge over Social & Emotional Development) and her personal beliefs and practices over those of the institution.

As indicated previously, Trisha's choice of motivating style used to engage students in learning depended on the activity and the targeted domain of learning. According to Reeve and colleagues (2014), various perspectives influence teachers' motivating styles. Of particular relevance to this case study are teaching setting, educational experience and family, the latter of which Trisha indicated helped shape her views of emotional self-regulation, and I would suggest, of teaching practices in general.

Teaching Setting

Trisha was very comfortable working in her work setting to the extent that she exhibited a certain disregard for institutional priorities. This likely was the result of her role as the only Head Start teacher at the center, or as she put it, 'the big guy,' and her role as Staff Member in Charge (SMIC). She appeared to have free rein of her classroom and was able to implement practices with which she was comfortable. For example, while Our Care's Group Management Guide had very specific guidelines regarding the use 'Time Out' and directed teachers to use it only for "very disruptive behaviors" and as a "last resort" (p.18), this teacher indicated using it without discretion. While the Guide stated that 'Time Out' should not be used as a punishment, Trisha indicated using it as such. When discussing defiance early on in the study, this teacher explained that if a child refused to clean up their toys, and pushed her hand out of the way if she attempted to help, her response would be to let the child know that his/her behavior was not acceptable. She would then place them in time out. While the CDC recommended that teachers only use 'Time Out' to help children calm down, the hypothetical scenario Trisha shared regarding its use indicated the strategy actually upset the child rather than calmed him down.

Educational Experience

Reeve and colleagues (2014) hypothesize that "school wide norms often inform teachers as to which approaches to instruction are most common, accepted, and expected." (p.96). However, while communicating directions by snapping fingers and giving children 'looks' was not normative within Head Start, this teacher had acquired

most of her classroom experience (three of four practicum experiences and six years of teaching) within a public school system, which she stated "was very, very rigid."

Although her setting at Our Care may have been different from that of the public schools she worked in, Trisha may not have had the time or the need to adapt to a new setting that she stated provided "a lot more free range for creativity." This teacher continued to implement strategies that had been effective in the public school setting because they appeared to be working in her current setting as well. As Trisha reflected on the two different settings, she said "I don't know, they [public school system] just had a lot of different expectations where here it's more about letting the child develop on their own and grow on their own."

When discussing her internships, she said

…like in my internships and stuff, I saw the way that [learning] centers were run and the kids, like in my final internship, the kids would, at that point,… the teacher would tell them you know, "So-and-so and So-and-so, you are in the Science Center.... So-and-so and So-and-so you're at the computer." So she told them where to go, which is what I did when I taught kindergarten. So my [learning] centers have always been very super-duper structured so coming into a preschool setting like this, I still had that in me to keep it organized and you know, not have it be so chaotic and have kids running around the room and stuff like that. Even though they are able to pick what they want to do, at the end of the day my room is never a mess you know because they know where everything goes and they put it back because they know that if they don't, they won't get to play in that spot the next day…and they don't want that. (laughs)

Family

Given the close relationship between Trisha and her mother, it is not surprising that she was very influential in Trisha's career choice as well as her professional practices. It was her mother who instilled in Trisha the need for effective classroom management beginning with control over one's own emotions. Yet, her mother also taught Trisha at an early age to respect others and to avoid bringing shame on a person. Trisha and her sister attended the elementary school where their mother taught and were told that they "better never, ever" misbehave in class because their mother would hear about it "within the hour." As an adult, Trisha indicated being careful not to shame her students in front of their peers. For example, when discussing the reason for no longer using a Color Behavior Chart as she had done in the past with her kindergarten students, Trisha said

> It's almost embarrassing to them…I don't like that because it's like everybody
>
> sees it on the wall. It's on the wall all day. Everybody knows you are on red or
>
> you are on purple. That's your name…that kid's in trouble. And they'll remind
>
> you all day long, you know, "You're on purple."

While Trisha seemed to have transferred that personal lesson into her teaching, there were others that she chose not to adopt. As she said, laughing, "I don't necessarily follow all her [mother's] directions." When speaking about growing up watching her mother teach, for example, Trisha explained that her mother's classroom was different because her mother liked "a little bit more chaos."

> Like when she's transitioning into something… She knows how to play the piano
>
> and she goes and bangs on her piano and gets the kids to transition into the next

thing. They know that's cleanup time but to me that's just "Ahh!" I just couldn't stand that. It just seems like too much.

Summary

Trisha grew up in a family of teachers with her mother serving as both an inspiration and mentor throughout the early years of Trisha's career. When Trisha struggled during her early days working in an elementary classroom, her mother advised that, for Trisha to become more effective, she would have to gain control over herself and ultimately of the children. As a result, the issue of control issue emerged as a core principle in both Trisha's personal philosophy and classroom practice.

Trisha represents a teacher-centric view of emotional self-regulation to the extent that a child's ability to develop emotional self-regulation abilities is viewed as flowing from the teacher who establishes her authority over the children and who defines and communicates, both verbally and non-verbally, the parameters of acceptable behavior within the learning environment. Further, Trisha's understanding of the behaviors of emotionally self-regulated and unregulated children was centered not just on control but compliance as well, indicating that following rules was a critical part of emotional self-regulation.

To support emotional self-regulation, which for this teacher centered greatly on behavioral regulation and, more specifically, was translated as children's readiness to conform to adult requests (Kopp, 1982; Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1995), Trisha used a variety of strategies. These included reviewing rules, maintaining a tight schedule, providing physical support (e.g., touch and bear hugs), engaging children in problem

solving, using time out, supporting students' self-reflection, movement, and rewards. Yet, Trisha's framework of decision-making regarding her choice of classroom strategies and their implementation was context bound revealing a relationship between the type of strategy used and the classroom activity underway. Specifically, during Free Choice Times, Trisha promoted autonomy in the children allowing them to independently regulate their emotions and behavior whereas during planned learning sessions, she would immediately interrupt and stop any disruptive behaviors that emerged. Such anticipatory self-regulation encourages patterns of regulation aligned with optimal social functioning within a specific context (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011).

Finally, Trisha's strong command of her classroom allowed her to create a space where she could make decisions as to classroom priorities and disciplinary actions. Across both realms, Trisha routinely prioritized certain domains of learning over others (e.g., Mathematics and Literacy Knowledge over Social & Emotional Development) and often implemented her personal beliefs and practices over those preferred or mandated by the institution.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

This study described and explained understandings of emotional self-regulation among three Head Start teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts while also identifying socio-cultural perspectives that influenced their ability to effectively apply their understandings. The questions that guided the study were as follows:

1- How do teachers working within varying socio-cultural contexts define the concept of emotional self-regulation?

2- What strategies do teachers use to support emotional self-regulation within their early childhood classrooms?

3- In what ways do teachers' implemented strategies align or deviate from their stated understanding of emotional self-regulation?

4- In what ways do socio-cultural perspectives influence teachers' application of their understanding of emotional self-regulation?

In Chapter Three I explained the research design employed in this study. A qualitative collective case study based on Stake's (2006) design was used in order to allow for rich descriptions and interpretative analysis both of which were foundational to the individual cases and the final cross case analysis. In Chapter Four through Chapter Six study participants were introduced and situated within their broader socio-cultural context.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the gaps in the literature and the cross case analysis, which consists of an overview of each individual case, the relationship between case themes and the research questions, and the linked assertions developed across the three cases. The resulting analysis taken from across the cases is then framed in relation to the implications for the field of early childhood education. The chapter ends with a brief concluding paragraph.

Gaps in the Literature

While the heterogeneity of the student population in the United States has led to an increase in research addressing emotional self-regulation within diverse populations, the majority of research is based on normative developmental frameworks (Raver et al., 2004) and focuses on children rather than on teachers' perspectives. Furthermore, as McInerney (2008) states, research has often overlooked the emics of self-regulation within diverse socio-cultural contexts with the majority of studies neglecting to address socio-cultural perspectives in the socialization of self-regulation (Trommsdorff, 2011). I contend that, by developing a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding emotional self-regulation within varying socio-cultural contexts, Early Childhood educators and administrators will be better equipped to support early childhood teachers in their daily practices. Also, given the importance of early childhood teachers in establishing learning environments that support young children's emotional self-regulation, it would seem appropriate to understand how teachers conceptualize and support this construct.

Rogoff's Socio-Cultural Theory

Rogoff's theory provided a relevant framework for understanding teachers as part of a larger socio-cultural community. This theoretical framework afforded an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the three participants' forms of agency. It also allowed me to listen to and understand participants' voices which as Wertsch (1991) reminds us, do not "exist in total isolation from other voices (p.52)."

Rogoff's framework revolves around the intersection of people, relationships, and environments. According to Rogoff and colleagues (1995b), development occurs through "changing participation in sociocultural activities" (p.63). For the purpose of analysis, the scholars (1995b) identify 'activity' (to include historical traditions, individuals, social partners, cultural tools, and their transformation) as the unit of analysis. In this study, that 'activity' was teacher's stated and implemented understanding of emotional self-regulation and the context was two Head Start classrooms located in Our Care Centers situated within the larger context of early childhood education in the United States. Teachers' stated and implemented understandings around emotional self-regulation were analyzed in relation to their socio-cultural contexts considering Rogoff's three planes, (i.e., apprenticeship, guided participation, and participatory appropriation (Rogoff, 1995a). Apprenticeship highlights the ways in which individuals interact with others in culturally organized activities designed to provide less experienced individuals with opportunities to mature. In this study, culturally organized activities included teachers' understanding and strategies around emotional self-regulation. At the guided participation plane, participants described their strategies within their specific socio-cultural contexts. Finally, participatory appropriation, which refers to an individual's active engagement in

activities and to how those activities produce a change that prepares him/her for similar subsequent activity involvement, included teachers' reflections on their classroom practices and strategies around emotional self-regulation.

Data Analysis

I began the study by closely examining each teacher as an individual case with data sources including a reflexivity journal, three naturalistic observations, four semi-structured interviews, three of which were video-elicited interviews, and relevant document analysis. Key points from the completed data records for each teacher were categorized into broad themes which contributed to my ability to better understand the teachers as both individuals and practitioners within unique socio-cultural contexts and also served to support the generation of individual codes (APPENDICES K-M). The themes were then further examined in relation to the research questions. As recommended by Stake (2010), once I had identified individual case themes and established close familiarity with each teacher, I used the individual case themes in conjunction with the original data sources to generate codes and themes across all three cases.

Overview of Individual Cases

Lourdes

Emotional Self Regulation	Strategies	Sociocultural Perspectives
Cognitive Emotional	Regulate and Shift Attention Control Responses to Stimuli through Social Interaction & Language	Negotiating Institutional Policy
Self-Control Make Choices Do Things	Transitions Embedding Peer Learning Curriculum-Based Intentional Partnering	Personal Beliefs & Values Classroom Families

Figure 6. Major Themes Lourdes

Lourdes defined emotional self-regulation as "the control that a child have over himself to make choices, to do things; how much that person can control himself when it comes to taking a decision, doing things." This teacher's definition is reflective of the complexity of the construct of emotional self-regulation addressed in the literature in terms of the challenge of separating emotion, cognition, and behavior. Contained within her definition was a perceived overlap between emotional and cognitive functions and, as a result, the strategies Lourdes chose to implement in the classroom addressed this overlap. Further, while Lourdes' definition of emotional self-regulation indicates that the locus of control is situated within the individual child, her practices highlighted the important role she, as a teacher, had as "emotion mentor," implementing strategies that allowed children to think about their own emotions, as well as those of others. According

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to Hayashi and colleagues (2009), such pedagogy of feelings is meant to ensure goals of relatedness and social harmony. While such goals are aligned with an interdependent model of agency, Lourdes' strategies reflected independent and interdependent models of agency, which prioritize individual and collective outcomes, respectively. While she saw emotional self-regulation as critical to children's sense of self, autonomy and success, it was also a means of successfully relating to others.

Overall, Lourdes' preferred strategies for supporting emotional self-regulation in children were closely aligned with her understanding of emotional self-regulation, which focused on a child's ability to control themselves in order to make appropriate choices and engage in learning opportunities. Specifically, the strategies she implemented enabled children to further develop their ability to regulate and shift their attention as well as control their responses to stimuli through social interaction and language.

As Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) recommend, it is important to account for the ways in which history and culture attribute to different behavioral practices within groups of individuals. In examining the impact of sociocultural perspectives on Lourdes' implementation of her classroom strategies, the two primary influencers that emerged were the classroom families and her personal beliefs and values. While Lourdes' occasionally found that her practices or decisions were in conflict with institutional policy or guidelines, she developed ways of successfully negotiating the tensions that inevitably arose.

Lourdes had a firm understanding of emotional self-regulation as defined in the field of early childhood education and in western literature and her strategies were aligned with dominant views of best practices. However, her overriding commitment to

her personal beliefs and valuing of family, both her own and the classroom families, frequently led her to implement strategies that privileged the needs and requests of those families and the children with whom she worked over the institution's policies.

Pam

Emotional Self Regulation	Strategies	Sociocultural Perspectives
Cognitive Emotional	Reactive	Intersection of Personal & Professional
Calm Demeanor Express Feelings	Choices Responsive Care Label Emotions Prase & Encouragement Redirection Planned Ignoring	Personal & Professional Stressors Motherhood
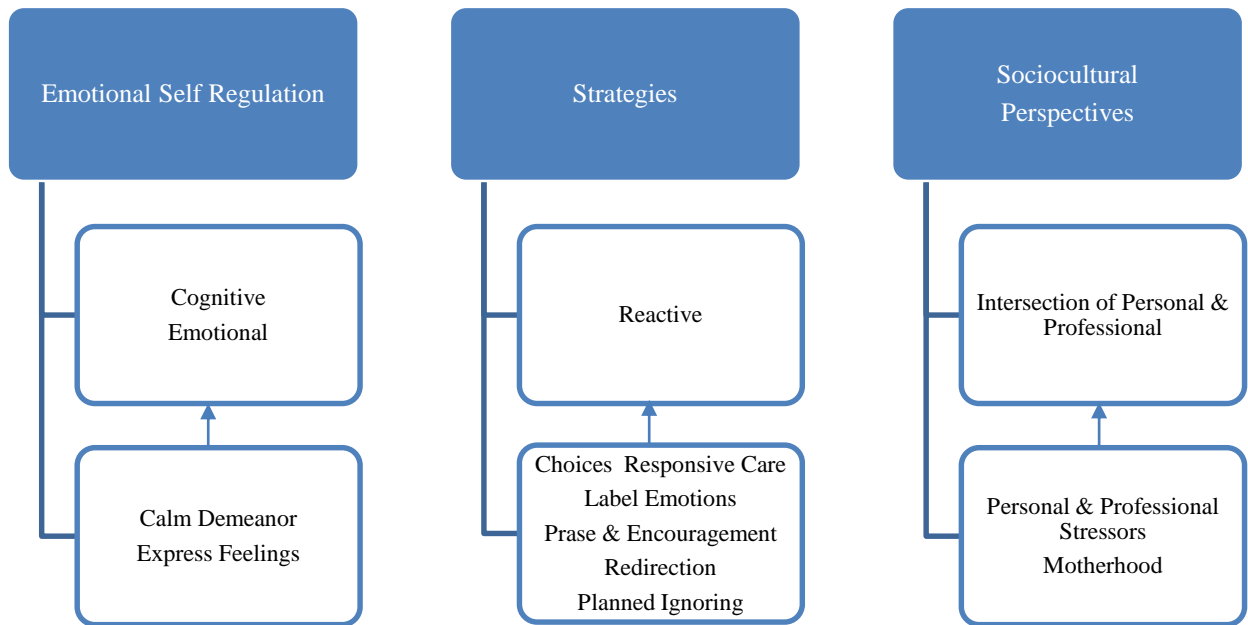
Figure 7. Major Themes Pam

Pam's definition of emotional self-regulation consisted of both cognitive and emotional components and was consistent with general understandings within the field of early childhood education. Specifically, she defined it as "for children to learn what their emotions are and how to take care of their own emotions." Pam believed it was the teachers' job to nurture 'inbred, easy-going temperaments' and to teach children that were 'naturally born difficult' that "that is not the way to be."

For Pam, emotionally self-regulated children understand their emotions as indicated by their ability to assign labels to their feelings. Pam felt that emotional self-

regulation was important to children because of the critical role it plays in a child's socialization. Her assertion as to the relationship between emotional self-regulation and socialization is consistent with the findings of Torres (2011) who concluded that emotional self-regulation is a prerequisite to a child's ability to create and maintain successful relationships.

Pam identified several proactive strategies used to support children's emotional self-regulation in her classroom to include using responsive caregiving, providing choices, using language to identify and label feelings, and providing praise and encouragement. However, multiple reviews of data sources revealed a tendency on her part to implement more reactive practices or to implement strategies in a reactive manner.

At the conclusion of the classroom observations, a clear pattern was discernible to the extent that a persistent gap between Pam's stated understanding of emotional self-regulation and her actual practices remained. Specifically, rather than cultivating emotional self-regulation abilities within the children in a manner that was consistent with her proactive stated understandings of emotional self-regulation, challenging behaviors in the classroom would escalate to the point where immediate intervention was required. Her inability to consistently implement proactive, constructive strategies was highly mitigated by the personal and professional stressors in her life. Family health issues, a divorce, and a change in Center Directors were clearly impacting her personal resiliency leaving her to frequently work from a reactive position with the children.

Trisha

Emotional Self Regulation	Strategies	Sociocultural Perspectives
Independent/Dependent Process	Context Bound Autonomy & Control	Personal over Institutional Control & Structure
Calm Demeanor Compliance	Rules Schedules Time Out Physical Support Rewards Problem-Solving Self-Reflection Movement Non-Verbal	Setting (Leadership Role) Eductional Experience Family

Figure 8. Major Themes Trisha

Trisha's definition of emotional self-regulation focused on a child's ability to calm himself/herself in a challenging situation. However, there was a dual perspective that emerged to the extent that Trisha felt that a child acting alone was more likely to demonstrate an ability to independently calm himself/herself whereas in situations involving multiple children, she or another adult would frequently need to step in and calm each child. Trisha's perspective of emotionally self-regulated children focused not on the management of emotions, but primarily on behavioral regulation and the degree to which students exhibited the ability to comply with her directives and follow class rules.

Trisha's decisions regarding implementation of strategies vacillated between choosing ones that would exert pressure on students to "think, feel, or behave in specific ways" (Reeves, 2009, p.159) and ones that promoted a child's sense of autonomy. Further, her decision to use strategies that either exerted control or promoted autonomy was context-bound in that, while she allowed children to independently regulate their

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emotions and behavior during Free Choice Time, she immediately interrupted and stopped disruptive behaviors that occurred during planned lesson times so that children could listen and learn.

Three primary perspectives that influenced Trisha's classroom practices were setting, educational experience, and family. The impact of Trisha's role as Staff Member in Charge (SMIC) could be noted in classroom priorities and practices whereby she privileged some learning domains over others and at times chose methods of discipline that were counter to the center's philosophy.

Trisha acquired most of her classroom experience within a public school system, which she characterized as being "very, very rigid." However, Trisha viewed the rigidity as having a positive impact on children and thus she integrated some of those principles into her pre-school classroom. Finally, Trisha's mother served as both an inspiration and mentor throughout the early years of Trisha's career. One of the most influential beliefs that was handed down by her mother was that, in order to be successful, Trisha would need to establish control over herself and the children. As a result, the issue of control, in terms of herself, her classroom, and her students, emerged as a core principle that guided Trisha's personal philosophy and classroom practice.

Trisha's understanding of emotional self-regulation and its importance for both teachers and children stemmed from the critical role it plays in learning. As a result, while Trisha's stated strategies were closely aligned with the profession's key supports for emotional self-regulation, her implementation of strategies was highly contextualized and bounded by the type of activity in which children were engaged. Her decisions

surrounding strategies and their implementation were also influenced by her leadership

role within the center, her experience, and her family.

Cross Case Analysis

The previous sections focused on the individual cases with particular emphasis

placed upon the distinguishing characteristics of each. In the following sections, the

research questions are used to conceptually frame the cross-case analysis with Table 2

providing an opening summary of the emergent cross-case themes.

Table 2. Cross Case Analysis

Role of Emotional Self-Regulation	Tool for Learning & Life Tool for Learning Tool for Socialization
Classroom Strategies Support	Cognitive/Behavioral Context Bound Personally Mitigated
Socio-cultural Perspectives	Institutional Family Education Setting (Roles & Stability)

Q1: Teacher's Definitions of Emotional Self-Regulation

All three teachers defined emotional self-regulation in ways that are consistent

with general understandings of the term within the field of early childhood education,

particularly in terms of a focus on emotional, behavioral, and cognitive components. As

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is reflected in the literature, teachers' definitions mirrored the complexity of the construct of emotional self-regulation, specifically the challenge of separating emotion from cognition and behavior. However, the teachers were quick to link their definitions to the perspectives they held regarding the larger role of emotional self-regulation within the lives of children. None of the teachers indicated considering ESR as an end goal. For example, distinctions began to emerge across the cases as teachers identified emotional self-regulation as a tool for supporting the attainment of one of three primary goals including academic and life success, academic success only, or effective socialization. Further, the teachers' definition and perceived role of emotional self-regulation also impacted, to differing degrees, the selection and implementation of classroom strategies.

Two significant conclusions can be drawn with respect to research question one. First, the data sources suggest that the curriculum within higher education programs may have a normative effect and thereby mitigate the socio-cultural distinctions that teachers bring to their educational experiences. Second, it is equally compelling to note that presumptive links between stated definitions of emotional self-regulation and actual classroom practices may be ill advised as, in all three cases, the construct of emotional self-regulation was not a discrete phenomenon but was instead inextricably tied to larger instructional goals.

Q2: Classroom Strategies Used to Support Emotional Self-Regulation

All three teacher's demonstrated familiarity with, and an understanding of strategies aligned with western theories and used by early childhood professionals in supporting emotional self-regulation. The relative importance that teachers assigned to the role of emotional self-regulation in achieving learning goals helped shape practice.

For example, since Lourdes saw emotional self-regulation as essential to a child's success in school and life, it was an integral part of her daily practice. This teacher was very intentional in utilizing every opportunity during the day to support her students' emotional self-regulation. She implemented activities that allowed children to learn from each other, clearly communicated expectations, employed consistent routines, and embedded emotional self-regulation activities throughout the day. For Trisha, the importance of emotional self-regulation was tied to its ability to promote academic success. As a result, there was a clear demarcation in the day between "learning" time and "play" time. This teacher was very purposeful in her choice and use of strategies to support emotional self-regulation during activities that were focused on specific learning outcomes, but not as much during free play. Trisha redirected children, engaged them in movement activities, and maintained a 'tight' schedule. Her strategies were at times more intrusive as she intervened in situations in order to preempt escalation of behaviors that might interfere with learning. For Pam, the primary role of emotional self-regulation was to promote socialization. However, her employment of strategies was impacted by mitigating stressors which will be further discussed in the following sections.

Q3: Implemented Strategies and Stated Understandings of Emotional Self-Regulation

This question was not designed for evaluative purposes or to suggest that any gaps between stated understandings and actual strategies employed were reflective of either negative intentionality or performance deficits relative to a teacher's practices. Instead, the question, and accompanying interview and observational data, presented an

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opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which tacit values or other influencers may impact classroom practice. In this regard, two particular issues emerged that were critical in understanding the ways in which teachers' stated strategies and implemented strategies were or were not aligned. Those issues were as follows: 1) the teacher's learning goals for children and, 2) the teacher's ability to function effectively within the context of the larger learning environment. The impact of these two issues situated teachers on a continuum with Lourdes implementing proactive approaches on one end, Pam implementing reactive approaches on the other, and Trisha employing a hybrid approach as the mid-point.

For Lourdes, emotional self-regulation was critical to the goals of academic and life success for children and this perceived importance led her to implement strategies that encouraged the child's ability to regulate and shift attention and control responses to stimuli through social interaction and language. Moreover, her strategies were proactive to the extent that she refrained from using punitive disciplinary strategies, clearly articulated her instructional and behavioral expectations for the children and supported those expectations through both high levels of engagement (Webster et al, 2008) and a structured, predictable classroom environment (McIntosh, Herman, Sanford, McGraw, & Florence, 2004).

Trisha and Pam both viewed emotional self-regulation as a tool that could be used in advancing other competencies in children including academic learning and socialization, respectively. For Trisha, the primary learning goal in her classroom was academic success and thus the strategies she implemented were context bound to the extent that she utilized anticipatory self-regulation techniques (Trommsdorff & Cole,

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2011), or immediate disruption of challenging behaviors, to gain the children's attention and focus them on learning activities. This was in contrast to free choice time where Trisha implemented strategies that allowed for more autonomy on the part of the children. Additionally, with an emphasis on maintaining control of herself and the children, coupled with the high level of independence she enjoyed within the learning environment, Trisha was able to effectively implement her strategies.

Pam perceived emotional self-regulation as a means for advancing children's need for appropriate socialization. However, her efforts to implement the strategies she had identified were frequently mitigated by stresses resulting from her personal life which, when coupled with the lack of a classroom routine and structure, left her to operate primarily from a reactive position in addressing challenging behaviors. While Nelson (2000) indicates that beliefs and training are more influential than socio-cultural perspectives to classroom practices, the stressors, to include isolation she experienced after the departure of the Center Director with whom she worked closely, seemed to influence her practice more than her stated beliefs and (educational) training.

In reviewing all three cases, it was clear that attempts to establish direct links between stated definitions of emotional self-regulation and actual classroom practices are problematic for a number of reasons. Specifically, rather than prevailing theoretical understandings being the primary indicator of practice, it was demonstrated that the teachers' implemented strategies were instead inextricably tied to larger learning goals and personal and professional contexts. And, on the surface, while the power of learning goals to yield influence on classroom practices may represent affirmation of existing knowledge in the field, it is important to note the emerging views which hold that these

learning goals surrounding emotional self-regulation may also be viewed as a means by which ideologically dominant values of agency, individualism, and self-determination can be promoted (Vassalo, 2013). Viewed collectively, the linked assertions clearly establish the need for broader consideration of learning goals and professional and personal contexts in any effort to understand the complex intersection of theoretical/conceptual understandings and practice.

Q4: Socio-Cultural Perspectives and Emotional Self-Regulation

By attempting to understand the classroom practices of teachers, with respect to their support of emotional self-regulation, it became clear that classrooms must be viewed as an ecosystem containing many constituent and interrelated parts all of which contribute to a teacher's effectiveness.

As noted in the previous section, a teacher's learning goals and learning environment can certainly impact classroom practice but this study also demonstrated additional components or perspectives that must be taken into consideration including institutional policy, family, education, and setting. In this regard, the emergent analysis directly reflected Rogoff's (1995) assertions that we must examine, not just the teacher, but also his/her interpersonal and socio-cultural context.

While Head Start and Our Care have clearly defined and articulated policies with respect to classroom management, discipline, and preferred teaching practices, the institutions' impact on these three teachers differed depending on the individual teacher's personal planes. As per Clark & Peterson (1986), teachers' beliefs functioned as a contextual filter, helping them process, interpret, and adjust practices. In fact, all three

teachers frequently negated institutional policy by privileging to some extent not only their personal beliefs, but also their values ~~or~~ and preferred practices.

Families, both in terms of the teachers' personal family as well as the classroom families, impacted classroom practice. While Lourdes's practice was reflective of high levels of collaboration with the families she worked with, Trisha and Pam noted the influence of immediate family members. For Trisha, her mother's influence had helped shape her philosophy, which was grounded in issues of control over herself, her students or the classroom. As per Shank (1982), Trisha's observations of her mother's practices were critical to her learning how to behave in a classroom context. Similarly, Pam's interactions with her son had brought into question longstanding beliefs regarding effective ways to support children's curiosity and learning. She was increasingly mindful of walking this fine line as she interacted with her students each day.

Evidence of Rogoff's apprenticeship process was reflected in the influence of practicum experiences for two of the three teachers. In the case of Lourdes, this process was foundational and contributory but it was her years of experience that served as a primary framework within which she had constructed her current classroom practice. Trisha's practicum experience within the public school system was also highly influential in her development as a teacher. Through her observations and engagement within that setting, she learned the value of highly structured learning environments and routines, which she ultimately transferred to her early childhood classroom.

Finally, the setting in which the teachers worked exerted influence over their daily classroom practices and implementation of strategies with the role of the teacher and the stability of leadership being two considerations. Trisha operated as a Staff Member in

Charge and enjoyed a degree of autonomy that freed her to implement her preferred strategies and to employ a hybrid approach to supporting children's self-regulation, an approach which promoted both control and autonomy. Meanwhile, Pam was working in a Center that had recently undergone a leadership change, which had created personal tensions in the Center and left Pam without a close ally in administration. The perceived instability within the environment, coupled with Pam's personal stresses, had negatively impacted her effectiveness particularly in terms of pursuing her learning goals and managing the classroom.

Implications for Field of Early Childhood Education

Discoveries yielded by this study hold implications for teacher preparation and professional development programs and early childhood care agencies and providers.

First, despite varying socio-cultural contexts, the teachers' articulated definitions or understandings of emotional self-regulation were reflective of dominant views within early childhood education. This suggests that formal teacher education programs may serve a normative function with respect to the transference of foundational knowledge within the early childhood profession. However, while teachers articulate certain dominant understandings of emotional self-regulation, this study demonstrated that implemented practices may differ as a result of a variety of influences such as personal and professional background, classroom learning goals, and personal or professional stressors. Additionally, it was apparent that a teacher may not always have full awareness of the differences between his/her knowledge and practices and thus it is important that a system or process for enabling teachers to consistently observe and reflect on their

practices be put in place within early childhood settings. This system or process should also recognize the ways in which people, relationships (e.g., including external ones such as family), and environments interact so that relevant supports (e.g., mental health, peer supports) can be designed to assist those teachers who may be struggling to implement effective classroom strategies within the specific socio-cultural context they are working in.

Second, while previous research (Trommsdorff, 2009; Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011) has shown that models of agency, be those independent or interdependent, as well as socio-cultural perspectives impact the development of classroom strategies, the current study highlights additional perspectives. Noted briefly above, those perspectives can include educational background, values and beliefs, family, classroom families, and stressors.

Third, in two of the three cases, the classroom practices of teachers were greatly shaped by the classroom experiences that they had either through internships. Based on this, it is critical that teacher education programs maintain commitment to providing student teachers with opportunities that allow them to work within the intersection of theory and practice in order to gain confidence and build resiliency prior to entering the teaching profession. While it is critical for student teachers to be aware of, and understand, prevailing theories and practices regarding emotional self-regulation within the field of early childhood education, equal emphasis needs to be placed on raising awareness of the impact of socio-cultural influences on classroom practice. Student teachers need to realize that theory and associated practices are going to be implemented in very specific socio-cultural contexts and, consequently, that practices may need to be

adapted to varying influencers or perspectives. As teacher educators, we need to raise student teachers' awareness to socio-cultural perspectives and prepare them to successfully navigate these.

Finally, the study demonstrated the value of video-elicitation interviews to the extent that it allowed teachers to observe, discuss, and reflect on their classroom practice thereby generating new insights into the process of teaching and learning.

Conclusions

This study's findings provide insight into participating teachers' understanding and practices around emotional self-regulation. As reiterated through the individual chapters, the goal was to understand what socio-cultural perspectives impacted participating teachers' ability to implement their understanding of the complex construct of emotional self-regulation and not to assess or verify the appropriateness of shared understandings and practices. While the participants' definitions of emotional self-regulation were aligned with those that are commonly used in the field, it was important to notice that it was their implementation of strategies that diverged, reflecting the influence of learning goals and varying sociocultural contexts. Moving forward, additional research could further develop the study herein by examining other socio-cultural contexts affiliated with Head Start.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Site Access Letter

Dear Mr./Ms. _____

Thank you for your willingness to consider my request to conduct a study at your Head Start Center. This letter serves as confirmation of my preliminary visit to your center on ___ (insert date and time) to discuss the details of the study further.

To support your conversation with your staff and families, I am providing a brief outline of the study. Please note that the University of South Florida supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and has approved this study. There are no known risks associated with this research. The primary purpose of the study is to examine how early childhood teachers from varying cultural backgrounds define emotional self-regulation and the strategies they use to support it in their classrooms. Participation or non-participation in this study will not adversely affect teachers in any way. Additionally, participation is strictly voluntary. At the end of the study, participating teachers will receive a $25.00 gift card to Target or Wal-Mart.

The study includes three video taped classrooms observations as well as four interviews with participating teachers. Classroom visits will last approximately 40 minutes, the initial interview 30 minutes, and subsequent interviews 60 minutes. In order to minimize classroom disruption, interviews will take place during naptime or other appropriate time slots.

During my scheduled visit, I would like to discuss the study outline with your teachers and families and answer any questions they have.

Thank you again for your willingness to be a part of the study. Your participation will help us better understand how to support teachers and their classroom practices.

I look forward to meeting you and to learning more about your center.

Yours sincerely,
Anna Paula P. da Silva

Appendix B: Site Approval Letter

(Head Start Letter Head)

March (___), 2014

To: University of South Florida

As _____(insert professional title) of <u>R'Club XXXXXXX </u>(insert

complete name of organization), I agree to allow Anna Paula Peixoto da Silva, a doctoral

candidate at the University of South Florida, to conduct a study within our Head Start

centers. The study's purpose is to examine how early childhood teachers define

emotional self-regulation and the strategies they use to support it in their classrooms.

I understand that participation is voluntary and that we may withdraw from the study at

any time.

Sincerely,

_____

(insert professional title)

Appendix C: Letter of Informed Consent - Teacher

Emotional Self-Regulation: Definitions and Applications within Diverse Socio-Cultural Frameworks

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study #

Dear Ms./Mr. _____,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that examines how early childhood teachers define emotional self-regulation and the strategies they use to support it in their classrooms.

The information contained in this letter is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the study. The University of South Florida supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and has approved this study. There are no known risks associated with this research. Participation or non-participation in this study will not adversely affect you in any way. Your participation is strictly voluntary. Should you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time by calling me at 727-76-5212. At the end of the study, participants will receive a $25.00 gift card to Target or Wal-Mart.

Participants in this study will be required to take part in an initial 30-minute interview regarding emotional self-regulation. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time at the teacher's Head Start Center and will be audio recorded. After the interview, the teacher will be asked to complete a demographic data form. Additional participation will involve three 40-minute videotaped classroom observations that will be used to guide a conversation regarding emotional self-regulation. Once audio taped material is transcribed, teachers will have the opportunity to review and verify the accuracy of the statements. The study is scheduled to last approximately six weeks.

All interview answers, classroom video clips, and anecdotal records are strictly confidential and will be secured in a locked file cabinet in my home office for a period of three years. Teachers' names will remain confidential. Similarly, any publication or presentation of the findings from this research will use pseudonyms for all of the participants.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement on the next page and return it to me. The extra copy should be kept for your own personal records. Your return of this letter and your signature on the permission form implies consent. A summary of the findings from this study will be made available to you upon request. Thank you for your time and consideration to participate in the study.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM: I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed consent form.

Name (PLEASE
PRINT):_____

Signature: _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached:
_____

Best days and times to reach you:_____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study. I have also answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____ _____

Date   Investigator's Signature

Appendix D: Letter of Informed Consent - Parent

Emotional Self-Regulation: Definitions and Applications within Diverse Socio-Cultural
Frameworks

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study #

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I would like to request your permission to video tape your child and his/her classroom as
part of a study that examines how early childhood teachers define emotional self-
regulation and the strategies they use to support it in their classrooms.

The information contained in this letter is provided to help you make an informed
decision regarding the study. The University of South Florida supports the practice of
protection for human subjects participating in research and has approved this study.
There are no known risks associated with this research. Participation or non-participation
in this study will not adversely affect your child in any way.

This study will involve three 40-minute videotaped classroom observations of your
child's teacher's interactions with the children in the classroom. The teacher and not the
children will be the focus of the video, which will be used for the sole purpose of guiding
a conversation with the teacher regarding emotional self-regulation. The video will only
be used to help facilitate teacher interviews and will not be shared in any public context.
Additionally, children's names will remain confidential and any publication or
presentation of the findings from this research will use pseudonyms for teachers and
children. The study is scheduled to last approximately six weeks.

If for any reason you do not wish for your son or daughter to be videotaped, please sign
this form and return it by (insert date)

Name (PLEASE PRINT):_____

Signature: _____

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Purpose: Describe and explain teachers' understandings and application of emotional self-regulation in early childhood classrooms and identify factors that influence their ability to effectively implement their understandings.

1. Briefly tell me about your personal background.

2. Briefly tell me about your educational background and preparation for teaching.

3. What experiences (educational courses, personal experiences) were most helpful in preparing you for working with young children and why?

4. What factors do you think have helped define who you are as an early childhood teacher?

5. What values and beliefs that you were raised with impact your work as a teacher?

6. What skills do you think children should learn in preschool?

7. What skills do you want children to learn in your classroom?

8. How do you support children learning/developing those skills?

9. Define the term "emotional self-regulation."

10. What verbal and non-verbal behaviors does a self-regulated child exhibit?

11. What verbal and non-verbal behaviors does a child that is not self-regulated exhibit?

12. What do you think is the role of emotional self-regulation in an early childhood classroom?

    Possible Probe: What do you believe has helped shape your views on the role of self-regulation?

13. How do you currently support your students' emotional self-regulation?

Possible Probe: How do you make decisions regarding which strategies to implement to support emotional self-regulation?

14. In your opinion, how does the Center support children's emotional self-regulation?

15. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix F: Demographic Information Form

Gender

☐ Male   ☐ Female

Age

☐ 20-25   ☐ 30-35   ☐ 40-45 ☐ 50-55   ☐ 25-30   ☐ 35-40   ☐ 45-50   ☐ 55-60

Educational Level (check the highest level completed)

☐ Bachelor's Degree   ☐ Graduate Degree

Years of Experience in Early Childhood Education

☐ 1–5 years   ☐ 16–20 years

☐ 6–10 years   ☐ 21–30 years

☐ 11–15 years   ☐ Greater than 30 years

Race

☐ White

☐ Black   or African American

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander

Ethnicity

☐ Hispanic

☐ Not Hispanic

Country of Origin: _____

Appendix G: IRB Certificate

COLLABORAJ'IVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental} course elements.

- Name:
- Email:
- Institution Affiliation:
- Phone:

Anna Paula da Silva (ID: 3822107)
dasilva@usf.edu
University of South Florida (ID: 425)
8139745142

- Curriculum Group: Human Research
- Course Learner Group: Social/ Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel
- Stage: Stage 2 -Refresher Course

- Report ID: 17152928
- Completion Date: 11/16/2015
- Expiration Date: 11/15/2018
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score•:   95

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED
SBE Refresher 1-Instructions (ID: 943)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 936)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1-Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 937)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – Informed Consent (10: 938)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (10: 15029)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 15035)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 -Assessing Risk (ID: 15034)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Prisoners (10: 939)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 -Research with Children (ID: 15036)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 – Research in Educational Settings (10: 940)	11/16/15
SBE Refresher 1 -International Research (10: 15028)	11/16/15

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.
CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

Appendix H: IRB Approval Letter

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 ● Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 ● FAX (813) 974-7091

4/4/2016

Anna Paula da Silva
USF Teaching and Learning
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Expedited Approval for Continuing Review**
IRB#: CR2_Pro00016960
Title: Emotional self-regulation: Teachers' voices and perspectives within diverse socio-cultural
       frameworks

Study Approval Period: 4/13/2016 to 4/13/2017

Dear Dr. da Silva:

On 4/2/2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above
application and all documents contained within including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):

ResearchProtocolIRBF.docx

The IRB determined that your study qualified for expedited review based on federal expedited
category number(s):

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to,
research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural
beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history,
focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in
accordance with USF HRPP policies and procedures and as approved by the USF IRB. Any

changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendix I: Sample Self-Reflection Form

Supporting Emotional Self-regulation in EC Classroom: Teacher 1/Observation 1

Objective: *The teacher reflects on her support of emotional self-regulation in order to consider what may be enabling or hindering her ability to implement personal understanding of emotional self-regulation in the classroom.*

Teacher'Definition: "self-regulation is the control that a child have over himself to make choices, to do things; how much that person can control himself when it comes to taking a decision, doing things."

Implementation → Strategies ↓	Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented	Thoughts and Comments
Engages children in transitions				
Engages children in problem solving				
Uses variety of resources (books, songs)				
Embeds specific emotional SR skills in everyday activities				
Provides guidance				
Provides opportunities for children to learn form each other				
TOM Strategies				

Appendix J: Sample Reflexivity Journal

April 23, 2014

Went to 2 centers in XX [name of city]. Lourdes, a former TOOLS teacher, is working in

one of the centers and was receptive to the study as were 2 other teachers at the center.

The teacher who met the selection criteria at the other center was not receptive at all and

told me the Supervisor who was out for the week would be the one to make the decision.

I told her that was not the case and if she was not interested she could/should make that

decision herself. She cited problems with getting parental permission for filming among

other concerns. I wonder how much of her hesitation was due to her own reservations.

While I am confident I would be comfortable having someone come in an observe me

teaching now, I remember how hard that was for me early on in my career. I need to

remember to do everything possible to ensure that teachers who do agree to participate

are comfortable with my presence in their classroom.

May 9, 2014
Pam

Debriefing began at the end of nap time. Pam guided me into Director's office and

suggested we debrief in there so that she could also eat her lunch. Apparently there are

rules regarding where they can and cannot eat as well as other rules now being enforced.

While I want to make sure we meet in a place where she is comfortable, I didn't think

this [debriefing in the Director's Office] was a good idea since the Director was in the

office, so I asked if we could talk elsewhere. Given what I had observed during my visit,

I wasn't sure Pam would be comfortable viewing the video in front of her new

supervisor. I may have been wanting to protect her privacy and that of the students in her

classroom. While the new director obviously has access to all of the classrooms at any time, my videos and conversations were to remain confidential.

May 14, 2014
Lourdes

When I arrived in Lourdes' classroom this morning she told me I should videotape breakfast because that was a time when children were very unregulated. Instead of trying to hide or make excuses for what might go on in the classroom, she actually seemed to want to point out those instances that she may have been challenged by. I remembered how easy it was to work with her in the past. She had always been very welcoming and was always open to hearing suggestions and to discussing ways to improve her classroom practice. I need to realize that my role now is very different. I need to remain aware of that and not slip in to my former role of curriculum coach. I also have to be careful that I maintain a broad perspective and not allow her guidance to overtake my observations.

May 27, 2016
Trisha

Revisiting videos of classroom observations and transcripts of my conversations with Trisha has made me think about Stake and his recommendation to deconstruct the whole and then reassemble it to develop a deeper understanding. While at a superficial level, transcripts from interviews may lead one to think that her classroom practices stemmed from social emotional competence and a desire to develop an emotionally safe learning environment for her students, watching the actual videos and re-reading those transcripts adds another layer that is much needed in understanding how the actual implementation of the strategies reflected instead a need to establish a controlled environment.

Appendix K: Sample Interview Coding- Final Lourdes

da Silva, Paula 4/26/16, 7:31 PM
Strategies/Child-centered/ Visuals/Environment/

Teacher: This is the Circle Time area. We have there the theme, what we are talking about this week…so you see that it was a theme board. We have a white board where we put the date, we put the message of the day, and then anything else when they ask questions we write it down there so they can see. Also…there are the days of the week, the letter of the day, uhm, the number of the week…we have shapes, colors, the weather, so every day we go through all that skills with them during Circle Time so they need something they can see and associate. Even we have songs for weather, songs for the days of the week, and we have other resources but we want something on the board so they can see what we are talking about…they can relate…what we are singing and what we are reading with what is in there.

Interviewer: Ok. Here then there was someone who's not normally in the classroom. I guess she's the floater. Can you tell me a little bit about that relationship?

da Silva, Paula 5/7/16, 11:21 PM
Strategies/Child-centered/Peer Collaboration

Interviewer: They (the children) do know her already because she's been here since last year so…they know her name, they know that if they need something they can either go to me as a teacher or to her as well.

Teacher: And to your assistant teacher as well?

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: Uhm-hum.

Interviewer: Ok. (Viewing another section of the video) So you and your AT both worked at that table with children and it seemed there were some things that had been prepared for the children. Can you talk a little bit about that activity?

Teacher: Yes. We were doing art related to Pirates so what we did…we provide the boat that we were gonna use, the popsicle stick, the colors and we told them to build a Pirate

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Appendix L: Sample Interview Coding- Final Pam

Interviewer: Ok. Thank you for clarifying. That's helpful. So, what does it mean to you for a child to be "left behind"? You mentioned that children need to learn social skills when they're little, otherwise they are going to be left behind even in preschool. What does that mean?

da Silva, Paula 5/10/16, 9:29 AM
Emotional Self-regulation/
Perspectives/Socialization

da Silva, Paula 5/10/16, 9:32 AM
Socio-cultural Perspective/
Role of Mother

Teacher: Because clicks do start, whether we want them to exist or not. Clicks start very, very young and…them learning to be social with everybody and not just a (pause) small, intimate group of friends because that doesn't allow for if a child was to come in mid-year, they need… this, this group of children needs to have the skills to recognize how difficult it is for the student that is coming in mid-year and they need to have the social skills to engage that new child and say "Hey! Why don't you come and join us and play with us?" and make that child feel comfortable. I guess what I'm trying to get at is all children should feel like they can play with anyone that they want to and not just certain kids.

Interviewer: So being "left behind," if I'm understanding correctly, and I may or may not be, but it has more to do with the social aspects of being accepted?

da Silva, Paula 4/27/16, 6:46 AM
'Being left behind'

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So it's about getting along with other children?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: Engaging in play?

Teacher: Yes.

Appendix M: Sample Interview Coding- Final Trisha

Interviewer: So part of your program, I mean what was your final internship supposed to be like?

Teacher: uhm…

Interviewer: You weren't supposed to take over?

> da Silva, Paula
> 4/25/16, 9:30 PM
> Educational Background/
> Final Internship

Teacher: I wasn't supposed to take over…actually what they had to do, because I wasn't a teacher yet, they had to bring in subs to just come in and sit there and watch me. I mean, I had more experience in the classroom, but they were getting paid to do it….what I was doing (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) Because they had the degree…

> da Silva, Paula
> 4/25/16, 9:30 PM
> Educational Background/
> Final Internship

Teacher: Yeah…so I mean, I don't know. I think…I was supposed to come in and she was supposed to kind of guide me into it and then release me, but she would observe me, you know, and make sure…I would sit with her at the end of every day, when she was able to be there, and she'd say "Instead of doing this, you may want to go this way because a couple of those kids didn't get it." So I mean she would help me and help me come up with other ideas. But when she had to go (laughs) I didn't get that anymore and a sub with a Business Degree telling me…is not going to give me any tips (laughs along with interviewer).

Interviewer: So if you can tell me a little bit about (the period) after that. Upon graduating with your Bachelor's degree, what experiences have you had since then?

> da Silva, Paula
> 4/25/16, 10:08 AM
> Background/Professional
> Experiences
>
> da Silva, Paula
> 4/25/16, 9:31 PM
> Background/HSExperience

Teacher: I taught kindergarten in Hillsborough County Public Schools from 2006-2012. Then I became an Assistant Director for a preschool from 2012-2014. And then that job…I was laid off because it was a donated (grant-funded) position. So I have been doing Head Start because it was too late to get back into the school system when I was laid off.